NETAJI SUBHAS OPEN UNIVERSITY

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—রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর

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—সুভাষচন্দ্র বসু

Any system of education which ignores Indian conditions, requirements, history and sociology is too unscientific to commend itself to any rational support.

—Subhas Chandra Bose

Price: ₹475.00
[Not for sale]

Printed at ROYAL HALFTONE CO. 209/C Bidhan Sarani, Kolkata - 700006

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HEG

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HONOURS IN ENGLISH

BRITISH PROSE LITERATURE: 17TH AND 18TH CENTURIES

6

CHOICE BASED CREDIT SYSTEM

PREFACE

In a bid to standardize higher education in the country, the University Grants Commission (UGC) has introduced Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) based on five types of courses viz. *core, generic, discipline specific, elective, ability and skill enhancement* for graduate students of all programmes at Honours level. This brings in the semester pattern which finds efficacy in sync with credit system, credit transfer, comprehensive continuous assessments and a graded pattern of evaluation. The objective is to offer learners ample flexibility to choose from a wide gamut of courses, as also to provide them lateral mobility between various educational institutions in the country where they can carry their acquired credits. I am happy to note that the University has been recently accredited by National Assessment and Accreditation Council of India (NAAC) with grade "A".

UGC (Open and Distance Learning Programmes and Online Programmes) Regulations, 2020 have mandated compliance with CBCS for U.G. programmes for all the HEIs in this mode. Welcoming this paradigm shift in higher education, Netaji Subhas Open University (NSOU) has resolved to adopt CBCS from the academic session 2021-22 at the Under Graduate Degree Programme level. The present syllabus, framed in the spirit of syllabi recommended by UGC, lays due stress on all aspects envisaged in the curricular framework of the apex body on higher education. It will be imparted to learners over the six semesters of the Programme.

Self-Learning Materials (SLMs) are the mainstay of Student Support Services (SSS) of an Open University. From a logistic point of view, NSOU has embarked upon CBCS presently with SLMs in English / Bengali. Eventually, the English version SLMs will be translated into Bengali too, for the benefit of learners. As always, all of our teaching faculties contributed in this process. In addition to this, we have also requisioned the services of best academics in each domain in preparation of the new SLMs. I am sure they will be of commendable academic support. We look forward to proactive feedback from all stakeholders who will participate in the teaching-learning based on these study materials. It has been a very challenging task well executed by the teaches, officers & staff of the University, and I heartily congratulate all concerned in the preparation of these SLMs.

I wish you all a grand success.

Professor (Dr.) Ranjan Chakrabarti
Vice-Chancellor

Netaji Subhas Open University

Under Graduate Degree Programme

Choice Based Credit System (CBCS)

Subject : Honours in English (HEG)

Course Title - British Prose Literature : 17th and 18th Centuries

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First Print : December, 2022

Printed in accordance with the regulations of the
Distance Education Bureau of the University Grants Commission.

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UG : English (HEG)

Subject : Honours in English (HEG)
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Module-1
Prose Literature of the Early 17th Century

Unit - 1 □ English Prose - Developments since the Renaissance

Structure

1.1.1 Objectives

In Core Courses 1 and 3, you have been thoroughly trained on British poetry and drama from the 14th to the 18th centuries. This is the first course you are taking up on British prose literature, the systematic study of which we commence from the 17th century. It is not that the earlier periods did not have any prose literature of significance, in fact you have come across Old and Middle English prose literature in the relevant historiographical study. From an academic perspective however, it is customary to commence our textual study of English prose literature from its burgeoning after the Renaissance. Hence, this Unit in particular and the course in general is of pivotal importance. The following are the **basic objectives** of this introductory Unit:

- To learn how the rudimentary forms of early prose-writings developed into a distinguished style, with the emergence of Renaissance in England.
- To learn about the great translators and reformers who experimented with

new forms of prose- writing and contributed significantly to the rise of specific genres in English literature.

- To be able to form a holistic idea about the nature of prose-writing in the Renaissance and Reformation Age in England and their future influences.

1.1.2 Introduction

You will remember that Old English Prose garnered ample significance with the translation of Latin originals. It was under the leadership of **Kind Alfred** ("The father of English Prose") that historical and religious treatises (such as Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, and Pope Gregory's *Pastoral Care*) were translated for the advancement of general learning in English. **Aelfric** contributed to the development of the narrative style with his *Catholic Homilies*, *Colloquy* and *Grammar*, along with **Wulfstan, the Archbishop of York**, whose *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos* (The Sermon of the Wolf to the English) maintained the alliterative cadence in prose. ***The Anglo Saxon Chronicle*** helped preserve the historical records of English wars and royal campaigns.

The Middle-English Period saw the amalgamation of the West Saxon dialect favoured by King Alfred, with French and Scandinavian loan-words (after the Norman Conquest of 1066 A.D.). The inflectional structure of Old English was slowly replaced with a more homiletic style of Prose (e.g ***The Ancrene Riwle***-written as a moral, practical guide-book for three anchoresses). Chaucer included two prose tales namely "The Tale of Melibeus" and "The Parson's Tale" in his ***The Canterbury Tales***, and English Prose ranged between a simple, unembellished style and charming narratives with **Sir John Mandeville's** *Travels*, **Sir Thomas Malory's** *Morte D'Arthur*, and **John Wycliffe**'s English translation of the *Bible*.

It is to be kept in mind that during the Old English period and the age of Chaucer, the basic nature of the English language changed more due to the loss of inflections than because of changes in vocabulary. But from around 1400 AD, that is roughly after the closure of the Middle English period, this trend witnessed a reversal. With the passing of inflections came a growing use of prepositional forms. Between 1400 and 1650AD the English language underwent radical changes with the triumph of the vernacular in the 15th century and the steady import of French and Latin words in the 16th century. Also, as is inevitable, the influences of both the Renaissance and the Reformation are seen in the prose- writings of the time. In order to proceed with our understanding of the prose that we see after the Renaissance, this background is importantly to be kept in mind. The very categories into which we

have divided the prose output of the period will give you a fair idea of the variety that was witnessed after the Renaissance.

1.1.3 Theological Works

In their eagerness to use vernaculars in worship, the Reformers of the English Church were insistent on an accurate translation of the Bible which would free them from their dependence on the Latin *Vulgate*. Hence was undertaken a series of translations of the Holy Scriptures which culminated in the Authorized Version of 1611. You actually have dedicated Units on the significance of this English Bible, so here we will concentrate on the historiography of Bible translations, which you must understand was not just about theology but about an independent cultural idiom for the English. Hence, it becomes an important component of History of English literature as well. Under the influence of the Renaissance translations of the ancient classical writers, some of the following attempts were taken up during this time:

- **William Tyndale (1494- 1536)** is considered as the greatest modern Bible translator of the 16th century. He was also a religious pamphleteer and a theologian. His writings revealed his support for the **Lollards** and rejected the supremacy of the Roman Catholic Church. He mostly worked outside England in secret and his translations of the Old and New Testament were condemned by the established authorities. He used simple language and honest expressions to translate the Hebrew/Greek Bible into English and make it accessible to the common people. Being a Protestant translator, he used the word "congregation"which was later kept unchanged in the Authorized Version as well. He also contributed a number of new phrases to the English language which would later be used frequently, such as "long-suffering", "scapegoat" etc.
- **Miles Coverdale** brought out the first complete Bible (1535) and was much inspired by Tyndale. He was supported by King Henry VIII in his work. ***The Great Bible***, written by a group of translators commissioned by the King himself, came out in 1539.
- ***The Book of Common Prayer*** was published in 1549 and was composed under the guidance of Archbishop Thomas Cranmer.
- Queen Elizabeth ascended the throne in 1558 and the Calvinistic The ***Geneva Bible*** published in 1560, was not granted an official status.
- Finally, the **Authorised Version of the *Bible*** in English was published by **King James** in 1611. King James identified the importance of a standard

religious text and employed more than 40 scholars in 1607. It was a work of great artistic skill and dignity. The narration of the grand events (*The Pentateuch, Gospels, Acts of the Apostles*) was done with suggestive clarity. Phrases like 'a good Samaritan', 'eleventh hour', and 'sweat of the brow' were introduced to the English vernacular and it went on to greatly influence contemporary prose- writers.

- **John Foxe** published *Acts and Monuments* (later named *The Book of Martyrs*) in 1563, recounting the biographies of true Christians who sacrificed their lives. There emerged sermon writers also like **James Usher** (*Chronologia Sacra*) and **Joseph Hall** (*Virgidemiarum*).

1.1.4 Translations

The spirit of the Elizabethan Age was greatly reflected in the translation of classical literature, which was pursued diligently by the learned scholars of the time. The works of Virgil were translated by Phaer and Stanyhurst, Plutarch's *Lives* by **Sir Thomas North** in 1579, the writings of Ovid and Homer by **George Chapman** and 'Essays of Montaigne' by **Florio** in 1603. **William Painter**'s *The Palace of Pleasure* (1566) drew influences from French writings and **Geoffrey Fenton**'s *Tragical Discourses* (1567) was heavily influenced by the Italian *novella*. This wave of translations will give you an idea of how deeply continental literary influences have shaped the development of English literature in general and prose in particular.

1.1.5 Travel Literature

The pride and glory of the Elizabethan empire lay in the courageous expeditions of its brave sailors to far-off lands and unknown sea-routes. Apart from trade purposes, sea voyages were sponsored and encouraged by the Royal Court to extend the boundaries of the Empire as well as to learn more about the world outside. John Cabot set sail with his son Sebastian under the patronage of King Henry VII and 'discovered' Newfoundland as early as 1496. Sir Humphrey Gilbert returned there to establish a colony almost a hundred years later. Sir Francis Drake circumnavigated the world successfully in his ship 'Golden Hinde' in 1579, sailing under the orders of the Queen herself, and Thomas Cavendish did the same a few years later. Other explorers included Sir Martin Frobisher (Baffin Island) and Sir John Davis (west coast of Greenland) and their main aim, in the words of Sir Walter Ralegh was "To seek new worlds for gold, for praise, for glory."

Richard Hakluyt was a clergyman, compiler and editor of numerous accounts of actual journeys of discovery and adventure by the English. He declared himself to be a patriot and a follower of science. His final three-volume book of voyages was titled *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation*, which was published in between 1598 and 1600. It was in this collection that two important accounts of **Sir Walter Ralegh,** namely 'Discoverie of Guiana' and 'Report of the Fight about the Azores' were included. The historian and geographer **Samuel Purchas'** wrote *Purchas his Pilgrimage* in 1613, which was a detailed survey of the past and present life of England. The four volume edition of 1625 was titled 'Hakluytus Posthumus or, Purchas his Pilgrims' which aimed at providing a complete history of land and sea expedition by Englishmen and others. The influence of travel literature, its importance in proving how England as a nation extended its geographical boundaries and knowledge, can be traced in William Shakespeare's ***The Tempest***. Prospero, the exiled Duke, discovers a new home in a far-off island and becomes the master of its native resident Caliban. We need to understand in this context the close connections between the popularity of travel literature and the burgeoning of Britain's colonial dominions in Asia and Africa.

1.1.6 Essays

One of the most important literary gifts of the Renaissance in the field of English prose was the essay form. With its earliest origins in the works of Greek philosophers like Theophrastus and Plutarch, and their Roman counterparts like Cicero and Seneca, the form had quite an early ancestry. However, it was the French author and humanist philosopher Montaigne (1533-1592) who in his collection called *Essais* (1580) first used the term, and it was clear that the Continent was ready to adapt this classical form.

Among English essayists, the first name that we need to reckon with is that of **Francis Bacon** (1561-1626): He was a man of letters who was made a Member of Parliament in 1584. His most erudite work was 'Essays' (58 in number in the final edition) published in 1597, and then again in 1612 and 1625. He wrote on familiar day-to-day subjects like 'Of Studies, 'Of Travels', 'Of Truth', 'Of Goodness and Goodness of Nature'. He introduced an epigrammatic style in his writing which was influenced by Latin diction and rhetoric and observational skills. You will have a first-hand acquaintance with couple of his essays in the next two Units, and that will be a fitting initiation into the prose style of the period. ***The Advancement of Learning*** (1605), a philosophical treatise, ***The New Atlantis***, a prose fiction imagining a perfect world, and ***Novum Organum*** a logical work explaining the foundations of his philosophy, are some of his other relevant works. As an essayist he is usually

brief, very objective and rational in his approach. For him the new knowledge of the world, supported by secular meditation of various kinds of thought-processes, emerging arguments and novel experiences, enabled the distinction between God's word and work. You can therefore clearly understand how English literature, after moving ahead from the Middle Ages as a result of the Renaissance, was clearly beginning to acquire a secular, rationalist and therefore a modern approach.

For Francis Bacon, the source of all human knowledge was observation and his new philosophy meant to explain the natural foundation and the logical premise of all universal phenomena. He was interested in science, astronomy and medicine and believed in the potential for progress of the Renaissance Man. His **'Essays'** were basically general reflections on human life based on the ethics of Humanism. As we just said, Montaigne was the inventor of the essay form, and he wrote in a self-conscious reflective manner, treating matters with a light-hearted curiosity. It was from him that Bacon adopted the essay into English literature. But Bacon added to the form his own wisdom and aphoristic style. He drew his subject matter from both the personal and the public life. References from the world of contemporary politics, religion and history can be found in his essays. Some of his observations have found the status of idioms in the English language and are used even today. E.g: "Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man", "A wise man will make more opportunities than he finds", "It is impossible to love and to be wise". English literature insofar as the development of the 'Essay' as an established form of non-fictional prose, thus owes much to the early efforts of Bacon.

1.1.7 Pamphlets

King Henry VIII's challenge to the established order - the highest authority of faith in the land, and the eventual coinage of the alternative term "Puritan", further added impetus to the development of the Renaissance satirical pamphlet, a prose style heavily derived from the subsequent religious controversy. The Elizabethan satirical pamphlet, a mixture of journalistic prose-writing and concise tracts on societal values, developed in order to criticise the evils of the time. The pamphleteer **Stephen Gosson** wrote *School of Abuse* in 1579 which was refuted by **Philip Sidney** in his *Defense of Poesie* (1595). So you see how the beginnings of literary criticism in English literature were made through these pamphlets.

The University Wit, **Thomas Lodge** (1558-1625) wrote pamphlets titled *Honest Excuses, Alarm Against Usurer'* and *Wit's Misery* in such a style that humour disguised the deep sarcastic tone in most of the cases. **Thomas Nashe** (1567-1601) who wrote *Anatomy of Absurdity* and *Pierce Penniless*, mixed a colloquial ease and a high

rhetorical style in his writings. **Robert Greene** (1560-92) is most remembered for his *Groatsworth of Wit bought with a Million of Repentance* (1592) in which he referred to William Shakespeare as an "upstart crow". His other pamphlets followed more journalistic, colloquial style, revealing the author's ample knowledge about the gritty life of London's delinquents. **Thomas Dekker** wrote *The Wonderful Year* in the year 1603, marking the death of Queen Elizabeth and King James I's ascension to the throne, including a report based on the outbreak of bubonic plague in England.

John Milton (1608 – 1674) who was naturally gifted with a poetic genius, formally studied the classical languages along with the Humanist ideals of Erasmus during his formative years. As a Protestant patriot on the parliamentary side, he wrote pamphlets against the socio-political evils of his time, some of which caused a lot of controversy during his lifetime. ***Areopagitica*** (1644) was the most famous one, in which he advocated the freedom of the press. 'Of Education' was published in the same year and 'Letters of State' in 1694. He also wrote two pamphlets on the need for divorce. His contribution to English prose amounted to a total of around 25 pamphlets, of which four of course were in Latin.

1.1.8 Historical Works

The use of anecdotes and allusions in telling stories about their heroes and the nation, was quite prevalent in the historians and biographers of this age. **Sir Thomas More** compiled the *History of Richard III* in a dramatic and moralistic tone, firstly in Latin and then it was published in English (1557). The Humanists often wrote biographies of their peers in an affected style and eulogistic manner.

- **Edward Hall** wrote the *Union of the two Noble and Illustre Families of Lancaster and York* (1548), describing the reigns of King Henry, the Fourth to King Henry, the Eighth.
- **Raphael Holinshed's** *Chronicles* was published in 1577, recording English, Scottish and Irish histories, which were famously used by William Shakespeare as source material for many of his plays.
- **Walter Ralegh** compiled *The History of the World* (1614), where he applied a typical Renaissance worldview in heroically depicting the past and present of his country.
- Another Historian, **Edward Hyde** wrote *The History of Rebellion and Civil Wars in England* (published in 1704).

- **Thomas Fuller** was an Anglican preacher and historian, who is remembered for *Holy State*, *The History of the Holy War* (on the Crusades) and *History of the Worthies of England* (1662).

1.1.9 Prose-fiction

Even though the systematic rise of the English novel was to come a little later (of which we will study in detail in this Course), this period did witness the modest beginnings.

- **Sir Thomas More** published ***Utopia*** (1516) in Latin, where he created the perfect world or the ideal state of his imagination. The ideal society is set in a fictional remote island, far from Europe and its socio-cultural trappings. Actual historical people like Peter Giles and John Morton are included as characters and commentators in his narrative. More wishes England to one day adopt the Humanist belief-system and societal spirit of Utopia. His other works in English are also noteworthy, such as *The Lyfe of John Picus* and *Dialogue*. In this last work he opposed the arguments of the reformers such as Tyndale and Martin Luther. He revived the native English tongue by presenting serious religious theories in a colloquial, humorous manner.
- **Sir Philip Sidney** wrote the pastoral romance ***Arcadia*** (1590) mainly to amuse his sister, the Countess of Pembroke. The love-story, drawing inspiration from the Greek tradition of chivalry and romance) starts with Basilius, the king of Arcadia, who rejects court-life and settles in a rural paradise, with his wife and two daughters. Two princes visiting Arcadia fall in love with the two daughters, Pamela and Philoelea and start courting them in disguise. Various obstacles are placed in their paths and finally it is the King of Macedonia, Euarchus, who clears up the misunderstandings. The work is essentially a celebration of the Renaissance ideal of Humanism and Arcadia becomes a symbol of earthly perfection.
- **John Lyly** created the character of Euphues, a young citizen of Athens and narrated his adventures and travels in his ***Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit*** (1579) and ***Euphues and his England*** (1580). From his works is derived the term 'Euphuism', which is a name given to a particular style of English prose which includes a decorative, grand manner of address, full of alliterations and rhetorical devices. Affected speech and mannerisms, copious discussions and ornamental passages, elucidated he adventures of young Euphues, an Athenian.

This self-conscious style was quite successfully adopted by later writers and captured the imagination of the English reading public.

- **Thomas Lodge** wrote ***Rosalynde: Euphues Golden Legacy*** in 1590 which later influenced Shakespeare's play ***As You Like It***. It was a prose romance bearing Greek influences, and used a high rhetorical style. Since you have read the Shakespeare play as part of your syllabus, you can additionally try to evaluate his use of sources from Lodge for creating the plot.
- **Robert Greene,** another pamphleteer, is also known for his prose romances such as ***Pandosto*** (1588) and ***Menaphon*** (1589).
- **Thomas Nashe** wrote ***The Unfortunate Traveller*** in 1594, which is considered as a rudimentary picaresque novel, inspired by the Spanish tradition. Episodic in nature, and often discursive, it maintains an important place in the development of English prose-fiction till this day.

1.1.10 Miscellaneous Prose

- **Sir Thomas Elyot** (1490-1546): He wrote ***The Book of the Governor*** which was sort of a guide to the ruling class, in matters of practical instruction. Humanism was one of the common points of reference for the prose-writers of this age.
- **Roger Ascham** (1515-1568): Two of his main works were ***Toxophilus*** (1545) (a nationalistic treatise on the English sport archery) and ***The Schoolmaster*** (1570) (on the practical needs of teaching ethics). He took up the onus of writing in plain and straight-forward English and as one of the earliest prose-writers during the Renaissance, helped in breaking the over-burdening influence of Latin on the vernacular tongue.
- **Richard Hooker** (1554-1600): He published his four books ***Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*** in 1594, a work which is both a philosophical as well as a theological masterpiece.
- **Robert Burton** (1577-1640): His ***The Anatomy of Melancholy*** (1621) is an in-depth study of melancholy, done in a pessimistic tone in a conversational style.It is an amalgamation of religious solace and humanist practicality.
- **Thomas Hobbes** (1588-1679): He was a rationalist and a philosopher who wrote ***Leviathan*** (1651), a materialistic discourse on relation between men in society and political theories. He declared that human life was'solitary',

'brutish' and 'short'. According to him an ideal commonwealth should be an absolute state to avoid perpetual conflicts and civil strife among citizens.

- **Sir Thomas Browne** (1605-82): He was a distinct figure during the Reformation who initiated a rare fusion of faith and reason in his works. In ***Religio Medici*** (1643) he gives the true meaning of Christianity (relating it to Humanity above all) and discusses the relation between Catholic and Protestants and in ***Hydrotaphia*** (Urn Burial) he meditates upon the mysteries of life and death. He created a fusion between Latinisms and native English words.
- **Jeremy Taylor** (1613-1667): He was a preacher above all and wrote sermons for the benefit and instruction of pious Christians. His important works include ***The Liberty of Prophesying*** in 1647 and ***Holy Living*** in 1650.
- **Sir Thomas Overbury (1581-1613):** He was a practitioner of the prose form known as 'Character', which was basically a portrait in words of a real-life person highlighting his virtues and vices. He wrote 'Characters or, Witty Descriptions of the Properties of Sundry Persons' (1614). The form was influenced by Joseph Hall and the classical Greek writer Theophrastus, who wrote about typical vices observed in actual persons.

1.1.11 Summing Up

In this Unit, we have therefore provided you an overview of the varied emergent prose styles of the period. From this variety, you are to understand the manifold aspects of life and culture of contemporary society that literature was beginning to embrace. In a sense, we might say that the Renaissance resulted in one of the first liberalisations and modernisations of English literature; with prose forms being one of the most benefitting. The following are the points you need to keep in mind as we sum up this Unit:

- Developments in prose forms during the Renaissance and Reformation:
- The Renaissance, in its advocacy of classical Humanism, inspired works on history, philosophy, polity, travel and various other disciplines.
- The new trends in prose exhibited a thirst for knowledge, imaginative force and a reliance on reason, as reflected in the publication of pamphlets and other scholarly tracts.
- The late 16th and early 17th centuries produced great theological translators, preachers and sermon-writers.

- The emergent non-fictional prose laid the foundation of the rudimentary novel, mainly inspired by the Italian and Spanish traditions.
- With the Restoration of King Charles II in 1660, Elizabethan idealism started to see a shift towards neo-classicism.

1.1.12 Comprehension Exercises

Long Answer Type Questions:

1. Write an essay on the development of the satirical pamphlet in English Prose.
2. What was the significance of the translation and publication of the *Bible* in English during the Renaissance? Discuss with examples.
3. Write an essay on the historical works published during the Reformation in England.

Medium Length Answer Type Questions:

1. Assess Thomas More's *Utopia* as a doctrine of Renaissance Humanism.
2. Discuss the rise of Travel-literature in England during the Renaissance and comment upon the works of any two major travel-writers.
3. Discuss some of the common themes found in the major philosophical works that appeared till 1650.

Short Answer Type Questions:

1. Discuss in brief the origin and meaning of the term'Euphuism'.
2. What role did Francis Bacon play in enriching English prose?
3. Discuss the contribution made by John Milton to English Prose.

1.1.13 Suggested Readings

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Unit - 2 □ Francis Bacon: Of Studies

Structure

1.2.1 Objectives

It is interesting that we begin our systematic study of English Prose Literature only in Core Course 6, which focuses on the 17th and 18th centuries! This is not to say that there was no prose at all in the earlier periods, but we have confined the syllabus mainly to gathering information about earlier periods from the perspective of History of Literature. All the same, the knowledge of earlier prose literature thus gathered, and the preceding Unit of this Course will definitely help you to understand the present author better. Units 2 and 3 of this Module are companion pieces, where we shall take up two essays by Francis Bacon. Accordingly, if you follow the structuring of the Units dear learner, you will find that the learning objectives are divided across these two Units to provide you greater clarity and develop a systematic understanding. At the end of Module 1 Units 2 and 3, you should be in a position to:

- Be informed about the development of the 'Essay' as a genre.
- Account for its popularity in contemporary English literature.
- Have a fair idea of Francis Bacon as an essayist.
- Develop an analytical perspective on how relevant Bacon's essays are to us in our time.

1.2.2 Introduction

Let us first and foremost know about the rise and growth of the 'Essay' as a literary form, for that is seminal to our understanding of both these Units, at least for the immediate purpose. The word "essay" originates from the French word "essayer", which in turn derives from the Latin word "exagere" which means '**to weigh' or 'to sift**'. This should give you a fair idea, to begin with, as to what the purpose of this literary form basically was. The French Renaissance statesman and author **Michel de Montaigne** (1533 – 1592) is considered the father of the essay since it was he who introduced the trend of using a personal voice in his writing in the sixteenth century. It was a radical move since, before the publication of his *Essais* in two volumes between 1580-88, all writing had been governed by the purely formal approach. By introducing the conversational approach to writing short pieces called *Essais*, Montaigne was providing a format to be experimented upon and modified by writers across generations from then on.

Burges Johnson in *Essaying the Essay* (1970) analyses that Bacon "borrowed this word essay from Montaigne, turn[ed] it into English and use[d] it as a title for some short prose experiments of his own". Bacon, of course was more formal than Montaigne in his style of address. However the personal element remained intrinsic to the choice of topics and their treatment and analyses. Overall Bacon made the essay into a definite form adapted to his purposes of exposition of important subjects filling up the gap in learning which he discusses in *The Advancement of Learning*, essayed in so many forms.

Alan Sinfield and Lindsay Smith in *Textual Practice* (1998) discuss the origins of the essay in the cultural revolution of the Renaissance since the arts became more centred on the human self and enquiry in the topical context of the human being's perfection and possibilities. Literature and, therefore, the essay too becomes an important site of such exploration as seen in the *Essayes* of Bacon.

1.2.3 A Brief Insight on Francis Bacon

Sir Francis Bacon (1561 – 1626) was a man of many talents and modes of expression. He is renowned for not only his scientific method of enquiry but also his philosophical treatises and his essays in the world of literature. He excelled as a statesman, philosopher, scientist and jurist. Many shadows fell on his public career in Parliament as he took part in the conviction of his patron, the Earl of Essex. His

rise to fame in court was possible only after James I's accession in 1603. Consequently, he was knighted and given the position of the Baron of Verulam, the Viscount of St Albans and later rose from Solicitor General to Attorney General to Lord Keeper and finally Lord Chancellor of England.

Bacon is however most remembered for popularising his inductive method of scientific enquiry as outlined in his *Novum Organum* which required a planned procedure for investigating all natural things. His empirical methods have often been credited with encouraging experiment and invention, propelling the dawn of the industrial age and forming the rhetorical and theoretical backdrop of modern science. His proposition was that the fulfillment of scientific knowledge lay in its practical application. While Bacon's literary productions are few compared to his philosophical and scientific works, it is his pragmatic vision that shines through the Essays which you shall be studying in this unit. It is essential to form an idea of his corpus of work and his life to locate his essays in the matrix of his ideas and engagements.

The first edition of the *Essays: Religious Meditations, Places of Persuasion and Dissuasion* appeared in 1597 written in varying styles covering topics pertaining to both public and private life. However the coherence and organization of content in the essays improved with the second edition in 1612 with 38 essays in it. Further improvement and enlarged scope is seen in the 1625 edition which was published under a new title *Essayes or Counsels, Civill and Morall.*

Bacon considered these essays to be "as a recreation of my other studies" apparently placing greater importance on his other writings such as *The Advancement of Learning* (1605) written in two books which surveys the entire field of learning and seeks to correct the defects and deficiencies in the same through the Instauration Magna of learning.

However Bacon's Essays have been admired and praised by his contemporaries who credited him with having invented the form of the 'essay'. Henry Hallam describes the *Essayes* thus: "They are deeper and more discriminating than any earlier or almost any later work in the English language" Of course, Bacon borrowed much from Montaigne and other writers, whose content and style influenced his work.

1.2.4 Francis Bacon – The Essayist

The essays possibly have their origin in Bacon's common place book. The common place book was where the educated Renaissance man wrote down his own collection of words/phrases/aphorisms from all that he read or heard as a ready reference for future conversations and /or essays wherein it was possible to explore and enjoy the

rhetorical pleasure of rewriting these ideas so collected under the aegis of different topics . In the particular collection of phrases and aphorisms in the common place book we learn much about the keeper of the book and his interests and opinions.

In Montaigne we see the direct induction of the essay from the common place book as his essays are often strings of quotations on a given subject. While Bacon's common place book shows his pleasure in rhetoric, in his case it is obviously also a storehouse for his interactions in court and parliament since it collects phrases/ sayings both for and against a particular topic.

You have already read about the three editions of Bacon's *Essays* in the previous subsection. Note that the change in his style and confidence in writing was also a result of greater circulation and more importance given to the writings themselves. The 1597 edition was intended but for a few friends in private circulation. As the genre of the essay became more popular and Bacon's reputation as a scientist grew as well, he revised and expanded his scope for the 1612 and then the 1625 version displaying impeccable mastery over the language and the form of the essay.

Bacon's style was compressed and aphoristic, chosen to best analyze the subject matter. In an age familiar with complex and superficial or ornamental stylistic devices he turns to accurate and chastened thought expressed in definitive words. The abstract finds expression in the commonest objects seen and experienced rather than through imaginative and allusive expression. The judicial balancing of pros and cons in his essays also highlights his scientific temper and bent of enquiry. It is to be noted that the aphorisms he used would have been common for other educated men and the pleasure of reading his essays would lie in recognizing the same as well as appreciating the reorganization of those aphorisms and their utilization in essaying a topic.

The Renaissance had a special love for the pithy epigram or *sententia* (Latin, meaning literally feeling or opinion, a maxim, proverb, aphorism , a brief expression of conventional wisdom). Hence the writer who would have best imbibed the past traditions and was able to express the same in his own way, echoing the known in forms unknown was the one who was appreciated as 'original'—different from the Romantic conception of original and spontaneous writing. Bacon successfully and creatively blends Cicero, Aristotle, Tacitus, Plutarch among others, more concerned with the argument he creates with their sayings and the associations surrounding their phrases than in ascribing the source of his phrases/aphorisms.

In the Preface to *Maxims of Law*, Bacon says, "...the delivery of knowledge in distinct and disjointed aphorisms doth leave the wit of man more free to turn and toss and to make use of that which is so delivered to more several purposes and applications." This aphorism itself may be understood with reference to his discussion

on the methods of delivering knowledge in *The Advancement of Learning*. He discusses the two different ways of expression – the 'magistral' and the 'probative'. The former delivers knowledge in a full and systematic way giving an impression of finality demanding that the reader accepts the knowledge as it is. It uses the medium of 'methods' as style of expression—formal and elaborate. On the other hand the probative style of writing encourages the readers to examine all the propositions and to add to them. The style of writing employed is, thus, through aphorisms since they become the vehicle of enquiry and become the starting point of intellectual journeys that deliberate on the given topic. We, of course, understand Bacon's partiality for the latter style or medium of imparting knowledge in keeping with his scientific temperament and principles of investigation. There are two sides of every topic chosen for exposition by Bacon and never any finality in the conclusion. At the same time he takes into consideration all past discussions on the topic as well. In his adopted style of writing he discards the elaborate style of Cicero favoured in his day and takes Seneca for master. Hence Cicero's long periods get substituted by brief, witty aphorisms. Unlike Montaigne, Bacon also compresses several different ideas in the span of one essay rather than elaborating on a single idea alone.

In addition to Montaigne, Machiavelli is a major influence on Bacon in discussions revolving around ethics and government as well as on Bacon's cynical yet pragmatic style of expression and reflection. In contrast to Montaigne, the essays are impersonal pieces. However Bacon's personality emerges through the very aphorisms culled by him and the opinions formulated through the essays rather than the topics chosen by him for the same. It is true that we see him quite preoccupied with the material, often seeing relationships as steps in the ladder of success and also placing greater emphasis on success/failure rather than judging action in terms of good/bad. However that does not mean that Bacon is insensitive to moral values. He shows respect and admiration for values but at the same time chooses the pragmatic approach to success seeing the noble ends of such advancement as more important than the means. He deliberates upon the effects of actions and their ethical implications, such as in 'of cunning' and 'of honour and reputation'. He shows ample awareness of the grace of arts and the graces of conduct and many of his essays also plumb philosophical questions and are highly meditative like 'of truth', 'of death' and 'of beauty' to name a few.

Bacon also expertly bridges the gap between the Renaissance ideals of the 'Active' and 'Contemplative' lives and the controversy surrounding the choice of either. In his scientific programme he was concerned with the application of theory to everyday life. His essays too can be seen as an effort towards strengthening his readers' sense of enquiry and reflection so as to impact their everyday lives and enrich them with

past wisdom formulated in new ways to suit the needs of the present day in matters private and public.

1.2.5 Text-of Studies

STUDIES serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability. Their chief use for delight, is in privateness and retiring; for ornament, is in discourse; and for ability, is in the judgment, and disposition of business. For expert men can execute, and perhaps judge of particulars, one by one; but the general counsels, and the plots and marshalling of affairs, come best, from those that are learned. To spend too much time in studies is sloth; to use them too much for ornament, is affectation; to make judgment wholly by their rules, is the humor of a scholar. They perfect nature, and are perfected by experience: for natural abilities are like natural plants, that need proyning, by study; and studies themselves, do give forth directions too much at large, except they be bounded in by experience. Crafty men contemn studies, simple men admire them, and wise men use them; for they teach not their own use; but that is a wisdom without them, and above them, won by observation. **Read not to contradict and confute; nor to believe and take for granted; nor to find talk and discourse; but to weigh and consider.** Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested; that is, some books are to be read only in parts; others to be read, but not curiously; and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention. Some books also may be read by deputy, and extracts made of them by others; but that would be only in the less important arguments, and the meaner sort of books, else distilled books are like common distilled waters, flashy things. Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man. And therefore, if a man write little, he had need have a great memory; if he confer little, he had need have a present wit: and if he read little, he had need have much cunning, to seem to know, that he doth not. Histories make men wise; poets witty; the mathematics subtile; natural philosophy deep; moral grave; logic and rhetoric able to contend. *Abeunt studia in mores.* Nay, there is no stond or impediment in the wit, but may be wrought out by fit studies; like as diseases of the body, may have appropriate exercises. Bowling is good for the stone and reins; shooting for the lungs and breast; gentle walking for the stomach; riding for the head; and the like. So if a man's wit be wandering, let him study the mathematics; for in demonstrations, if his wit be called away never so little, he must begin again. If his wit be not apt to distinguish or find differences, let him study the Schoolmen; for they are *cymini sectores.* If he be not apt to beat over matters, and

to call up one thing to prove and illustrate another, let him study 197 the lawyers' cases. So every defect of the mind, may have a special receipt.

1.2.6 Detailed Annotation – 'Of Studies'

'serve for delight'—provide pleasure

'for ornament'—for enhancing the beauty of conversation

'for ability'—for increasing efficiency in work related interactions

'privateness and retiring'—in seclusion and at times of leisure

'discourse'—conversation or discussions...in the art of oration

'judgement and disposition of business'—in discretion, making choices and conducting affairs of public life

'expert men'—men of experience

'judge of particulars'—form the correct opinion regarding individual details of a matter

'general counsels '—advice regarding the matter as a whole

'plots and marshalling of affairs'—planning and arrangement of all matters

'those that are learned'—learned through studies

'sloth'—laziness/indolence

'affectation'—showing off

'humour'—whim

'proyning'—trimming/pruning

'direction'—guidance

'too much at large'—too vague and generalized

'bounded in by experience'—controlled and given specificity through practical experience

'Crafty'—clever in a deceptive or dishonest way

'contemn'—deride as useless

'they teach not their own use'—the knowledge in books do not describe the manner in which such learning may be applied

'that is a wisdom'—the wisdom of practical application of knowledge

'without them'—outside the realm of books

'above them'—superior to studies

'observation'—experience of life...observing people/situations/events

'not to contradict and confute'—not with the aim of opposing another or proving someone false

'nor to believe and take for granted'—not to accept all knowledge found in books unquestioningly

'but to weigh and consider'—contents of the book should be read with intelligence, examined and judged thoughtfully before absorbing the same

'to be tasted' —read in parts/sampled

''to be swallowed'—read hastily, not with great attention

'to be chewed and digested'—read thoroughly and assimilated

'curiously'—carefully

'diligence'—consistent effort to accomplish task undertaken

'by deputy'—through another person

'arguments'—subjects

'distilled books'—books of which summaries have been made

'like common distilled waters, flashy things'—he compares synopsis of books to distilled water which is tasteless and provides no pleasure, having only momentary utility

'a full man'—a man with a developed mind and fulfilled countenance

'a ready man'—a quick and alert man with ready responses to everything

'an exact man'—a man who is precise and correct in every detail

'cunning'—skill/cleverness

'subtile'—subtle...mathematics leading to refinement of the intellect to be able to discern the slightest and finest differences or similarities

'nature philosophy deep'—natural sciences lend depth to the mind

'moral grave'—moral values lend gravity to the student

'logic and rhetoric able to contend'—by reasoning and persuasion able to debate and argue well

'Abeunt studia in mores'—Studies permeate one's character and moulds it

'stond'—obstacles, hindrance

'wit'—mind/intellect

'wrought out by fit studies'—removed or cured by suitable studies
'reins'—kidneys
'So'—similarly
'wit be wandering'—unable to concentrate, distracted
'demonstrations'—proving or solving mathematical problems
'never so little'—even a little
'schoolmen'—philosophers
'cymini sectores'—hair-splitters...i.e. they make distinctions which are so fine and subtle as would not be noticed by others
'to call up'—to recall
'receipt'—cure/remedy

1.2.7 Analysis–'Of Studies'

In this essay Bacon details the different kinds of 'studies' possible, their uses and their possibilities. He suggests that 'studies' is a multifaceted experience that finds fulfilment through its application in practical life.

At first he maintains that studies serve their purpose in giving pleasure when it is pursued in private and in the leisure of one's home. Then it finds use in decorating one's speech and conversation by displaying knowledge gained. Studies also increase one's efficiency in practical transactions by increasing a person's ability and acumen in making judgements and helping his business related work. He further adds that while experts can provide us with the particulars of a matter, advice regarding the matter as a whole is best given by learned men. In this Bacon suggests the importance of being learned and the ways in which studies impacts both a person's life and those around him.

However, he is quick to add that spending all of one's time in studies is a sign of sloth and criticizes one who makes use of his studies for ornament as he is a show off and one who only makes judgements by dint of his studies as a whimsical and eccentric person without grounding in experience. Here we see Bacon's insistence on a practical and balanced approach to studies wherein he wisely says that studies provide too much of generalized information, which finds specificity only when the knowledge derived from experience provides the grooves or contours within which the learning might find better exposition. Bacon also uses an analogy at this juncture where he compares natural abilities to the natural growth of plants which need tending and pruning to look best and in order to flourish. Studies prune and shape

the natural talents in a person and experience perfects these honed traits in him. How may studies therefore be used in perfecting a person's character? The essay by Bacon goes on to analyze and expound on this point in detail.

He says that studies do not teach one to deal with actual situations as this art comes only through observation and experience. Thus, cunning men consider studies useless, not understanding their value; simple men admire studies without knowing how to apply learning ; wise men know how to perfectly blend the spheres of studies and experience knowing the value of both in one's personal development and social skills.

Bacon then advises the student on the manner of reading. The aim is not to oppose the text and prove it false, nor to completely believe everything written, nor simply to extract ornament for conversation but to carefully examine and judge the contents of the book before absorbing them. Thus the student has to learn the art of discrimination and wise action even while studying or reading anything. He details that certain books are only to be read in parts , or in the analogy of eating that he uses—to be tasted. Other books are to be read completely but not with particular care, i.e. they are to be 'swallowed'. Still others are to be read with great attention and diligence and absorbed wholly and are as he explains, to be 'chewed and digested'. Bacon also concedes that certain books may be read through somebody else when they contain less important matter and commoner arguments such that their summaries suffice for us to learn what is in them. However he also states that such 'distilled books' have no pleasure in the drinking thereof like distilled water, bearing only functional quality without the pleasure of learning, judgement or consideration required in books of worth as described earlier.

The skills gained by different activities are referred to by Bacon here. Thus while conversation and interactions make a man alert and quick with his repartees and reactions, writing makes a man precise in his expression. Compared to these skills, reading makes a man wholly developed according to Bacon. However it is important to note that the other two skills are related to the learning derived from reading. Hence Bacon through his aphorism "Reading maketh a full man ; conference a ready man ; and writing an exact man" basically conveys once again the distilled essence of his opinion on studies and experience discussed above.

He also discusses the possibility of one who is not perfected in these experiences and skills of reading, writing and conversing. He even had advice for this imperfect situation where the person writing less needs good memory, if he converses less he needs to be quick witted by nature to make up for the lack of experience and one who reads too little needs to be very clever to appear to know what he does not.

Now he discusses the different effects of studies on people's intellect. When men study history they gain wisdom as they learn from the events of the past, poetry makes a man imaginative and creative, hence witty. Mathematics helps develop a man of refined intellect capable of making subtle distinctions. Natural philosophy adds depth to his character and ability of interrogation and reflection on the world around him. Moral studies lend him gravity and dignity and logic and rhetoric give a man ability to debate and argue with excellence. Hence studies deeply influence a man's character and abilities. That is why he had said that "Reading maketh a full man"

Any imperfection in the intellect can be corrected or cured by choosing the correct subject of study. Here too Bacon uses the analogy of diseases in the body that may be cured by the correct exercises. He gives several examples of maladies like kidney stones, disease of the lungs, stomach ailments, head disorders which may find relief in bowling, shooting, walking and riding respectively. Similarly, if a man is distracted easily, mathematics brings him concentration since if his mind wanders even a little, he has to restart his mathematical exercise. When a man is unable to make fine distinctions, philosophy cures him by its method of finding distinctions almost invisible to the ordinary eye. Finally, if a man is unable to recall arguments and ideas to prove his point, he is advised to study lawyer's cases which shall teach him both to remember as well as apply his knowledge to his arguments. Hence every defect in the mind may be cured and every individual perfected through studies. Even in this analogy, it might be noted that the value of each kind of study lies in its application in the person's everyday life.

Thus Bacon expertly leads his essay towards finding the perfect amalgamation between the seemingly separate world of life and books. Studies become the base on which experience is built and at the same time, experience renders studies useful and also guides the process of study. One without the other is useless. Both are required in the perfect functioning of the individual in his worldly affairs.

1.2.8 Summing Up

In this Unit therefore, we have learnt:

- About the development of the 'Essay' as a literary form
- The formative influences on Francis Bacon, the first major English essayist
- Following Bacon, a pragmatic approach to studies and its worth

1.2.9 Suggested Activity

One of the Learning Objectives that we had set down for this Unit was for you to analyse how relevant Bacon's essays could be in our time. If you keep in mind that Bacon was a Renaissance scholar and humanist, you can try to relate his pragmatic advice in this essay with other contemporary texts that you have studied in earlier Core Courses, on the expansive understanding of knowledge that scholars of the time held. You can, with help from your counselor, take up the following activities:

- An essay on 'Perceptions of Knowledge in Post-Renaissance England'.
- An essay on 'Understanding Doctor Faustus in the light of 'Of Studies'.
- A Project Paper on 'The Development of the English Essay'.

Unit - 3 □ Francis Bacon: Of Gardens

Structure

1.3.1 Objectives

The broad objectives of this Unit are aligned to that of the previous Unit, since for ease of your understanding, we have dedicated two separate lessons to the two essays by Francis Bacon. For all practical purposes therefore, Module 1 Units 2 and 3 are to be read as companion pieces. While in the previous Unit, we have charted the development of the 'Essay' as a literary form and acquainted you with one of the most read essays of Bacon, here you will study another piece, 'Of Gardens'. The interesting aspects about these essays are Bacon's choice of simple subjects of everyday life that are invested with a philosophical understanding, his pragmatic awareness, and the easy manner of deliberating. In all of these, you will gather some insights into the early beginnings of modernist thought that the Renaissance infused into English literature and culture.

1.3.2 Text of Gardens

GOD Almighty first planted a garden. And indeed it is the purest of human pleasures. It is the greatest refreshment to the spirits of man; without which, buildings and palaces are but gross handiworks; and a man shall ever see, that when ages grow to civility and elegancy, men come to build stately sooner than to garden finely; as if gardening were the greater perfection. I do hold it, in the royal ordering of gardens, there ought to be gardens, for all the months in the year; in which severally

things of beauty may be then in season. For December, and January, and the latter part of November, you must take such things as are green all winter: holly; ivy; bays; juniper; cypress-trees; yew; pine-apple-trees; fir-trees; rosemary; lavender; periwinkle, the white, the purple, and the blue; germander; flags; orange trees; lemon-trees; and myrtles, if they be stoved; and sweet marjoram, warm set. There followeth, for the latter part of January and February, the mezereon-tree, which then blossoms; *crocus vernus*, both the yellow and the grey; primroses, anemones; the early *tulippa*; *hyacinthus orientalis*; *chamairis*; *fritellaria*. For March, there come violets, specially the single blue, which are the earliest; the yellow daffodil; the daisy; the almond-tree in blossom; the peach-tree in blossom; the cornelian-tree in blossom; sweet-briar. In April follow the double white violet; the wallflower; the stock-gilliflower; the cowslip; flower delices, and lilies of all natures; rosemary-flowers; the *tulippa*; the double peony; the pale daffodil; the French honeysuckle; the cherry-tree in blossom; the damson and plum-trees in blossom; the white thorn in leaf; the lilac-tree. In May and June come pinks of all sorts, specially the blushpink; roses of all kinds, except the musk, which comes later; honeysuckles; strawberries; bugloss; columbine; the French marigold, *flos Africanus*; cherry-tree in fruit; ribes; figs in fruit; rasps; vineflowers; lavender in flowers; the sweet satyrian, with the white flower; *herba muscaria*; *lilium convallium*; the apple-tree in blossom. In July come gilliflowers of all varieties; musk-roses; the lime-tree in blossom; early pears and plums in fruit; jennetings, codlins. In August come plums of all sorts in fruit; pears; apricocks; berberries; filberds; musk-melons; monks-hoods, of all colors. In September come grapes; apples; poppies of all colors; peaches; melocotones; nectarines; cornelians; wardens; quinces. In October and the beginning of November come services; medlars; bullaces; roses cut or removed to come late; hollyhocks; and such like. These particulars are for the climate of London; but my meaning is perceived, that you may have *ver perpetuum*, as the place affords.

And because the breath of flowers is far sweeter in the air (where it comes and goes like the warbling of music) than in the hand, therefore nothing is more fit for that delight, than to know what be the flowers and plants that do best perfume the air. Roses, damask and red, are fast flowers of their smells; so that you may walk by a whole row of them, and find nothing of their sweetness; yea though it be in a morning's dew. Bays likewise yield no smell as they grow. Rosemary little; nor sweet marjoram. That which above all others yields the sweetest smell in the air is the violet, specially the white double violet, which comes twice a year; about the middle of April, and about Bartholomew-tide. Next to that is the musk-rose. Then the strawberry-leaves dying, which yield a most excellent cordial smell. Then the flower

of vines; it is a little dust, like the dust of a bent, which grows upon the cluster in the first coming forth. Then sweet-briar. Then wall-flowers, which are very delightful to be set under a parlor or lower chamber window. Then pinks and gilliflowers, especially the matted pink and clove gilliflower. Then the flowers of the lime-tree. Then the honeysuckles, so they be somewhat afar off. Of beanflowers I speak not, because they are field flowers. But those which perfume the air most delightfully, not passed by as the rest, but being trodden upon and crushed, are three; that is, burnet, wildthyme, and watermints. Therefore you are to set whole alleys of them, to have the pleasure when you walk or tread.

For gardens (speaking of those which are indeed prince like, as we have done of buildings), the contents ought not well to be under thirty acres of ground; and to be divided into three parts; a green in the entrance; a heath or desert in the going forth; and the main garden in the midst; besides alleys on both sides. And I like well that four acres of ground be assigned to the green; six to the heath; four and four to either side; and twelve to the main garden. The green hath two pleasures: the one, because nothing is more pleasant to the eye than green grass kept finely shorn; the other, because it will give you a fair alley in the midst, by which you may go in front upon a stately hedge, which is to enclose the garden. But because the alley will be long, and, in great heat of the year or day, you ought not to buy the shade in the garden, by going in the sun through the green, therefore you are, of either side the green, to plant a covert alley upon carpenter's work, about twelve foot in height, by which you may go in shade into the garden. As for the making of knots or figures, with divers colored earths, that they may lie under the windows of the house on that side which the garden stands, they be but toys; you may see as good sights, many times, in tarts. The garden is best to be square, encompassed on all the four sides with a stately arched hedge. The arches to be upon pillars of carpenter's work, of some ten foot high, and six foot broad; and the spaces between of the same dimension with the breadth of the arch. Over the arches let there be an entire hedge of some four foot high, framed also upon carpenter's work; and upon the upper hedge, over every arch, a little turret, with a belly, enough to receive a cage of birds: and over every space between the arches some other little figure, with broad plates of round colored glass gilt, for the sun to play upon. But this hedge I intend to be raised upon a bank, not steep, but gently slope, of some six foot, set all with flowers. Also I understand, that this square of the garden, should not be the whole breadth of the ground, but to leave on either side, ground enough for diversity of side alleys; unto which the two covert alleys of the green, may deliver you. But there must be no alleys with hedges, at either end of this great enclosure; not at the hither end, for letting your prospect upon this fair hedge from the green; nor at the

further end, for letting your prospect from the hedge, through the arches upon the heath.

For the ordering of the ground, within the great hedge, I leave it to variety of device; advising nevertheless, that whatsoever form you cast it into, first, it be not too busy, or full of work. Wherein I, for my part, do not like images cut out in juniper or other garden stuff; they be for children. Little low hedges, round, like welts, with some pretty pyramids, I like well; and in some places, fair columns upon frames of carpenter's work. I would also have the alleys, spacious and fair. You may have closer alleys, upon the side grounds, but none in the main garden. I wish also, in the very middle, a fair mount, with three ascents, and alleys, enough for four to walk abreast; which I would have to be perfect circles, without any bulwarks or embossments; and the whole mount to be thirty foot high; and some fine banqueting-house, with some chimneys neatly cast, and without too much glass.

For fountains, they are a great beauty and refreshment; but pools mar all, and make the garden unwholesome, and full of flies and frogs. Fountains I intend to be of two natures: the one that sprinkleth or spouteth water; the other a fair receipt of water, of some thirty or forty foot square, but without fish, or slime, or mud. For the first, the ornaments of images gilt, or of marble, which are in use, do well: but the main matter is so to convey the water, as it never stay, either in the bowls or in the cistern; that the water be never by rest discolored, green or red or the like; or gather any mossiness or putrefaction. Besides that, it is to be cleansed every day by the hand. Also some steps up to it, and some fine pavement about it, doth well. As for the other kind of fountain, which we may call a bathing pool, it may admit much curiosity and beauty; wherewith we will not trouble ourselves: as, that the bottom be finely paved, and with images; the sides likewise; and withal embellished with colored glass, and such things of lustre; encompassed also with fine rails of low statuas. But the main point is the same which we mentioned in the former kind of fountain; which is, that the water be in perpetual motion, fed by a water higher than the pool, and delivered into it by fair spouts, and then discharged away under ground, by some equality of bores, that it stay little. And for fine devices, of arching water without spilling, and making it rise in several forms (of feathers, drinking glasses, canopies, and the like), they be pretty things to look on, but nothing to health and sweetness.

For the heath, which was the third part of our plot, I wish it to be framed, as much as may be, to a natural wildness. Trees I would have none in it, but some thickets made only of sweet-briar and honeysuckle, and some wild vine amongst; and the ground set with violets, strawberries, and primroses. For these are sweet, and prosper in the shade. And these to be in the heath, here and there, not in any

order. I like also little heaps, in the nature of mole-hills (such as are in wild heaths), to be set, some with wild thyme; some with pinks; some with germander, that gives a good flower to the eye; some with periwinkle; some with violets; some with strawberries; some with cowslips; some with daisies; some with red roses; some with lilium convallium; some with sweet-williams red; some with bear's-foot: and the like low flowers, being withal sweet and sightly. Part of which heaps, are to be with standards of little bushes pricked upon their top, and part without. The standards to be roses; juniper; holly; berberries (but here and there, because of the smell of their blossoms); red currants; gooseberries; rosemary; bays; sweetbriar; and such like. But these standards to be kept with cutting, that they grow not out of course.

For the side grounds, you are to fill them with variety of alleys, private, to give a full shade, some of them, wheresoever the sun be. You are to frame some of them, likewise, for shelter, that when the wind blows sharp you may walk as in a gallery. And those alleys must be likewise hedged at both ends, to keep out the wind; and these closer alleys must be ever finely gravelled, and no grass, because of going wet. In many of these alleys, likewise, you are to set fruit-trees of all sorts; as well upon the walls, as in ranges. And this would be generally observed, that the borders wherein you plant your fruit-trees, be fair and large, and low, and not steep; and set with fine flowers, but thin and sparingly, lest they deceive the trees. At the end of both the side grounds, I would have a mount of some pretty height, leaving the wall of the enclosure breast high, to look abroad into the fields.

For the main garden, I do not deny, but there should be some fair alleys ranged on both sides, with fruit-trees; and some pretty tufts of fruit-trees, and arbors with seats, set in some decent order; but these to be by no means set too thick; but to leave the main garden so as it be not close, but the air open and free. For as for shade, I would have you rest upon the alleys of the side grounds, there to walk, if you be disposed, in the heat of the year or day; but to make account, that the main garden is for the more temperate parts of the year; and in the heat of summer, for the morning and the evening, or overcast days.

For aviaries, I like them not, except they be of that largeness as they may be turfed, and have living plants and bushes set in them; that the birds may have more scope, and natural nesting, and that no foulness appear in the floor of the aviary. So I have made a platform of a princely garden, partly by precept, partly by drawing, not a model, but some general lines of it; and in this I have spared for no cost. But it is nothing for great princes, that for the most part taking advice with workmen, with no less cost set their things together; and sometimes add statuas and such things for state and magnificence, but nothing to the true pleasure of a garden.

1.3.3 Detailed Annotation—'Of Gardens'

'a Garden'—a reference to the Garden of Eden
'purest'—highest/noblest
'gross'—coarse
'build stately'—construct grand and magnificent buildings
'garden finely'—lay out beautiful gardens
'hold it'—think
'royal ordering of gardens'—in the grand scheme of laying out gardens
'severally'—separately/ in each of them
'stoved'—kept warm
'warm set'—planted in a warm and sheltered place
'Lilies of all natures'—lilies of all kinds
'my meaning is perceived'—what I wanted to say is clear to the reader
'Ver pepetum'—perpetual spring
'breath'—perfume
'warbling of music'—rise and fall of sweet music
'in the hand'—when flowers are plucked
'fast flowers'—their perfumes are tightly concealed/ retained
'in a morning's dew'—when the flowers are wet with dew and fill the air with fragrance
'about Bartholomew tide'—near about the 24th of August , Saint Bartholomew's day
'a bent'—a grass
'first coming forth'—beginning of the season
'set whole alleys of them'—plant on both sides of the pathway
'contents'—area of the garden
'a green in the entrance'—a grassy plot
'to buy'—to reach
'covert alley'—covered /sheltered
'Carpenter's work'—wooden poles
'knots or figures'—garden beds designed in fanciful shapes
'toys'-trifles
'tarts'—pastries
'for the sun to play upon'—so that a dazzling effect may be produced by the reflection
'diversity of side alleys'—different types of side walks

'deliver you'—lead you
'too busy'—elaborate
'full of work'—intricate and overcrowded
'welts'—edges or borders
'closer alleys'—narrower and more sheltered alleys
'mount'—piece of raised ground
'three ascents'—three flights of steps
'bulwarks'—boundary walls
'unwholesome'—unhealthy
'spouteth'—ejects
'receipt'—receives
'rest'—stagnation
'curiosity'-ingenuity
'rails of low statuas'—railings with low statues engraved
'equality of bores'—tubes or pipes of equal diameter
'nothing to health and sweetness'—contribute nothing towards improving one's health and temperament and/or external beauty
'framed'—shaped
'natural wildness'—as though of unregulated or unplanned growth
'Part of which heaps'—some of the heaps
'standards'—like flags pricked(planted)
'walk as in a gallery'—walk protected from the wind as its a well covered path
'gravelled'—gravel is a mixture of coarse sand and powdered stone
'lest they deceive the trees'—so that they do not starve the trees by taking away their nourishment
'arbours'—bowers
'so as it be not close'—so that it is not congested
'health of the year or day'—i.e. when the weather is hot and unpleasant—either in summer or in the noon
'more temperate parts of the year'—periods when the weather is more pleasant
'turfed'—overgrown with grass
'a platform of a princely garden'—a design or sketch on which a magnificent garden may be built
'taking advice with'—consulting
'statuas'—statues/figurines
'state and magnificence'—grandeur and splendor

1.3.4 Analysis—'Of Gardens'

In the earlier essay we had seen Bacon's attention to detailing different facets of the activity or contents of study. However that detailing is nothing compared to his efforts in his essay 'Of Gardens' where he preoccupies himself with describing the finer details of how the perfect garden of his imagination, the princely garden must look. It displays his knowledge of flowers, their qualities as well as a fine aesthetic sense of quantity and arrangement to create the perfect garden.

He starts with a reference to the Garden of Eden probably as a signifier as the best possible garden that can ever be planted or created. He therefore calls it the 'purest' of human pleasures, seeing it as one of the nobler forms of refreshment for human beings. The art of creating a garden, according to Bacon, requires greater talent and sophistication than constructing a building. Hence Bacon sets the tone for his act of creating the perfect garden through directions in the essay which recommend the activities as worthy of the time of both the reader and the writer.

Bacon insists that in the laying out of a garden on a grand scale such as a royal garden, it should be so planned that there are blooms for every time of the year. This would create great variety providing pleasure to the individual spending time in the garden. He then goes on to detail the possible flowering plants that may be selected as representative of every month of the year. His range of knowledge about flowers and seasons is quite staggering and this part of the essay might make for tedious reading for someone not much interested in the names of so many flowers. He clarifies that this set of examples are meant only for the climate of London thereby indicating that his knowledge extends beyond what is expressed and hopes that he has been able to clarify his aim, which is to keep this garden in a state of perpetual spring.

He continues to describe all the sweetest smelling flowers, conjecturing that the fragrance of flowers in better enjoyed when it spreads in the air than when it is plucked. He differentiates between flowers like roses and damask which withhold their perfume till you deeply inhale their scent and the white double violet or the musk rose which fills the air with its sweetness. There are also flowers like the wild thyme and watermints which perfume the air when they are crushed and trod upon. He offers this information to the avid gardener so that he may be able to plan the planting of flowers in his garden in order to give the greatest pleasure to the visitor walking through the alleys.

The portions of the garden as it should be in Bacon's vision are then described. The total area should not be below thirty acres according to him. There are three

main spaces that he enunciates: the grassy plot that is to be the entrance, a heath or desert in the middle and finally the main garden. He suggests that the green at the entrance is important because it is pleasing to the eye and it prepares the way for the main garden by creating a fair alley till the hedge of the enclosed garden. Therein he realizes that the alley to the garden is significant and hence advises that it should be a covered alley so that it is a comfortable walk for the visitor. He also states that gardens are best if the garden beds are square , not approving of the fancy shapes of beds often made for viewing pleasure under the windows of the house where the garden stands. He provides many details of ways in which the alley might be made most pleasurable and beautiful.

Then he lends attention to decorating the main great hedge which shall enclose the garden. He advises that it be not too elaborate or overcrowded with design since he thinks of such ornamentation as best appreciated by children alone. He also envisages a mount in the middle with ascending steps where some fine dining spaces with chimneys might be located to add to the pleasures of the garden.

Bacon describes the possible kinds of fountains that may adorn such a garden seeing that they create great beauty unlike pools which make the garden unhealthy because of their stagnant water. Hence he argues that fountains which keep the water in perpetual motion are better suited for the purposes of a garden since it does not fester flies and frogs. Of course even this fountain has to be cleaned regularly to prevent any discolouration of the water.

The heath which comprised the intermediate space between the green and the garden, is proposed by Bacon as one of natural wildness having the appearance of unregulated growth. He suggests that thickets of sweet briar and honeysuckle serve best here, when placed in a random order. He again gives us a list of flowering plants to serve as heaps and flowers to serve as flag like standards on those heaps. Overall the intended effect seems to be to create a contrast between the randomness of the heath and the order in the garden.

The sidewalks are imagined in detail as providing shelter from the sharp wind and the heat of the day and of summer too. Fruit trees might create these alleys with gravelled pathways. That his knowledge of gardening is not simply learnt from books can be understood from the minor aspects of his descriptions. For example when he writes about the planting of fruit trees in the alley, he suggests that the borders be large and fine flowers planted sparingly so that they do not starve the trees by absorbing all the nourishment. These little remarks make the essay more than simply a dictionary of flower names. Bacon further concedes that the central garden is most

suitable for enjoyment in temperate weather both in terms of the day and the year. Hence the alleys and sidewalks with their arbour seats become important spaces providing relief to the visitor in hot or windy weather. He states that he does not like aviaries much since they might dirty the floor of the garden. Aviaries might be best if they are overgrown with grass and there is scope for the birds to fly about, so large is the area allotted for them.

Bacon concludes by recognizing that his plan of the perfect garden has been made without keeping any constraints of cost in mind since he envisages this to be a garden for a prince. Usually princes consult workmen in creating their gardens without any attention to the costs thereof and decorate it with many statues and figurines as well. However Bacon claims that those statues do not contribute to the true pleasure of a garden. Therefore he obliquely seems to state that his envisioned garden provides the noblest and highest pleasure of the garden which he had spoken of in the introduction to this essay. He also concedes that his is more of a collation of suggestions on general principles than a model to be followed. It may be noted that through the essay, he is able to take on the persona of both the creator of the garden as well as a visitor on its premises. He approaches the structure from all points of view, thinking of all possible pleasures to be derived from it. We might also like to read this essay with the earlier one and see him displaying all the qualities of a well studied man honed by experience. While many of the facts may be derived from the common place book kept by him, and the pleasure in writing this essay lies in collating the same, it becomes an essay when it organizes information with the skills derived from experience and a genuine appreciation of gardens and their beauty, else it would have been an unrealistic account. Also we should note the use of terms like 'I wished' or 'I like' suggesting the personal element in this essay where he gives free reign to his imagination of how he would create a garden without any monetary constraints. The essay then becomes a creative and fulfilling exercise for the writer. For the reader, it is a guide and a wealth of information on ways of fashioning a garden which refreshes and pleases.

1.3.5 Bacon's Essays–Structure and Style

For obvious reasons, we shall in this section, talk about the structure and style of Bacon's Essays with particular reference to the two texts that have been taken up in the two consecutive Units. For matching this with the general trend of his essays, you may refer to the Introduction in Module 1 Unit 2 where Bacon's style of writing has been discussed in detail. With specific reference to the two selected essays, we

may note that his style of writing is crisp and Senecan avoiding excessive ornamentation simply for the sake of display. His style is in keeping with his content, because in both the essays we see him disliking ostentatious display for its own sake. In 'Of Studies' , he disapproves of study simply for adorning one's speech and in 'Of Gardens' he expresses dislike for excessive ornamentation of the hedges, preferring clean, neat arrangements seeing decorative flower bed patterns as trifles. Hence his writing too reflects this neatness and we always see him as being aware of the direction his argument is taking.

The structure of the essays reveals a mind which naturally finds cohesion and organization in expression. The thoughts are never scattered or disjointed but form a composite whole, where all the parts of the essay lead to the conclusion. The introductory thought finds balance and restatement in the conclusion. The essays are very well wrought together from his own private collections of words, phrases and aphorisms. However, it is not limited by that and shows an original mind capable of directing his thoughts and opinions towards cogent conclusions.

1.3.6 Summing Up

The two essays discussed in these 2 Units show us Bacon's style of interrogating subjects chosen for analysis in his preferred probative manner of delivering knowledge. However at the same time, we might like to consider the finesse of argument through which he convinces the reader as well. While the aphorisms in 'Of studies' certainly encourage the mind to turn it about and think of examples related to one's own reading , it also keeps explaining the aphorisms in order to impress the point quite deeply. In 'Of gardens', the reference to different kinds of flowers and the qualities they possess becomes a medium for finally convincing the reader of the choice of the same in the manner favoured by the writer. Hence does the writing not tilt towards the 'magistral' too? Perhaps we might see his essays as grappling between the two modes of dissemination of knowledge even as they become yet another avenue for this scientific temper to find expression and exposition. Both the essays reveal a mind that debates every possibility before arriving at a conclusion as well as one which knows how to organize information and rhetoric in order to lead to the conclusion he favours. We can imagine the delight of the Renaissance reader in discovering the Bacon's 'method' and unique, crisp style of expression not requiring ornamentation for providing pleasure to the reader.

1.3.7 Comprehension Exercises (Units-2 & 3)

Long Answer Type Questions:

1. Discuss Francis Bacon's style of enquiry and dissemination with respect to the essays in your syllabus.
2. Examine the development of the form of the essay with special reference to Francis Bacon and his essays.
3. Are Bacon's essays personal utterances? Reflect with reference to the essays studied by you.

Medium Length Answers Type Questions:

1. What are the possible influences on Bacon's writing? Discuss.
2. How far do Bacon's philosophical and scientific writings influence the style and content of his essays?
3. "GOD Almighty first planted a garden. And indeed it is the purest of human pleasures. It is the greatest refreshment to the spirits of man" —Examine the significance of this opening line. Why do you think Bacon utilizes this proposition as a starting point of his essay?
4. "Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man."—Explain with reference to context.

Short Answer Type Questions:

1. Explain with reference to the context the following line:

   "Crafty men contemn studies, simple men admire them, and wise men use them;".
2. Comment on the significance of the observation "For fountains, they are a great beauty and refreshment; but pools mar all, and make the garden unwholesome, and full of flies and frogs".

1.3.8 Suggested Reading (Units-2 & 3)

Bacon, Francis. *Bacon's Essays*. Indo-European Pub., 2010.

Chaudhuri, Sukanta. *Infirm Glory*. Paul Press, 2006.

Thampi, G. B. Mohan (Ed). *Reflections*. Dorling Kindersley India, 2012.

Unit - 4 □ The English *Bible* – The Authorized Version of 1611

Structure

1.4.1 Objectives

The objectives of this Unit are to acquaint learners with the King James *Bible* or the Authorized Version as it is also known as. Further, the Unit should help learners to see the seminal text in the context of the numerous translations that were undertaken before the mentioned one took shape. Third, this Unit should enable learners to grasp the essential features of the said book and to understand the different kinds of influence that it has exerted on English culture, morals, language and literature.

1.4.2 Introduction

A knowledge of the *Bible* stands the student of English language and literature in good stead as it exercises a foundational influence on the latter disciplines having shaped the same in unmistakable ways. From structure, grammar, idiom and rhythm to tone the **Authorized Version** is invaluable in the scope and reach of its influence. While several translations preceded it, contributing to it in different ways and several succeeded it, the **Authorized Version** occupies a unique position in the history of Bible translations.

It will probably not be far off the mark to suggest that this seminal version became something of a transitional or bridge book which linked the earlier and later translations, deriving as it did from earlier translations and inspiring new ones. Moreover, as has been pointed out in a later section of this Unit. The linguistic and literary history of the **Authorized Version** is closely associated with the development of English prose. Hence, apart from its theological relevance the **Authorized Version** enjoys immense historical, cultural, linguistic and literary significance. It has also acquired the status of a standard reference version, a reliable source of Biblical information, a veritable encyclopedia of facts and figures and acceptability across denominations.

1.4.3 History of Bible Writing (Translation) in English

The King James Version of the *Bible*, as you must be aware of by now, was also known as the Authorized Version. It is the third English translation of the *Holy Bible*, the first having been the *Great Bible* commissioned in the reign of King Henry the VIII, and the second having been the *Bishop's Bible* in 1568. In 1525 William Tyndale, a contemporary of Martin Luther began a translation of the New Testament. He worked on this translation over the next decade, revising it considerably and even beginning work on his translation of the Old Testament. Tyndale's translation was the first **printed** *Bible* in English and despite its limitations it has remained the basic, though unacknowledged model for subsequent translations of the times.

The *Great Bible,* so called because of its size, was the first **authorized** edition of the English *Bible* having been commissioned by Henry the VIII to be read aloud in church. Prepared by Myles Coverdale under the direction of Lord Thomas Cromwell, Secretary to King Henry the VIII, this version drew on the Tyndale *Bible* eliminating the parts seen to be objectionable, using with slight adaptation the New Testament and translating the parts of the Old Testament that William Tyndale had left incomplete. It was published in 1539 and ordained for use in churches. A second edition, with a preface by Archbishop Thomas Cranmer and usually known as Cranmer's *Bible* was published in 1540.

The Bishop's *Bible* was brought out at the instance of the Church of England which felt that the Great *Bible* was deficient in several aspects and hence a more comprehensive and authentic translation was required. Published in 1658 it was considerably revised in 1672 and this revised version of the Bishop's *Bible* was adopted as the fundamental source for the Authorized King James Version which was begun in 1604 and completed by 1611. It was printed by Robert Barker, the King's Printer.

King James I of England guided the Anglican and Puritan clerics on the adoption of a balanced theological approach maintaining, among other things, the belief in the Episcopal nature of the Church of England and an 'ordained clergy', that is, the sacramental character of the holy order that vests authority onto a bishop, priest or deacon. Most importantly the King James *Bible* is a work that sought to capture in English the meanings of the content in the original languages in which the Bible had been composed, namely the Hebrew of the Old Testament, the Greek of the New Testament, and Aramaic wherever it was used. The name *King James Bible* however, was not used till 1797 when Charles Butler used it in his work *Horae Biblicae*. Referring to the **Authorized Version** of the Bible George Sampson in his *The Concise Cambridge History of English Literature* maintains "The greatest of all translations is the *English Bible*. It is even more than that: it is the greatest of English books, the first of English classics, the source of the greatest influence on English character and speech".

The Latin Vulgate, translated from the Hebrew and Aramaic by Jerome between the years 382 and 405 CE remained the standard version of the Holy Book for Catholics for over 1500 years. It differs slightly from the King James Version in that it includes the Apocrypha. Until 1450 when Gutenberg first printed the Vulgate copies of the same were rare and hard to get. It was in the 14th and 15th centuries that the Bible was translated into the modern languages in the face of Episcopal resistance.

1.4.4 The Authorized Version of 1611—Salient Aspects

The King James' Version (KJV) or the *King James' Bible* (KJB), also known as the Authorized Version was commissioned in 1604 and published in 1611 for the Church of England. It is called the **"Authorized Version"** because it was commissioned and sponsored by King James I who was the reigning monarch at the time. In the absence of a uniform or agreed English version the king ordered the new translation which would be acceptable across denominational divides. It belongs to a distinguished tradition of *Bible* translation being the third translation of the *Bible* into English, the two earlier ones having been the *Great Bible* commissioned in the reign of King Henry VIII (1536) and the *Bishops' Bible* commissioned in the reign of Queen Elizabeth I (1568). Since the two earlier translations which, too had been officially commissioned during the reigns of arguably two of the most powerful and well-known monarchs in English history, how did the King James' version of the *Bible* come to acquire the significance of almost a variorum edition implied in the name the **Authorized Version**?

This was probably because the mammoth task of translation was undertaken through a more consensual mode. King James convened the Hampton Court Conference where the proposed version was conceived by eminent clerics and theological scholars of the day, particularly in response to the flaws or deficiencies in the existing versions. Four Puritan leaders met the king in the presence of Anglican divines and argued for the need of a standard translation which would be the closest transliteration of God's Word as believed by Christian people. King James liked the idea and authorized the work of the proposed translation.

The task of translation was entrusted to six panels of translators all of whom were leading Biblical scholars thereby ensuring a comprehensiveness of application which lent greater credence to the exercise. Further, the historical popularity enjoyed by it proves its acceptability across the Protestant churches except for certain portions such as the *Book of Psalms* and brief passages in the *Book of Common Prayer* of the Church of England. In the 18th century the Authorized Version took precedence over the Latin Vulgate replacing it in popularity and by the beginning of the 19th century, with advances in printing technology the *Bible* became the most widely printed book in the world. The 'standard text' of 1769 was created through the extensive editing of Benjamin Blayney in Oxford which omitted the "Apocrypha" and today the **Authorized Version** is synonymous with this text.

The Bible as understood by Christians basically stands for the word of God as revealed through the prophets and the first missionaries. The Old Testament tells the story of God's chosen people, the Hebrews while the New Testament narrates the events pertaining to the life of Jesus through the four Gospels along with the fourteen letters of St. Paul written to some of the fledgling Christian churches and communities.

The first five books of the Old Testament, namely Genesis; Exodus; Leviticus; Numbers and Deuteronomy are together called the **Pentateuch** and their authorship in certain circles of Biblical scholarship has been attributed to Moses, though this is debated. Some of the succeeding books including Judges; Samuel I & II; Kings I & II; Chronicles I & II; Ezra; Nehemiah and the Book of Job mainly narrate the history of Israel through the centuries. The Book of Psalms situated in the Old Testament consists of 150 poems divided into 5 sections. The Psalms recount Israel's history and God's covenant promises. This book is followed by Proverbs which is succeeded by Ecclesiastes. This is followed by the prophetical books –Isaiah; Jeremiah; Lamentations (attributed to Jeremiah); Ezekiel; Daniel; Hosea; Joel; Amos, Obadiah; Jonah, Micah; Nahum; Habbukuk, Zephaniah; Haggai; Zechariah and Malachi.

The New Testament which begins with the four Gospels of the saints Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are followed by the Acts of the Apostles describing the struggles

of St. Paul. Paul's letters to the Romans, Corinthians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians, Timothy, Titus, Hebrews, James, Peter and John are succeeded by Revelation, the last book of the Bible.

The 80 books of the King James Version include 39 books of the Old Testament, an inter-testamental section containing 14 books of what Protestants consider the Apocrypha, and the 27 books of the New Testament. In common with most other translations of the period, the New Testament was translated from Greek, the Old Testament from Hebrew and Aramaic, and the Apocrypha from Greek and Latin.

When this Bible was translated, the title page was printed basically as one finds it today in Cambridge Bibles:

THE
HOLY BIBLE
CONTAINING THE
OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS

TRANSLATED OUT OF THE ORIGINAL TONGUES:
AND WITH THE FORMER TRANSLATIONS
DILIGENTLY COMPARED AND REVISED
BY HIS MAJESTY'S SPECIAL COMMAND
APPOINTED TO BE READ IN CHURCHES

1.4.5 Significance of the Authorized Version (Literary, Linguistic and Theological)

The significance of the **Authorized Version** of the *Bible* is considerable, consisting mainly in its far-reaching influences across disciplines, literatures, languages and cultures. Its influence on the English language, literature and culture, in particular is noteworthy. Variously described as the most influential book in the world, the most published title in printing history and the most celebrated book in the English-speaking world the *Bible* enjoys an unparalleled importance in terms of reach and influence.

It has to be remembered that the King James' Version is a translation of a collection of books composed over time by different authors in different languages. Hence, the source-text itself is far from homogenous, being a compendium of numerous literary genres in various languages reflecting distinct historical positions, social

ideas and cultural perspectives. This diversity of the original material can prove to be very challenging to translators who need to, perforce adopt a pluralistic technique in order to do justice to the source-text.

❖ **Linguistic Influence**

The commission to the translators of the **Authorized Version** among other directives was to produce a *Bible* that would be dignified and resonant in public reading. Its diction consequently tends to the Latinate, not least because the translators, all extremely erudite men, were perfectly at ease in Latin composition/translation, and this sense of being at home in that language is reflected in the cast of the prose. Also, since one of the royal instructions was not to use marginal notes for English words, terms and expressions derived from earlier versions the translators preferred to use the older Latin words already in use rather than their English substitutes without any explanatory marginalia. Thus, both natural proficiency and academic exigency played their part in the lexical quality of the said book.

The Bible has, undoubtedly contributed significantly to the development of the English language. As George Sainsbury remarks, "There is no better English anywhere than the English of the Bible." Edmund Gosse opines, "Not a native author but owes something of his melody and his charm to the echo of those Biblical accents which were the first fragments of purely classical English to attract his admiration in childhood." Such testimonies bear out the foundational and pervasive influence of the *Bible*, in general, and the **Authorized Version**, in particular on the evolution of English prose.

The introduction of the printing press into England in 1470 and the production of the King James *Bible* in 1611 were two events which contributed phenomenally to the development of English prose. It is no exaggeration to say that what Shakespeare did for poetry and drama; the King James *Bible* did for prose. English prose was undergoing a noticeable evolution in the 15th and 16th centuries marking the transition from Medieval to Elizabethan English. In contrast to the tremendous enhancement of its vocabulary, the grammatical structure of English underwent relatively few changes in the sixteenth century. Sometime in the last part of the century, a shift in the pronunciation of long vowels settled the pronunciation of English close to what it is today. During the Elizabethan period, Latin gradually gave way to English as the language of learning, and English prose finally achieved its maturity.

According to James Hedges in his essay "The Influence of the King James Bible on English Literature" the KJV borrows 83 percent of the New Testament and 79 percent of the Old Testament from Tyndale's 1530s translations, perpetuating

vocabulary and sentence patterns already nearly a century old. This possibly accounts for the vivacity of the vernacular which permeates the diction of the Authorized Version.

Compton-Rickett points out, "The influence of the Bible is two-fold – there is the rhetorical influence of the Old Testament and the conversational influence of the new. It has both the thematic and the stylistic influence." The two Testaments, written in different languages and during separate periods of history naturally employ stylistic registers which are at considerable variance from each other. The altogether more ritualistic, grave and somewhat heavy style of the Old Testament is naturally different from the tone of immediacy, even intimacy found in the Gospels documenting the Messianic birth and Paul's letters to the earliest churches.

The *King James Bible* has enriched the English vocabulary with sonorous phrases such as, 'on the sweat of thy brow', 'thou shall eat thy bread', 'clear as crystal', 'a broken read' and many more. These phrases have become part and parcel of our day to day English. Thus, the Bible has contributed immensely to the shaping of English language and style. In the view of David Crystal and other noted scholars the *Bible* has spawned 257 idioms in the English language including common ones such as "feet of clay,' "thorn in the side," "fly in the ointment," "lamb to the slaughter" and "see eye to eye," thereby informing the very tissue of the English language.

By the 19th century, F.W. Faber could say of the **Authorized Version**, "It lives on the ear, like music that can never be forgotten, like the sound of church bells, which the convert hardly knows how he can forgo."

❖ Literary Influence

The Old Testament, broadly speaking, contains three literary genres, namely narrative, poetry and prophecy. These species are crossed with other modes as for example, the narratives often have an epical quality and the poetry is chiefly lyrical. The prophetical books are variously intermingled with proverbial and poetic strains. In fact, both the Testaments are rich in proverbial literature consisting of pithy expressions of wisdom.

The Psalms of the **Authorized Version** contains some of the most beautiful poetry in the language; the Book of Revelation is rich in mystical symbolism lending itself to literary borrowings; the stories of Adam and Eve and the Fall of Man, Cain and Abel; Noah's Ark and the Flood; the Tower of Babel; Moses and the Parting of the Red Sea; David and Goliath and Samson and Delilah among others in the Old Testament are paradigmatic and foundational narratives which find a liberal echo in Western literature; the Gospels in their repetitive parallelism may almost be seen as

Modernist in their overlapping recounting of an event (the birth of Christ) from slightly different perspectives; and finally the rhythm that informs Biblical prose breathing life into the words is the kind that enlivens the greatest literature. A heterogeneous work, universal in orientation and scope and itself informed with pronounced literary elements cannot fail but imbue the various national traditions of literature, particularly of the English-speaking world with its primordial and prototypical qualities.

The literary influence exerted by the *English Bible* on both sides of the Atlantic is, thus both thematic and stylistic. While poets and writers down the ages drew inspiration from Scriptural themes they were, at the same time, influenced by the style of the iconic translation under discussion. In the 16th century apart from William Shakespeare Sir Thomas Browne in his *Religio Medici*, Robert Burton in his *Anatomy of Melancholy* and Jeremy Taylor in his various writings were deeply influenced by the **Authorized Version**. In the 17th century John Milton, John Bunyan and the Metaphysical poets who wrote religious verse were all indebted to the same source-text. The 18th century writers, not excepting the most famous ones such as John Dryden, Alexander Pope, Joseph Addison and Jonathan Swift were all inevitably influenced by this seminal encyclopedia which contributed variously to their distinctive elements of style. Thomas Carlyle and John Ruskin, among others in the 19th century were copious in their use of Biblical quotations. The typical cadences of Biblical language are evident in some of the stories by Oscar Wilde, as well.

According to George Sampson in *The Concise Cambridge History of English Literature*, since "Hebrew has no philosophical or scientific vocabulary nearly every word presents a concrete meaning clearly visible through a figurative use." He goes on to add, "Such a language is the very medium of poetry." Sampson further clarifies that the ancient writers were close to nature without any intervening distractions. He says, "Not only were their words simple and concrete, the structure of their sentences was simple...their poetry was measured, not by feet, as in ancient Latin and Greek, but by word-accents, as in the most ancient poetry of many nations."

This simplicity and directness of expression was, to some extent captured by the translators of the **Authorized Version** in their vividness of imagery and powerful rhythmic effects. As Sampson elaborates, the original Hebrew writers used a principle of "parallelism" whereby they sought to embellish a statement through repetition, supplement or antithesis which again was replicated by the Tudor translators in their rhetorical resonances. Also, the translators were influenced by Tyndale's version and followed his lead in maintaining simplicity, clarity and directness of expression.

The four main features of Biblical prose identified by Sampson namely universality of interest; vividness of language; simplicity of structure and pronounced patterns of rhythm were sought to be replicated by the 16th century English translators who were richly equipped and eminently qualified for the same. As James Hedges points out so pertinently, "From Bunyan to Beckett, from Milton to Morrison, the influence of the KJV broods over the corpus of literature in English, infusing its richness of texture, familiarity of phrasing, fund of imagery, force of simplicity into the very texture of our cultural heritage and the products of our permeated imaginations."

❖ **Theological Influence**

John Richard Green, in his *History of the English People*, speaking of those early days of translation, says: "The Bible was the one book which was familiar to every Englishman; the whole moral effect which is produced now-a-days by the religious newspaper, the tract, the essay, the missionary report, the sermon, was then produced by the Bible alone; and its effect in this way, however dispassionately we examine it, was simply amazing. .... All the prose literature of England, save the forgotten tracts of Wycliffe, has grown up since the translation of the Scriptures by Tyndale and Coverdale." The King James *Bible* which was deeply indebted to Tyndale soon replaced the earlier translations in popularity and its influence on both lay readers and clerics became indisputable.

Preachers and theologians from the 16th century onwards such as Jeremy Taylor, Isaac Barrows, Richard Baxter, John Howe and Robert South were deeply influenced by the *Bible* even as writers of hymns and religious lyrics such as Thomas Ken, Robert Herrick, George Herbert and others undoubtedly drew from the same source. While scientists such as Isaac Newton and Ralph Cudworth combined a reverence for the abstract divine with their devotion to intellectual reason philosophers such as John Locke believed in the essentially tolerant attitude of the Church and could pen a work such as *The Reasonableness of Christianity as Delineated in the Scriptures.*

In the 16th century through the competing colloquia of intellectual and artistic expressions the Bible was the central text from which the members of Western Christendom drew their moral bearings. It was strong enough to withstand the sensually disorienting challenges of Renaissance art and culture with its anthropomorphic emphasis aesthetically mediated. In 17th century England the religious tone, temper and outlook ensured a deeper, if not greater engagement with the *Bible*. With religious movements polarizing the nation and the increasing influence of the Puritans the *Bible* acquired a referential status quite unlike anything observed in previous ages. For the Puritan reformers the Bible was the only source of doctrinal sustenance and

anything beyond it was suspect. They relied on a literal interpretation of the *Bible* applying its tenets to judicial and civic administration.

Theologically, the *King James Bible* was important for its structural choices and its reasoned policy of inclusion/exclusion of material. A Scriptural document of the magnitude of the *Bible* which has been written by many authors over centuries and is part prophecy, part history and part literature will naturally acquire additions, variations, interpolations and accretions of various hues. Modern versions of the Bible accept this structure except for the Protestant elimination of the Apocrypha.

1.4.6 Summing Up

It is clear from the afore-mentioned discussion that the **Authorized Version** of the *Bible* is a triumph of translation to the extent possible. Keeping in mind the vastness and heterogeneity of the source material it is indeed a commendable achievement. We are dealing with two basic points here – the *Bible* and the translation in question, that is the **Authorized Version**. It is necessary to learn about this important translation of a book that till recent times was at the centre of the western Christian/moral world, encompassing as it does almost all the humanistic and literary disciplines and genres known to one.

The importance of this translation derives partly from the age in which it was accomplished – a time of beginnings and endings, of upheaval and consolidation and widespread linguistic changes. It came to not only reflect and embody these changes but was an active agent in the transformation of the English language, modernizing its grammar and syntax, promoting a recognizable style and bestowing a figurative density that vivifies the language to this day.

Possibly because of these abiding gifts the **Authorized Version** continues to enjoy relevance even today despite the preponderance of several newer and contemporary versions such as the New English Bible, the New International Version (NIV) and the New American Standard Bible.

1.4.7 Comprehension Exercises

Long Answer Type Questions:

1. Give an account of the *Bible* translations which preceded the **Authorized Version.**
2. Write a brief essay on the chief features of the *King James Bible*.

3. Comment on the factors which made the *Bible* the most-printed book in publishing history.

Medium Length Answers Type Questions:

1. Comment on the influence of the **Authorized Version** on the English language.
2. Write a note on the influence of the *King James Bible* on English literature.
3. Provide a summary of the theological aspects of the *King James Bible*.
4. Which factors account for the complexity and heterogeneity of the **Authorized Version**?

Short Answer Type Questions:

1. What was the significance of the Hampton Court Conference?
2. To which earlier translator does the Authorized Version owe a debt?
3. Who was the translator of the *Great Bible*?
4. Mention any two important religious English literary works which draws heavily on the *Bible*.
5. Mention any four common idioms that may trace their roots to the *King James Bible*.

1.4.8 Suggested Reading

Barton, John. *A History of the Bible*, Viking, 2019.

Bellinger, W.H. (Jr). *Introducing Old Testament Theology*, Baker Publishing Group, 2022.

Brown, Raymond. E. *Introduction to the New Testament,* Yale University Press, 2016.

Hall, Isaac Hollister. *The Revised New Testament and History of Revisions.* Hubbard Bros., 1881.

Unit - 5 □ 'Sermon on the Mount' from the *Bible*, New Testament: Gospel of St. Matthew, Chapters 5, 6 &7

Structure

1.5.1 Objectives

In continuation of the previous unit, here we will introduce you to a specific textual portion from the Bible. The objective is to enable you to see for yourselves how the Biblical text becomes in itself, an object of literary discourse.

1.5.2 Introduction

The *Bible*, as you now know, is not just the religious text for the Christians. It has since time immemorial, been a great treasure house of literature in the form of myths, stories and parables, and of course instrumental in shaping a culture. These are things we have discussed in the previous Unit. And yet, to repeat the obvious,

as students of English literature, the *Bible* is thus important for you not so much as a religious text as it is to be seen as a kind of source book in a literary-cultural sense. One question that should come to your mind before you proceed with this Unit is, why if post-Renaissance England saw a huge rise of secular literature of all forms, did the *Bible* as a text assume such importance? We are sure that in your further acquaintance with English literature, this will become an interesting area of interrogation. For now, the present Unit will focus on select portions of the Bible as a text, and this is in continuity with Unit 4 where we have discussed the spate of *Bible* translations into English in contemporary England.

1.5.3 Brief Discussion on the four Gospels of the new Testament

The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John written in the first century AD from the fiftieth year onwards, were of several gospels accepted in the New Testament and are hence, considered to be the canonical gospels. These are four narratives which deal with the birth, life, teachings, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The word 'gospel' means "good news" accounts or narratives. Regarding the genre of the gospels the consensus among scholars is that they belong to a type of ancient biography.

There are no detailed records of the life and teachings of Jesus. Paul's letters and the gospels are the earliest material available, and the primary sources for our knowledge of Jesus. However, as the meaning of the word 'gospel' and the first word in Mark's narrative implies these accounts are not objective reports but the propagation of certain beliefs which the writers wished to convince their readers of. Luke in 1:4 articulates it thus: "That you may know the truth concerning the things of which you have been informed." As these gospels were written at different times and under varying circumstances they naturally differ in terms of details. The first three as they traditionally appear in the Christian Scriptures are Matthew, Mark and Luke and they have considerable material in common. Each of the four gospels differs in point of detail and in embodying the account in a unique mould.

"Each of these writings was very early associated with the name of a disciple of Jesus or with someone closely connected with the apostles. The first and fourth gospels (as they are placed in the New Testament) give no internal indication of authorship but have been associated from the early days of the church's life with two disciples of Jesus: Matthew and John. Analogously, the second and third gospels

have been accepted as the work of companions of the apostles: Mark, who is associated with Peter (1 Pet. 5:13), and Luke, who is mentioned as a coworker in letters attributed to Paul (Philem. 24; 2 Tim. 4:11)."[4]

1.5.4 Summary of the Gospel of St. Matthew

While it cannot be conclusively proved that the apostle Matthew is the author of this Book it is generally assumed by Biblical scholars to be so. As recorded in the Bible, Matthew, also called Levi at times, used to collect taxes and one day when Jesus asked him to follow him, he did so. Mark 2:4-5 records how Matthew held a banquet in his house to which he had invited his tax-collector friends thereby advancing the theory that it was indeed the apostle who was the author.

The main message in this Book is that Jesus of Nazareth was the true king of the Jews, the Messiah whose coming had been prophesied by the prophets of the Old Testament and who would institute the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. The expression "Kingdom of Heaven" has been used over 30 times in this Gospel, thus proving the centrality of its significance to the larger pattern of thought and teachings to be found here.

Mainly intended for a Jewish readership, the Gospel of Matthew strives to emphasize the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies. In its exploration of issues related to Judaism it constitutes an appropriate transition from the Old to the New Testament. The book is divided into seven segments with an introduction describing Jesus' miraculous birth and the beginning of his ministry and an end dealing with the Last Supper, Jesus' trial and crucifixion and resurrection and the middle portion being occupied by five structurally parallel sections each dwelling on the miracles and actions performed by Jesus and ending with a long sermon preached by him. The mingling of narrative and discourse thus achieved is unusual and generally not found in the other gospels.

1.5.5 Text of the 'Sermon on the Mount'

MATTHEW 5-7 (King James Version)

- **Chapter: 5**

  [1]And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:

[2]And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,

[3]Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

[4]Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

[5]Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

[6]Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

[7]Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

[8]Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

[9]Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

[10]Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

[11]Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

[12]Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

[13]Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

[14]Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

[15]Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

[16]Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

[17]Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

[18]For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

[19]Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

[20]For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

[21]Ye have heard that it was said of them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgement.

[22]But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgement: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

[23]Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;

[24]Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

[25]Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.

[26]Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

[27]Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:

[28]But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

[29]And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

[30]And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

[31]It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:

[32]But I say unto you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.

[33]Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:

[34]But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne:

[35]Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King.

[36]Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.

[37]But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

[38]Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:

[39]But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

[40]And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.

[41]And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

[42]Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

[43]Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.

[44]But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

[45]That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

[46]For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?

[47]And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?

[48]Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

❖ **Chapter: 6**

[1]Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.

[2]Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

[3]But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:

[4]That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.

[5]And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

[6]But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

[7]But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

[8]Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

[9]After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

[10]Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

[11]Give us this day our daily bread.

[12]And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

[13]And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

[14]For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:

[15]But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

[16]Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

[17]But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face;

[18]That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

[19]Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

[20]But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

[21]For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

[22]The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

[23]But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!

[24]No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

[25]Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

[26]Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

[27]Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

[28]And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

[29]And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

[30]Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

[31]Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

[32](For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

[33]But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

[34]Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

❖ **Chapter:** 7

[1]Judge not, that ye be not judged.

[2]For with what judgement ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

[3]And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

[4]Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?

[5]Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

[6]Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

[7]Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:

[8]For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

[9]Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?

[10]Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?

[11]If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

[12]Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

[13]Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

[14]Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

[15]Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

[16]Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

[17]Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

[18]A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

[19]Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

[20]Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

[21]Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

[22]Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

[23]And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

[24]Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

[25]And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

[26]And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

[27]And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

[28]And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine:

[29]For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

1.5.6 The five Specific Discourses by Jesus in the 'Gospel of Matthew'

After going through the text we shall now move on to a consideration of the five specific discourses by Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew. These are the Sermon on the Mount; the Missionary Discourse; the Parabolic Discourse; the Discourse on the Church and the Discourse on End Times. Each of these discourses has a shorter parallel in the Gospel of Mark or Luke.

The first discourse in the Gospel of Matthew is called the Sermon on the Mount. This was delivered in Galilee relatively early in Jesus' ministry of preaching after his baptism by John the Baptist. Containing the Beatitudes[5], the Lord's Prayer along with several famous teachings this section is generally regarded as bearing the central

tenets of Christian discipleship, and is one of the best-known parts of the New Testament. The second discourse contains the directions to the twelve apostles as Jesus advises them on how to travel from city to city, carry no belongings and to preach only to Israelites. The third discourse (13: 1 – 53) presents a number of parallels to the Kingdom of Heaven, and includes the parables of the Sowers, the Tares, the Mustard Seed and the Leaven, the Hidden Treasure, the Pearl and the Drawing in of the Net. The fourth discourse anticipates the growth of a community of followers led by the apostles. Emphasizing the values of humility and self-sacrifice this section deals with the vesting of authority in Peter who consequently came to be regarded as the 'Rock' on which Christ built his Church. The fifth discourse found in Matthew 24 and called the Olivet Discourse (as it was delivered on the Mount of Olives) ponders the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem, the end of the world and the Second Coming of Christ. However, scholarly opinion is divided on the contents of this discourse, and it is difficult to arrive at any specific conclusions.

1.5.7 Themes in the 'Sermon on the Mount'

We shall now address the themes in the prescribed text. The Beatitudes (Matt 5: 3–11) essentially describe the character of the people expected to inhabit the Kingdom of Heaven. Though familiar in an Old Testament context the Beatitudes in Matthew assume the pithy and proverbial cast of teachings which in their crystallization of some of the highest spiritual ideals have also acquired the popularity of sayings. They focus on a new set of moral values such as humility, peace, compassion and love instead of force and retributive justice. Discussing the blessings that will attend people if they are characterized by certain traits Jesus, in the Beatitudes enumerates nine states of being, namely spiritual poverty, mourning, meekness, hunger and thirst for righteousness, mercy, purity, peace-making, the bearing of persecution for the sake of righteousness, and suffering all manner of torture and false allegations for the sake of Jesus. The blessings are respectively described as the kingdom of heaven, comfort, the inheritance of the earth, fulfillment, mercy, vision of God, being made the children of God, and again, the kingdom of heaven thereby returning to the first reward and completing the cycle of blessings.

Immediately after the Beatitudes in Matt 5:3 – 16 two metaphors are used by Christ to describe his disciples. First, he compares them to the 'salt of the earth' and then to the 'light of the world'. In the first instance the disciples are likened to a basic mineral derived from nature which is valuable for its taste; the saltiness that seasons food. Without its saltiness salt would be of no value. Similarly, the disciples are

understood to be simple, essential, close to the earth and exemplifying values which are of great importance to human lives. Coming immediately after the Beatitudes as it does this metaphor drives home the point that the apostles were expected to attain all the attributes mentioned in the preceding section.

In the second instance the disciples have been compared to the light of the world, that is, they are the source of spiritual illumination to ordinary humanity. Jesus explains that within the home the lit candle is put in a candle stand that it may impart its light to all who are present in the house. Jesus exhorts that they should not hide their light under a bushel but show forth their good works that all may see the same and glorify God. A single line in verses 14 to 16 mentions the concept of the city atop a hill which cannot be hid. In the context of illumination and visibility 'the city on a hill' refers to the visible body of Christ or the New Jerusalem, the ideal community of believers possessed of all the spiritual virtues set forth in the Beatitudes, and setting an example to others. In John 8:12 Jesus applies the 'light of the world' epithet to himself.

In Matt 17 – 20 is found Jesus' attitude to the law. He makes it clear that he has come to fulfil and not to destroy the teachings of the Old Testament. He upholds the sanctity of the commandments. However, his focus on their application is different as is clear from his attitude to anger, adultery, divorce, oaths, love for one's enemies and a great many other notions taken up in the succeeding chapters. Jesus' focus is not on the outward conventions but on the inner spirit of people. He says in verses 21 to 26 that offerings are not acceptable to God unless one comes to the altar with a pure mind having resolved all discord with other beings.

Verses 27 to 30 deal with Jesus' attitude to adultery. He invokes the Old Testament commandment, "Thou shalt not commit adultery" and goes beyond this ban by holding guilty the man who has even thought of a woman in lustful terms. His teachings on divorce in the next two verses express his belief in the view that God does not accept divorce and hence re-marriage, in the eyes of God is adulterous. In Palestinian Jewish law a man was permitted to have more than one wife. However, a re-marriage on the part of a woman would make her adulterous even if she had been given the legal document of divorce by her first husband.

In verses 33 to 37 Jesus preaches his radical view on oaths. Again he refers to the law as formulated in the Old Testament (which forbids a person to swear by himself but allows him to "perform unto the Lord (his) oaths") and advises his followers not to swear by anything at all, neither by heaven nor by the earth; not by Jerusalem and not by one's own head as everything belongs to God. One's word should be enough and anything more than that comes from evil.

Verses 38 to 48 contain one of the most significant of Jesus' teachings, namely one's attitude to one's enemies. In the first part he overturns the Old Testament lesson of an eye for an eye and in its stead advocates the turning of the other cheek if one is slapped on one thereby propagating a new gospel of goodwill, peace, and forgiveness. In the second part of this teaching, 43 to 48 Jesus explains how such tolerance will distinguish the true Christian from others. He maintains that it is easy to love one's relatives, friends and those who love one, and it is in human nature to reciprocate emotional warmth but to aspire to the perfection of one's Father in heaven one has to love and bless one's enemies.

In Chapter 6 Jesus teaches about almsgiving, prayer, fasting, treasure in heaven, God and Mammon and care and anxiety. Regarding almsgiving he warns the giver of exhibiting his giving saying the left hand must not know of the right hand's doings. However, God who sees in secret will reward the giver openly. Regarding prayer, too, he says one must commune privately with God and not in full view of others, and to not make vain repetitions while praying. Jesus ends his discourse on prayer by teaching his disciples how to pray to the Father and in the process articulates the Lord's Prayer which is one of the central prayers in the Christian faith and church.

In verses 19 to 21 Jesus distinguishes between the treasure in heaven and that on earth. He says while material possessions are eaten by moths, corroded by rust and stolen by thieves God's favour earned by good thoughts and works is the spiritual salvation or heavenly treasure which remains forever. In the next two verses Jesus speaks about the light of the body which is the eye. In verse 24 he says, "No man can serve two masters" going on to elaborate one cannot serve God and Mammon at the same time. Mammon being the personification of worldly greed and acquisitiveness it is clear that in order to serve God one has to detach oneself from the temptations of material possessions.

From verses 25 to 34 Jesus holds forth on care and anxiety. Through simple reasoning and rhetorical pressure he asks his disciples why they need concern themselves with the fulfillment of their physical needs such as hunger or thirst, or the clothing of their bodies. He holds that the birds do not grow or gather but God feeds them even as the lilies of the field do not toil or spin but are bedecked in nature's finery. He reasons with his listeners that if God cares so much for the birds and flowers how much more must he care for human beings. Since God knows of man's needs he will provide for him in due course and hence, human beings need not be anxious about their present or future needs but trust God and concentrate on acquiring the values associated with the kingdom of heaven.

In Matthew chapter 7 Jesus continues with his *Sermon* driving home his points through metaphors and parables. In verses 1 to 6 he focuses on a common human trait, that of judging others. He says before rectifying one's own flaws it is hypocritical to point out the faults of others. He also talks about giving to one what one is capable of appreciating and honouring, and not to cast "pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet" and turn against the giver. Here, as in other instances Jesus asks his followers to develop a sense of balance in their moral outlook. Even as they are instructed not to judge others they are advised to be discerning and not waste valuables before the undeserving.

In verses 7 to 12 Jesus teaches his followers to seek spiritual salvation and ask God to show the way that they may find the same. The analogy that he uses here is that if one's son asks for bread one does not give him a stone to appease his hunger. Therefore, if mankind being evil can behave in so loving a manner how much more will God give his children whom he loves? He ends this teaching with the call to serve others in the very ways that one would like himself to be served.

In verses 13 and 14 Jesus uses the metaphors of the gate and the path to distinguish between the broad path and the wide gate which lead to destruction and the straight gate and the narrow way which lead to life. The path of righteousness which is difficult to tread and which calls for sacrifices brings its user to spiritual salvation while the broad path which accommodates many worldly experiences leads to the wide and, therefore, easily accessible gates of hell.

In verses 15 to 20 Jesus warns his followers of "false prophets" likening them to wolves who appear in the clothing of sheep. He teaches his disciples to distinguish the true from the false by examining the produce they yield. He says a tree is known by its fruit. Just as a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit so also a corrupt tree cannot bear good fruit. Hence, corrupt trees are cut down and used as firewood being of no true use.

Moving on to man's recognition by God Jesus says that merely taking the name of the Lord repeatedly by one does not guarantee his entry into heaven. Entry into the kingdom of God is achieved by one who has lived his life according to the will of the heavenly Father and not by those who have just professed his name. God will deny any knowledge of them when they plead for recognition.

In verses 24 to 28 Jesus dwells on the reception of the teachings that he had just delivered by once again resorting to a parable. He says that the follower who pays heed to his words and lives his life accordingly will be like the man who builds his house on a rock. His house being on a firm foundation will be able to withstand the rains, floods and winds whereas the person who does not value his teachings will be

like the man who builds his house on the sand which will fall in times of inclement weather and natural disaster. Interestingly, at this point the people listening to Jesus were astonished by and commented on the authority with which he spoke contrasting him with the scribes.

1.5.8 Structure and Style

➢ **(With special emphasis on language)**

Having addressed the themes let us now turn our attention to the structure and style of the *Sermon on the Mount*. One school of thought from St. Augustine in the 5th century to Michael Goulder in the 20th century has tended to regard the Beatitudes as the core element around which the constituents of the Sermon are organized. Others have argued that it is the Lord's Prayer which is the central feature while yet others have pointed to the chiastic[6] arrangement of the Sermon. Some modern scholars read the Sermon as a set of theological themes.

The *Sermon on the Mount* may be compared to the *Sermon on the Plain* in the Gospel of Luke (6:17 – 49) which interestingly features around the same time in Luke's narrative. Opinion is divided as to whether it is the same sermon or another one as Jesus often preached similar themes across different venues.

It is interesting to see how the original Hebrew and Greek words have been translated into English. Sometimes, the nuances in the meaning of the original word enrich the English word investing it with shades of association. In the last verse of Matthew Chapter 5 the English word 'perfect' has been translated from the Greek word *telios* which not only means perfection but also implies a spatial and temporal framework aimed at an end, goal or destination towards which the disciples may proceed.

The translation of the mentioned text having been undertaken during a period of rapid linguistic change the translators often avoided the use of contemporary grammar and idiom settling instead for the slightly more archaic terms such as 'verily', 'it came to pass' and "in no wise" for the benefit of the readers. The pronouns *thou/thee* and *you* are consistently used as singular and plural respectively though by this time *you* was being seen as singular in general English usage, specially when addressing a social superior. The possessive of the third person pronoun for things, *its* which made its appearance in the last years of the 16th century is not seen, as a rule, the older *his* being the preferred choice, as for example in Matt. 5:13, [13]Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted?

The use of *-eth* for the third person singular present form of the verb, as in Matt. 5:15 – "[5]Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house" was favoured by the translators over the newer (e)s which was already in use as may be seen in the plays of William Shakespeare and Christopher Marlowe. Further, the word *which* was used for the relative pronoun for persons instead of *who* or *whom,* as for instance, in Matt. 5:10 - [1]"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

The anaphoric cast of the Beatitudes, each verse beginning with the words "blessed are..." induce a repetitive rhythm which makes for greater recall while their deductive arrangement holding out consolation and promise in the latter half of the verse makes for a compact, bipartite pattern giving the verses the pithiness of sayings. Such bipartite and specially tripartite structures were favoured by the contemporary writer Francis Bacon who has left ample evidence of such usage in his *Essays.*

Rhetorical questions inform the style seeking to drive home with logical intent the ideas expressed. Chapter 5 verses 46 and 47; Chapter 6 verses 25, 26, 27, 28, 30 and 31; and Chapter 7 verses 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, 16, and 22 provide examples of rhetorical questions which often follow in close succession thereby creating a sense of urgency.

Metaphors used liberally in the Gospels are usually part of the parables that Jesus uses to teach his followers. The salt of the earth, the light of the world, the wide and the narrow gates, the good and corrupted trees, the false prophets in sheep's clothing, and the two foundations (of rock and sand) found in the discussed chapters are among some of the best known metaphors which open allegorical lines of declaration or distinction, as the case may be. The images, belonging to the everyday world are used to great moral and literary effect.

Many of the phrases of the Authorized Version of the *Bible* have become an organic part of the English language in so natural and spontaneous a way over the centuries that their Biblical origin is scarcely remembered. The phrases "an eye for an eye", "turn the other cheek", "a thorn in the flesh", "lick the dust', "broken reed", "root of all evil", "a law unto themselves" to quote a few examples, have a proverbial quality about them.

1.5.9 Summing Up

To sum up the prose of the Authorized Version of the *Bible* provides an excellent

specimen of the English language of the late 16th and early 17th centuries when it was struggling to come into its own. The language was evolving at a rapid rate contending with foreign influences, absorbing new words and expressions into its vocabulary and generally striving towards the 'modernity' that distinguished it from its medieval and earlier ancestry.

It is important for you to remember that first, the prose of the Authorised Version was the outcome of translation and not original composition. The translation was made from 1st century Greek to early 17th century English at a time when the latter language was developing through its internal tensions and adjustments as well as under the forces of new concepts, cultures and civilizations. Second, bearing in mind the compulsions of translation, the English vernacular in which the *Bible* was officially ushered in showed many of the features of its age. One of the notable changes in late 16th century English prose was the decline of the elaborate Ciceronian sentence in favour of the Senecan aphoristic one. This shift seen in the Elizabethan love for the epigram or sententia is conspicuous in the *Bible* with many of its expressions having acquired the status of proverbs, as has been pointed out already.

Let us conclude with Andrew Sanders' observation in *The Short Oxford History of English Literature*:

Although the Authorized Version proclaimed itself to be 'Appointed to be read in Churches' no formal authorization was ever given to it. Its consistent dignity of expression, its memorable cadences, its felicitous, if limited choice of vocabulary, and its general intelligibility meant, however, that it effectively displaced its rivals within the space of a generation...For some three and a half centuries it has formed a vital link between the divided English and Scottish Churches and the linguistically distinct English and Scottish nations...No modern version has approached its richness and resonance. (195)

1.5.10 General Notes and Glossary

1. **Episcopal:** of, or relating to a bishop, or bishops in a group
2. **Vulgate:** It is a 4th century Latin translation of the *Bible* by St. Jerome who was commissioned by Pope Damascus I in 382 to make a revision of the old Latin translations. By the 13th century this translation had come to be called the *versio vulgata*, that is, the 'commonly used translation'.
3. **Apocrypha:** Biblical apocrypha denotes the collection of ancient books, found in some editions of the *Bible* between the Old and New Testaments, or as an

appendix after the New Testament. Because of their doubtful sanction these books have not been accepted among the canonical books of the *Bible*.

4. **Kee:** Howard Clark, Meyers, Eric. M, Rogerson, John and Saldarini, Anthony, *The Cambridge Companion to the Bible*, Cambridge University Press, 1997, p 447.
5. **Beatitudes:** These are the set of teachings/blessings by Jesus that begin, "Blessed are...", and appear in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. The word 'beatitude' comes from the Latin word *beatitudo* which means 'happy', 'fortunate' or 'blissful'.
6. **Chiastic:** Literary devices used to emphasize, parallel or contrast concepts and ideas.

1.5.11 Comprehension Exercises

Long Answer Type Questions:

1. Discuss how the 'King James Version' of the 'Bible' came to be written.
2. Suggest what the themes of the 'Sermon on the Mount' are indicative of Jesus' outlook on life.
3. Comment on the structure and style of the 'Sermon on the Mount'.
4. Point out the linguistic elements in the 'Sermon on the Mount' which prove the lasting influence of the 'King James Version' of the 'Bible' on English prose.
5. Discuss the literary style of the 'Sermon on the Mount' as reflective of contemporary English prose.

Medium Length Answers Type Questions:

1. Write a note on the four Gospels in the 'New Testament'.
2. Comment briefly on the five specific discourses delivered by Jesus in the Gospel according to Matthew.
3. Discuss the use of any five symbols in the 'Sermon on the Mount'.
4. Give an account of the Beatitudes as found in the prescribed text and comment on their significance.
5. Name the important prayers found in the 'Sermon on the Mount' and provide a summary of the same.

Short Answer Type Questions:

1. Who was William Tyndale and what was his achievement?
2. Write a brief note on the *Great Bible*.
3. Mention any two parables used by Jesus in the 'Sermon' and discuss their significance.
4. Point out the translators' preference for traditional grammar in place of the contemporary usages.
5. Mention any five sayings in the English language which have been derived from the 'Authorized Version of the Bible'.

1.5.12 Suggested Readings

Howard Clark Kee, Eric M Meyers, John Rogerson et all *The Cambridge Companion to the Bible*, Cambridge University Press, 1997.

www.biblegateway.com/passage/search

www.gcl.org/bible/matthew5

NOTES

Module-2
Prose Literature of the Later 17th Century

Unit - 6 □ English Prose of the Late Seventeenth Century

Structure

2.6.1 Objective

In the first half of the seventeenth Century we have already noted a remarkable development of prose through the translation of the *Bible*, the essays of Bacon, and a host of translations, historical writings, travel literature, and pamphlets to mention the most prominent forms. In the second half of this Century the continuity of this development is kept up, leading obviously to the ''age of prose and reason'' that the eighteenth century was going to be. Quite naturally, many of the writers who are born in the latter half of this seventeenth century, write well into the eighteenth century. Our objective in this Unit is to focus specifically on writings that emerge in the later part of the seventeenth Century.

2.6.2 Introduction – The Variety of Prose Works

In the Restoration Period, as in the Caroline and Puritan periods, English prose manifest its presence in different forms. Some of the more prominent ones are Essays, Letters, Biographies, Sermons, Allegories, Memoirs, Diaries and such miscellaneous forms. The eminent prose writers of this period are John Dryden, John Bunyan, William Temple, Samuel Pepys, Jeremy Collier, Thomas Sprat, John Locke and others. Jonathan Swift's *A Tale of a Tub*, written about 1696, but published in 1704, should in this regard, also be considered as a text of this period.

2.6.3 The Eminent Prose Writers – An Overview

Now we shall note in short some of the important prose writers, their writings and their bearing on later writers.

2.6.3.a John Dryden (1631-1700)

John Dryden's *Essay of Dramatick Poesy* is his toughest single prose work, published in 1668. It is also the first major pieces of literary criticism to have emerged in the period, making him the father of English literary criticism. *A Discourse Concerning the Original and Progress of Satire* is another one of his delightful essays which was actually a preface to his translation of Juvenal and Persius. Dryden's prose preface to the *Fables* (1699) is also a notable work.

As students of English literature, our major acquaintance with Dryden's prose is definitely the *Essay of Dramatick Poesy*. It is modelled on Plato's *Dialogues,* where four speakers (including Dryden himself in the name of Neander) discuss about the relative merits of ancient, contemporary French, and modern drama. In spite of being a neo-classicist to the core in his creative works, we must notice that in his prose treatise, Dryden never hesitates to highly acclaim Shakespeare's drama. This is significant because Shakespearean drama often stands in utter disregard of the conventions of classical dramaturgy. Shakespeare was neither any great follower of the French models. Dryden, it must be remembered, is acclaimed not only as the father of English criticism but in many ways of English prose as well. This is because his prose combines with ease of flow and forcible directness, a lucidity of arrangement which is suggestive of French examples. As such, later English prose writers owe much to him.

2.6.3.b John Bunyan (1628-88)

In the case of Restoration prose Dryden's only 'rival' could be John Bunyan. His work, *The Pilgrim's Progress* (the first part of which was written during his second term of imprisonment). has stood the test of time. It was published in 1678. Bunyan also wrote *The Life and Death of Mr Badman* (1680) and the *Holy War* (1682). Except for *Grace Abounding* (1666) all his major works are allegorical in nature, and this allegory is worked out with ease, force and clarity. *The Pilgrim's Progress* has what we might call a superabundance of scriptural references. Its characters and scenes and phrases have become a common possession. It is from this text that we have come to a realisation that creeds may change and faiths may be destroyed but the life of man is still a pilgrimage, and in its painful course he must encounter

friends and enemies, dangers and frustrations. Again, a text like *Mr Badman* looks forward to Defoe and the English novel of the eighteenth century. Bunyan's style is homely—never ribald or sentimental. It is strong and as plain as the style of the *Bible*. *The Holy War*, according to Macaulay, would have been the greatest English allegory if *The Pilgrim's Progress* had not been written. To Bunyan therefore English literary prose owes the gift of the allegory in a major way.

2.6.3.c Andrew Marvel (1621-78)

Though Marvel is more popular as a poet of the metaphysical school, his prose works are no less important. They include private correspondence, a long series of letters which he wrote to the civic authorities of Hull (from where he was elected to the British Parliament) on the doings of Parliament, and certain controversial works.

The longest of all these is *The Rehearsal Transposed* (written over the period between 1672-73) - an elaborate and successful essay in satirical controversy. The work is full of humour and charm. As students of literature, you need to think on the ability of a single creative writer to combine poetry and prose of such merit in his oeuvre.

2.6.3.d John Webster (1610-82)

Dear learner, lest you be confused, so let us clarify at the outset that this Webster is not the dramatist of the post-Shakespearean period, but a Puritan minister and doctor. His book *The Displaying of Supposed Witchcraft* (1677) brought the controversy into an atmosphere in which superstition could no longer thrive. It is amazing to know that when Harvey, Newton and Locke were teaching man to be scientific in their attitude to everything, Webster insisted that the evidence of witchcraft should also be dealt with the same scientific scrutiny. The book's historical importance is that it throws light on the relation between Puritanism and witch persecutions in England. As a social phenomenon, witch-hunting still happens in our societies, and a work like this could help us unearth the psycho-social factors that go behind it.

2.6.3.e Lord Halifax (1633-95)

Halifax was an important member of the House of Lords, and became famous for his oratorical skills, especially by opposing the Exclusion Bills. His *Miscellanies*, first collected in 1700, carry the stamp of a most attractive character. His finest piece of writing in the praise of truth in *The Character of a Trimmer* (1688). *The Ladies New Year's Gift*(1688) is in the nature of an essay. His *Maxims* (1693) are the finest things of their kind in English. As a prose writer, Halifax has many resemblances with Joseph Addison,one of the foremost essayists the Eighteenth Century.

2.6.3.f William Temple (1628-99)

We have an example of personal prose in the letters written by Dorothy Osborne to her husband, Sir William Temple, during 1652-54. And in response, Temple's *Letters* are interesting on account of their historical matter. These were all published posthumously by Jonathan Swift in 1700 and 1703. Temple's letters are marked by their simple and unaffected manner. The same agreeable prose style is found in his *Memoirs* (1691). His essays, or as they were called *Miscellanea* appeared in three parts—1680, 1692, and 1701. Temple's prose work *Upon Ancient and Modern Learning* (1692) is known to have inspired Swift's *Battle of the Books*. Other important essays by Temple are "Of Poetry", "Of Gardening", "Upon Health and Long Life". Going by the titles, it is possible to find similarities between Temple's work and that of Francis Bacon, whom you have read earlier. However, it must be mentioned that quite many a time, Temple's prose is melodious and rhythmic too.

2.6.3.g John Tillotson (1630-94)

Tillotson was a popular preacher of his time. Joseph Addison calls his *Sermons* a standard of the type His sermon, *The Wisdom of Being Religious* (1664) has perfect plainness and is characterised by an absence of rhetoric.

2.6.3.h Diarists—(i) Samuel Pepys (ii) John Evelyn

● **Diarists :** It is a coincidence that Samuel Pepys and John Evelyn initiated diary writing as an art in the same period, and touched on many similar issues along with personal details. These are mostly in the form of private jottings, and are hence suffused with intimate details. As students of literature however, our interest in these diaries and their writers stems from the fact that alongside personal details, their accounts also give much information about public affairs. These details are further embellished with their comments on the issues.

(i) **Samuel Pepys (1633-1703)**, famous in his time for radical reforms he introduced in the British navy, is of interest to us largely because of his *Diary*. His diary opens on Jan. I, 1660 and continues till May 31, 1669. Apart from this, Pepys is also renowned for his *Memoirs of the Navy*, published in 1690.

He is very frank and intimate in the presentation of details of personal and public interest. He shows himself as a worldly man with all follies and foibles, and yet having many human qualities. He is an enemy of corruption, endeavoring to place the country in a proper condition of national defence, but ironically sent by the new government to the Gatehouse in Westminster as an enemy to the State! He was one of the victims of the Popish Plot. Pepy's *Diary* also provides a real picture of the life of Restoration England, and the impact of the Great Plague and the Great Fire on it.

In fine Pepys is a creative artist—he neither applauds nor condemns; he simply re-creates. It is said that **there are many diarists, but there is only one Pepys**.

ii) **John Evelyn (1620-1706)** was a Fellow of the Royal Society like Pepys later on. Besides diary writing, he wrote *Fumifugium* (1661) wherein he proposed remedies for curbing the menace of the excessive smoke that always hung over the city of London. His other works are *Tyrannus* that urges the use of and English dresses; and *Sylva* that is a plea for reviving the spirit of planting in England. During the Great Plague and the Great Fire, Evelyn was an active workers and he even prepared a plan for the improved building scenario of London. His *Life of Mrs Godolphin* is a little gem of an English biography.

The difference between the two diarists is that Evelyn's diary has a greater length, while Pepys' covers a little more than nine years, Evelyn's work is a more finished production in matter of style which Pepys's is not. Consequently, Evelyns style is simple and lucid, but it lacks in the freshness of Pepys.

2.6.3.i Jeremy Collier

Jeremy Collier (1650-1726) and **John Dennis (1657-1734)** must figure in this discussion as two literary figures who were locked in a battle of views on the nature and impact of the contemporary English stage of the time. Collier famously wrote *A Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage* (1698); an attack to which Dennis answered the same year in his **Usefulness of the Stage, to the Happiness of Mankind, to Government, and to Religion**. The presence of such tracts of argument will give you an idea of where the stage had gone in post-Elizabethan society, and why these debates mattered in the cultural scenario of the time. Critics are of the opinion that while Collier's prose has vigour and colloquial style, Dennis' work is marked by a solemnity of tone

2.6.3.j Thomas Sprat (1635-1713)

Thomas Spat was a member of the Royal Society. The society demanded plain and unadorned or unornamental style of writings —''a close naked natural way of speaking''. Sprat followed it in his prose. He was in a sense the first historian of the contemporary society.

2.6.3.k John Locke (1632-1704)

John Locke was famous for his works like *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693), and *The Reasonableness of Christianity* (1695). These works largely show Locke's interest in diverse fields like medicine, education, religion, economies, politics etc –

cumulatively presenting him as one of the major thinkers and philosophers of the time. Lock must be credited for introducing the concept of epistemology in English philosophy, and in that sense he anticipated the great thinker-philosopher Emanuel Kant. Locke had the capacity to make philosophy speak the language of ordinary life, and was therefore very intelligible to common readers. His prose is he lucid, dignified and free of any verbosity. Apart from offering philosophical insights, Locke thus furthered the purpose of the Royal Society that demanded improvement of the English language.

2.6.4 Summing Up

We have discussed so far about the prose writings of the second half of the seventeenth century which saw the Restoration of Charles II, and the Revolution of 1688. King James succeeded to the throne in 1685, but his Roman catholic prejudices caused his rejection by the people. As Protestants held the sceptre, political issues gained over the religions ones. In this respect plain and argumentative prose that had begun to replace ornamental prose through the impetus of the Royal Society, considerably improved the English language in the sense that it became more the medium of common man's usage. In this brief Unit, we have given you an overview of the various trends that became emergent in the time.

2.6.5 Comprehension Exercises

Long Answer Type Questions:

1. Assess the contributions of John Dryden and John Bunyan to the development of English prose.
2. Give your estimate of the two major Diarists of the seventeenth Century.

Medium Length Answers Type Questions:

1. Asses the importance of the Royal Society in the development of English prose.
2. Briefly write on the development of personal prose in the later half of the seventeenth Century.

2.6.6 Suggested Reading

Pooley, Roger. *English Prose of the Seventeenth Century 1590-1700*. Routledge, 1992.

Unit - 7 □ John Bunyan: *The Pilgrim's Progress* (Extract)

Structure

2.7.1 Objectives

The basic objective of this Unit is to familiarise you with the allegorical mode as an important form of literary representation in 17th century English Literature. As you read through the Unit, you will discover how fundamentally different this is from the sense we have of an 'allegory' in Middle English literature. As a specific explication of this literary form, John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* will bring out the variety and complexities that can be incorporated within the allegorical mode when it is applied within the framework of fiction.

2.7.2 Introduction

To begin with, we presume that this particular text, the author and the literary mode itself are not as well known to you as many other literary texts, whether prose,

poetry or drama, in English Literature. All the same, John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* is, perhaps, one of such prose writings as constitute the meaningful landmarks which one cannot easily ignore. Generically, thematically and structurally too, the work by Bunyan evades any type of specifications. You may call it an allegory, or even a theological tract within a framework of fiction. It is in this overlapping of genres that the challenge of the text lies.

The plan behind designing this Unit is to draw your attention to this varied multiplicity of the meaning of the text. At this level of your academic discipline, the reading of *The Pilgrim's Progress* as a whole will be too heavy and ponderous. That is why an excerpt has been taken from the original work. The excerpt, however, is carefully chosen, since it is one of the core passages of this famous work. If you read it carefully, you will be able to understand its thematic richness, its allegorical signification and the Christian, theological/Puritanic ideas embedded in the text. But before guiding you to its multiplicity of interests, we would initially focus attention on John Bunyan himself, the Puritanic background of the early seventeenth century, to be followed by a brief summary of the text, and lastly a few critical observations on the excerpt, recommended in your course.

2.7.3 Brief Literary Biography of John Bunyan

The life of John Bunyan is such that we need to delve into a bit of personal details to understand his literary world. Bunyan came of a poor parentage, his father being a tin smith in the village of Elstow, near Bedford. He had very little schooling but learned the rudiments of reading and writing. From boyhood on, Bunyan experienced private visions that fed his brand of Christian devotion. He saw devils and heard inner voices talking about Christ and later in life felt driven to pray to trees and broomsticks. These visions and dreams would later serve as an inspiration for his writings. The major part of his early life was spent at a time when the English Puritans were experiencing almost a life and death struggle for their survival. Bunyan himself was a strong believer in Puritanic faith and he belonged to Baptist sympathies, to which he was induced by his first wife Margaret Bentley. He began to read the Bible and attend church on a regular basis. Bunyan was received into the Baptist Church in 1653. Bunyan advanced his knowledge of the Christian faith and scriptures by fasting and practicing solemn prayer. He started preaching in Bedford and nearby villages and gained an immense, popular following wherever he preached, earning the nickname "Bishop Bunyan" because of his stature as a religious teacher and thinker. His experience of religion was deeply individual. A pious young man, his

strong sensitivity to sin was self-imposed and self-enforced. His personal standards were harsh and unforgiving. Bunyan did not commit many sins, but he did confess to using profane language, having danced, and having rung the bells of his local church without permission. These details will enable you to understand how the religious discipline inherent in the man must have motivated his writings in a large way. His severe and self-critical moral code provides the backdrop to Christian's earnest and impassioned search for salvation in *The Pilgrim's Progress*.

Earlier, Bunyan had taken part in the Civil War (1642-1646), although nothing definite is known about his soldiering career. Religion and politics both dominated Bunyan's life at all points of time. You already know that the Puritans, evangelical Christians with strict moral beliefs, had a great influence over the government and culture of England during Bunyan's lifetime. Their growing power culminated in civil war and the installation of the Puritan Oliver Cromwell as Lord Protector of Britain in 1653. Religion in the seventeenth century as you know by now, was also highly political. It was not simply a matter of choosing one's faith to practice peacefully at home but a sign of political alliance with or rebellion against the ruling faction in public life. Religion affected one's career and one's family's prosperity, and Bunyan demonstrates this in *The Pilgrim's Progress* when Christian suddenly decides to leave his family behind to seek salvation in the Celestial City.

After the Restoration of Charles II, the Puritans had to face strong prosecution and Bunyan was sent to prison twice for his preaching to his congregation without having the state license to do so, one being for a lengthy period of twelve years. The long life of imprisonment ignited his creative impulse and he wrote part I of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. The milder tone of Part II may be partly a reflection of the spirit of greater tolerance of religious differences prevailing in England later in his life. It is famously held that Bunyan's famous allegory about Pilgrim's journey to the Celestial City has been second only to the Bible itself in the number of copies sold worldwide over the three and a half centuries since it was first published. In this connection references may be given to his other works not as well known as *The Pilgrim's Progress*. These are *Some Gospel Truths Opened* (1656), *A Vindication* (1657), *Grace Abounding* (1666), *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners* (1666), *The Holy City, or the New Jerusalem* (1666). The full title of the first part of the present text was *The Pilgrim's Progress from this world to that which is to come* (First Part - 1672), followed by the second in 1684. His other better known works are *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman* (1680) and *The Holy War* (1682). Few writers in history have left such a wealth of Christ-centered writings as Bunyan has.

2.7.4 Introducing *The Pilgrim's Progress*

As mentioned earlier, Bunyan began writing *The Pilgrim's Progress* when he was behind bars after the Restoration; and the first part thus written was published in 1678. Bunyan's assurance in the validity of all his personal visions underlies *The Pilgrim's Progress,* which he disguises as a dream. The second part was published in 1684. In the six years between Parts I and II, his confidence as a writer grew visibly. The text is so fresh and original partly because Bunyan knew no great fiction writers to copy. Early editions of his work were often on cheap and coarse paper, bought mainly by the poor. Bunyan thus had a hand in educating the class from which he himself came. The characters have no individual personality but are embodiments of moral qualities as illustrated by their names: Christian, Christiana, Great-heart, and Hopeful, to name a few. This might remind you of the naming of characters in the medieval morality plays.

Generically The Pilgrim's Progress is regarded as a prose allegory. Its full title is lengthy - *The Pilgrim's Progress from this world to that which is to come*. The entire text is divided into two parts. The first part describes the religious conversion of Christian, and of his religious life in this world, his visit to the river of Death, and the Heavenly City which lies beyond it. The second part is concerned with Christiana, the wife of Christian, and their children. Like Christian they also undertake a similar type of journey with a group of friends.

The plot structure is episodic and several episodes symbolise real life experiences. For example the episodes of Slough of Despond, the valleys of Humiliation and the Shadow of Death represent the different stages of despair and depression, spiritual despondency and terror. Christian is also confronted with the derision and anger of public opinion, symbolised by the Vanity Fair The full text and its symbolic implication will be explained to you very shortly.

At first sight *The Pilgrim's Progress* allegorises the Puritan faith. Christian and his wife Christiana belong to the Puritan sects, of which in real life Bunyan himself was a member. Historically, the Puritans were to undergo the toughest and severe punishments in the reign of Charles II. Yet, *The Pilgrim's Progress* is much more than merely a dramatisation of the Puritan spirit. Because of its allegorical content, it may be related to the tradition of Middle English dream and allegorical literature, as we have already mentioned. These aspects make it closely aligned with the popular traditions of culture to an extent unequalled by any other major literary work of the period.

Another element of popular culture that Bunyan integrates and assimilates within the prose narrative in his use of the Bible, which was a popular household reading during the time. The significance of *The Pilgrim's Progress* is thus multi-dimensional. Within its allegorical framework, its characters – abstractions and moral virtues or vices personified - are reminiscent of the medieval tradition of Morality plays. The pronounced presence of dream elements makes it comparable to other specimens of dream literature, chronologically both before and after Bunyan. In the introduction of dialogues in the lips of the characters, or the actions, reactions and interaction between and among different persons, and in specifying a distinctive storyline, *The Pilgrim's Progress* is a work of fiction in its germinal/embryonic form. It is also part and parcel of contemporary popular literature by virtue of its unpretentious presentation of themes and easy, simple and lucid language.

We may now draw your attention to the excerpt recommended in the course.

2.7.5 Text – *The Pilgrim's Progress* (Extract)

VANITY FAIR

Then I saw in my dream, that when they were got out of the wilderness, they presently saw a town before them, and the name of that town is Vanity; and at the town there is a fair kept, called Vanity Fair; it is kept all the year long; it beareth the name of Vanity Fair, because the town where it is kept is lighter than Vanity; and also because all that is there sold, or that cometh thither is Vanity. As is the saying of the wise, "All that cometh is vanity." (*Ecclesiastes* 11.8)[1]

This fair is no new erected business; but a thing of ancient standing; I will show you the original of it.

Almost five thousand years agone, there were pilgrims walking to the Celestial City[2], as these two honest persons are; and Beelzebub, Apollyon, and Legion, with their companions, perceiving by the path that the pilgrims made, that their way to the city lay through this town of Vanity, they contrived here to set up a fair; a fair wherein should be sold of all sorts of vanity, and that it should last all the year long. Therefore at this fair are all such merchandise sold, as houses, lands, trades, places, honours, preferments[3], titles, countries, kingdoms, lusts, pleasures, and delights of all sorts, as whores, bawds, wives, husbands, children, masters, servants, lives, blood, bodies, souls, silver, gold, pearls, precious stones, and what not.

And, moreover, at this fair there is at all times to be seen juggling, cheats, games, plays, fools, apes, knaves, and rogues, and that of every kind.

Here are to be seen, too, and that for nothing, thefts, murders, adulteries, false swearers, and that of a blood - red colour.

And as in other fairs of less moment, there are the several rows and streets, under their proper names, where such and such wares are vended; so here likewise you have the proper places, rows, streets (viz., countries and kingdoms), where the wares of this fair are soonest to be found. Here is the Britain Row; the French Row; the Italian Row; the Spanish Row; the German Row where several sorts of vanities are to be sold[4]. But, as in other fairs, some one commodity is as the chief of all the fair, so the ware of Rome[5] and her merchandise is greatly promoted in this fair; only our English nation, with some others, have taken a dislike thereat.

Now, as I said, the way to the Celestial City lies just through this town, where this lusty[6] fair is kept; and he that will go to the City, and yet not go through this town, must needs "go out of the world". (Corinthians 1, Chap 5 Verse 10)[7]

The Prince of princes[8] himself, when here, went through this town to his own country, and that upon a fair- day too, yea, and as I think, it was BEELZEBUB, the chief lord of this fair, that invited him to buy of his vanities; yea, would have made him lord of the fair, would he but have done him reverence as he went through the town. (Matthew, Chap 4, Verse 8) Yea, because he was such a person of honour, Beelzebub had him from street to street, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a little time, that he might, if possible, allure the Blessed One to cheapen[9] and buy some of his vanities; but he had no mind to the merchandise, and therefore left the town, without laying out so much as one farthing upon these vanities.

This fair, therefore, is an ancient thing, of long standing, and a very great fair.

Now these pilgrims, as I said, must needs go through this fair. Well, so they did; but, behold, even as they entered into the fair, all the people in the fair were moved, and the town itself as it were in a hubbub about them; and that for several reasons: for—

First, the pilgrims were clothed with such kind of raiment as was diverse from the raiment of any that traded in that fair. The people, therefore, of the fair, made a great gazing upon them: some said they were fools, some they were bedlams, and some they are outlandish men[10]. (Corinthians Book 1. Chap 2, Verse 7)

Secondly, and as they wondered at their apparel, so they did likewise at their speech; for few could understand what they said; they naturally spoke the language[11] of Canaan[12]; but they that kept the fair were the men of this world: so that, from one end of the fair to the other, they seemed barbarians each to the other.

Thirdly, but that which did not a little amuse the merchandisers was that these pilgrims set very light by all their wares; they cared not so much as to look upon them; and if they called upon them to buy, they would put their fingers in their ears, and cry, "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity", and look upwards, signifying that their trade and traffic was in heaven. (Psalm 119, Verse 37)[13]

One chanced mockingly, beholding the carriages of the men, to say unto them, What will ye buy? But they, looking gravely upon him, said, "We buy the truth". (Proverbs 23, 23)[14]

At that there was an occasion taken to despise the men the more; some mocking, some taunting, some speaking reproachfully, and some calling upon others to smite them. At last things came to a hubbub and great stir in the fair, insomuch that all order was confounded. Now was word presently brought to the great one of the fair, who quickly came down, and deputed some of his most trusty friends to take these men into examination, about whom the fair was almost overturned. So the men were brought to examination; and they that sat upon them[15] asked them whence they came, whither they went, and what they did there, in such an unusual garb?

The men told them that they were pilgrims and strangers in the world, and that they were going to their own country, which was the Heavenly Jerusalem[16]; and that they had given no occasion to the men of the town, nor yet to the merchandisers, thus to abuse them, and to let them in their journey, except it was for that, when one asked them what they would buy, they said they would buy the truth. But they that were appointed to examine them did not believe them to be any other than bedlams and mad, or else such as came to put all things into a confusion in the fair. Therefore they took them and beat them, and besmeared them with dirt; and then put them into the cage, that they might be made a spectacle to all the men of the fair.

2.7.6 Notes and Glossary

You will notice that the text has several Christian allusions mentioned in parentheses. For your convenience, we first put down the quotes from these sources as and where they occur in the text.

1. "But if a man live many years, *and* rejoice in them all; yet let him remember the day of darkness; for they shall be many. All that cometh *is* vanity."

   ~ *Ecclesiastes* 11:8 ~

   Clearly Bunyan's insistence is on vanity as a cardinal vice that undoes the human pursuit of Heaven hereafter. This idea is pervasively present in The

Pilgrim's Progress in general and of course the episode of 'Vanity Fair' in particular.

2. "Almost five thousand years agone...to set up a fair." The allusion is to Mark, Chapter V, verses 8 – 10. The "unclean spirit" is the Biblical phrase, particularly associated with Beelzebub, Prince of the Devils, Apollyon destroyer., also called 'the angel of the bottomless pit' in *Book of Revelation*, Chapter 9; Verse 11. At a time when we are all used to the culture of shopping malls where even the commonest of objects come to acquire a glitter, Bunyan's list of merchandise on sale at Vanity Fair appears interesting. You will notice that the exhaustive list contains in abstraction, allegorical references to all such objects, animate and inanimate, that comprise the various materialistic desires and acquisitions that modern (by any standards) life is made up of. To Bunyan the Puritan therefore, all such objects constitute impediments in the form of desires that tempt human beings in this transitory life, on the path to Heaven. And such is the law of faith that a 'pilgrim' must needs walk through such temptations to reach the promised salvation. The archetype for this was laid by Christ, who had to face the temptations posed by Satan in the desert; overcome them and only then could the Son of God get back to the Father. In this sense, 'Vanity Fair' is supremely allegorical.
3. Preferments, titles: Appointments and promotions to political or ecclesiastical positions.
4. Notice that Bunyan categorically mentions different European nations, each known for their national prejudices. Mention might be made in this context of the 18th century writer Oliver Goldsmith's famous essay 'National Prejudices', that you might as well read with your counselor in class. Bunyan perhaps is of the idea that these man-made prejudices and vanities are in a way deterrents in the path of achieving the universal goal of redemption of humanity by casting aside narrow pursuits in worldly life. But on the face of it, the different national rows make Vanity Fair a virtual world trade centre, if one were to use a modern analogy!
5. "...the ware of Rome and her merchandise...": The practices and the temporal power of the Roman Catholic Church. Bunyan's Puritan temperament would naturally be of this opinion.
6. "lusty": Cheerful, lustful. The glitter of the fair is here perceived through a Puritan vision.
7. "go out of the world": The phrase occurs in *Corinthians*: Chapter V, Verse

10. The exact words are:

"Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world."

~ 1 Corinthians 5:10 ~

8. "The Prince of princes...": The allusion is to one of the interesting episodes in *Matthew* Chapter IV; paragraphs 4 – 11 which relate to the Temptations of Christ, adored as 'the Prince of princes' by Satan in the wilderness. The exact words are:

"Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them,"

~ Matthew 4:8 ~

9. To cheapen: To ask the price of

10. "Bedlams" and "outlandish" – Outlandish bears the meaning of foreign, while Bedlams would refer to lunatics from Bethlehem Hospital asylum in London. The reference is to the *Corinthians:*

"But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, *even* the hidden *wisdom*, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known *it*, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."

~ 1 Corinthians 2:7, 8 ~

The word 'mystery' is important here. Since people at Vanity Fair cannot understand the inherent wisdom in the words of the pilgrims, they find them quaint, subject them to inhuman treatment and cause all the suffering. This is a lot like what was done to Christ, because temporal powers failed to/ deliberately did not understand his sayings.

11. The language of Cannan: The Greeks and Romans so designated all those who speak in tongues other than Greek and Latin.

12. Cannan: The Promised Land, ultimately conquered by the Children of Israel.

13. "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; *and* quicken thou me in thy way."

~ Psalm 119:37 ~

14. "Buy the truth, and sell *it* not; *also* wisdom, and instruction, and understanding."

~ Proverbs 23:23 ~

15. "...they that sat upon them": Interrogated and tried them (as in putting to trial)
16. "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of *them*, and embraced *them*, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that *country* from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better *country*, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city."
~ Hebrews 11:13-16 ~

2.7.7 Critical Estimate of the Textual Portion

'Vanity Fair' is the best known episode in *The Pilgrim's Progress*. The popularity of this section can be measured by the fact that William Makepeace Thackeray, a major Victorian novelist, titled his most popular novel as *Vanity Fair*. In a lighter vein, Vanity Fair is also one of the leading international magazines that carries news of Hollywood, politics, fashion, high society scandals and so on! It seems interesting to probe why Bunyan chose such a name.

The universal acceptability of the particular episode may be attributed to different reasons. First, it is written in a language which is easy to understand and lucid. Even when the readers fail to understand the underlying allegory of the text, they do not however detect anything in the text which is abstract, or highly philosophical or mystical. On the contrary, Bunyan turns one of the most familiar institutions in contemporary England – annual fairs – into an allegory of universal spiritual significance. Christian and his companion Faithful pass through the town of Vanity in the season of a local fair that is great and ancient. It is called Vanity Fair, an occasion for trade in tawdry products, and the worship of Beelzebub, one of the rebel angels against God in the army of Lucifer. At Vanity Fair, Faithful and Christian are mocked, smeared with dirt, and thrown in a cage. Given a chance to repent, they stay true to their righteous hatred of worldly possessions. They are condemned to death for belittling Vanity's false religion. Faithful tries to speak in his own defence but is burned at the stake and carried off to heaven. Christian is remanded to prison but escapes later.

In this context you may now like to take into consideration the opening sentence of the given extract – "Then I saw in my dream, that when they were got out of the wilderness, they presently saw a town before them..." which situates the text in the tradition of Middle English dream Literature.

You are also requested to look at the title of the 'Vanity Fair'. The dictionary meaning of the word vanity refers to the emptiness or worthlessness of the soul. It may also signify the worldly pride – the conceit. Thus the title 'Vanity Fair' may be suggestive of the kind of fair where worldly men display or exhibit their pride and engage themselves in foolish and meaningless activities – the kind of activity which degrades and degenerates, corrupts and perverts their social habits and characteristic tendencies.

At the beginning the author describes that the town of Vanity and the fair, which is located in that town are the contrivances of Beelzebub, Apollyon and Legion. It seems to resemble a large shopping centre, where, instead of consumable commodities everything that is sold is of mercenary, materialistic and morally depraved nature. They include such worldly items as "houses, lands, trades, places, honours, preferments." In fact the wares at the fair embrace both non-human and human objects – "lusts, pleasures and delights of all sorts, as whores, bawds, wives, husbands, children, silver, gold, pearls, precious stones and what not."

It is clear from Bunyan's description that his theological intention is as much to uphold the theological context of the text as also its social perspective. The historical time to which *The Pilgrim's Progress* belongs was the time of social restlessness, moral depravity with the men and women in the society engaging themselves in superficial activities, as the Puritan perception went. The flippancy and frivolity induced by the Restoration of the Royal Court of Charles II filtered down the social scale and affected the lifestyle and characteristic habits of the common people. This is being allegorically suggested by the scenes and situations, sights and objects at the Vanity Fair. In fact, the word 'vanity' suggestively refers to flimsy social habits and engagements of the Restoration worldlings. It is significant to note that at the Vanity Fair there is hardly anything good or redeeming either in the persons who assemble there or in the nature of the commodities, arranged either for sale or consumption by the people. And to quote Bunyan, this comprises of "... whores, bawds... jugglings, cheats, ... fools, apes, knaves and rogues" and also "houses, lands trades, places, honours, preferments..."

Bunyan's social vision is not merely confined to the contemporary English context

but also extended to the European reality. This idea is particularly embedded/ registered in the following paragraph:

"And in other fairs of less moment... with some others, have taken a dislike thereat."

It is true that Bunyan is not a satirist in the strict sense of the term, but in the lines and passages quoted above, you will not possibly miss the unmistakable spirit of social satire.

2.7.8 Puritanism in *The Pilgrim's Progress*: Evaluating 'Vanity Fair'

Vanity Fair is overwhelmingly enriched with the Christian Puritan spirit. Now when we say 'Puritan', you must feel curious about the associational meaning of this particular world. The word 'Puritan' is derived from the word 'Puritanism'. Therefore our task at this point is to ascertain how the prescribed text is reflective of the spirit of Puritanism. For this, we shall repeat in short the basic facts of Puritanism that you have already come across in Module 1.

The terms 'Puritan' or 'Puritanism' are mostly used in a narrow sense of religious practice and attitudes and in a broad sense of ethical outlook, which is much less easy to define. In a strict sense 'Puritan' was applied to those Protestant reformers who rejected Queen Elizabeth's religious settlement of 1560. This settlement sought a middle way between Roman Catholicism and the extreme spirit of reform of Geneva – the European city which became famous as the centre of the most extreme of the great Protestant reformers, John Calvin the founder of Calvinism. The Puritans influenced by Geneva and other continental centres objected to the retention of Bishop and to any appearance of what they regarded as superstition in Church worship. Apart from their united opposition to Roman Catholicism, Puritans disagreed among themselves on questions of doctrines and church organization - the principal sects being Presbyterians, Independents, Baptists and later Quakers.

Let us now cast attention to the meaning of Puritanism in the broader social and moral contexts. In this respect Puritanism has always represented strict obedience to the dictates of conscience and a strong emphasis on the virtue of self – denial. In this sense even an individual can be described as 'puritan', whether or not he belongs to the recognised Puritan sects, or even if one is an atheist. The Puritanic orthodoxy and conservatism, in general was opposed to any form of art or dramatic performance simply because the strict Puritan, in his intense love of truth, was much inclined to

confuse fiction with lying. Thus Bunyan was criticized by some of his Puritan comrades for writing fiction in his allegory *The Pilgrim's Progress*. This could be an interesting way of reading the present text which is by an avowed Puritan!

After having given you a very brief idea about Puritanism, we may now talk about how the spirit of Puritanism affects the text of 'Vanity Fair'. In course of reading the text of 'Vanity Fair' you have noticed how the fair ground is filled with objects and sights, sins and evils of mundane worldly life. The entire description corresponds to the Puritanic belief that the man's worldly life is full of temptations. At every step of life he stands vulnerable to temptations of all types, mostly moral and spiritual. But in order to achieve the ultimate or the final stage of salvation, man is to undergo this specific stage. Bunyan writes in this connection: "Now, as I said, the way to the Celestial City lies just through this town where this lusty fair is kept; and he that will go to the City, and yet not go through this town, must needs 'go out the world."

The Puritanic idea allegorised by Bunyan in this section of *The Pilgrim's Progress* is simultaneously allusive and suggestive. It alludes to the Temptations of Christ in the wilderness, and also the temptation of St. Augustine, narrated in *Soliloquies*. The immediacy of the Biblical allusion apart, the descriptions are also suggestive of the universal pattern of human life and existence – the encircling flames of Temptation, man's attempts at overcoming them, his self-salvation, as he succeeds in the task of conquering the evil allurements of worldly life. According to the Puritan, the human life represents the archetype of the pilgrimage and its progress towards self-enlightenment.

It has however been suggested that such a journey is neither smooth nor without any danger or adverse predicament. To the people around them, the pilgrims, who represent humanity appear to be strange and non – identifiable alien figures: "The pilgrims were clothed with such kind of raiment as was diverse from the raiment of any that traded in that fair. The people, therefore, of the fair, made a great gazing upon them. Some said they were fools, some they were bedlams, and some they were outlandish men." The Pilgrims were also subjected to physical torture and humiliation, as Christ was before his crucifixion. If you look into the text, you will find these ideas substantiated: "At that there was an occasion taken to despise the men the more: some mocking, some taunting, some speaking reproachfully and some calling upon others to smite them... But they that were appointed to examine them did not believe them to be any other than bedlams and mad... they took them and beat them, and besmeared them with dirt, and then put them into the cage that they might be made a spectacle to all the men of the fair ..." The reference to such commercial

terms as 'merchandise' and 'merchandisers' may stand for the commercialization of religion by the Catholic priests opposed by the Puritan Protestants.

2.7.9 Bunyan's Style

The allegoric design of *The Pilgrim's Progress* in general and of 'Vanity Fair' in particular, never appears to be dull or monotonous to the readers for two reasons. First, Bunyan hardly uses any word or expression which is tinged with philosophic abstraction. Bunyan states everything in a simple and lucid manner. He narrates the experiences with the delightful gusto of a story teller. Secondly, he dramatizes the narrative to capture the attention of his readers. The following passage may be cited to substantiate the statements:

One chanced mockingly, beholding the carriages of the men to say unto them, What will ye buy? But they, looking gravely upon him, said, We buy the truth. At that there was an occasion taken to despise the more; some mocking, some taunting, some speaking reproachfully, and some calling upon others to suite them."

2.7.10 Summing Up

To get back to where we began, should we denounce and criticize *The Pilgrim's Progress* as a dull and uninteresting text? It is true that the text has obvious theological/ moral/philosophical connotations. But Bunyan's descriptive art, his technique and style of writing have hardly divested the text of its literary merit and sound aesthetic appeal. 'Vanity Fair' itself is a microcosm of life's macrocosm with all its variety, contradictions, oppositional and diverse, differential elements.

2.7.11 Comprehension Exercises

Long Answer Type Questions:

1. The immediate contexts of *The Pilgrim's Progress* are at once social and philosophical. Analyse 'Vanity Fair' in the light of this statement.
2. Write a critical note on the Puritanic elements in 'Vanity Fair' with close reference to the text.
3. What fictional elements do you find in *The Pilgrim's Progress*? How do they contribute to the aesthetic appeal of the text? You are expected to answer this with reference to the syllabised text extract.

Medium Length Answers Type Questions:

1. How does Bunyan make use of Biblical elements in the text?
2. Why does *The Pilgrim's Progress* generically belong to the genre of dream literature? Analyse on the basis of your reading of the extract.
3. Comment briefly on the meaning of the title 'Vanity Fair'. Also relate it to the full title of *The Pilgrim's Progress*.

Short Answer Type Questions:

1. Write a short note on Bunyan and Puritanism.
2. What do you know about the Valleys of humiliation and the Shadow of Death?
3. Briefly show how Bunyan's upbringing contributed to the makings of the writer that he became in life.

2.7.12 Suggested Reading

Gillie, Christopher. *Longman Companion to English Literature*, Longman, 1972. (For a detailed idea of Puritanism)

Sharrock, Roger. *John Bunyan*. Praeger, 1984.

Talon, Henri A. *John Bunyan: The Man and His Works*. Rockliff, 1951.

Unit - 8 □ The Neoclassical Impact on Contemporary English Prose

Structure

2.8.1 Objectives

In this chapter you are going to learn about the prose in the duration of Seventeenth and Eighteenth centuries. The prose in this time was influenced by the dominating neoclassicist trend. In the beginning you will learn about what neoclassicism stands for. Then you will learn about neoclassicism as a contemporary trend through a significant part of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth centuries. Thereafter we shall take a brief overview of the impact of neoclassicism on contemporary prose. At the end we shall look at some selected sections from texts- fiction as well as nonfiction- to understand how neoclassicism manifested in the prose written during this time. At the end we shall sum up our matter in brief. The chapter will end with a few suggestions for the expected questions and reference books for enhanced reading.

2.8.2 Introduction

Neoclassicism was the prevalent influence on the shaping and development of the prose in the duration of Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century. The prefix 'Neo'

obviously means new, so Neoclassicism basically refers to the renewed interest in classical learning that took pace in this period with scholars reading, translating and re-interpreting the texts of the Golden Age of Human Civilazations - the Greco-Roman period. Philosophy, Politics, History, Art, Science and Literature- in every aspect the knowledge derived from the learning of Latin and Greek played a serious role changing and influencing the taste and inclination of ordinary people. In addition to this the rise of the Middle class, the Merchant, the Puritans added a matter- of-fact approach to the wisdom of everyday life and living. Thus there was a curious mix between the ancient wisdom of the Classical Age as well as the practical wisdom of contemporary times that could explain the unique character of this age of English Literature and its prose.

2.8.3 What is Neoclassicism?

Neoclassicism, as we've already said, can be understood as new classicism, or a renewal of the age of classical learning. The spirit of classicism was celebrated by the intellectuals and thinkers of this age. They were in a mood to welcome and relive the principles of the Classical period. Therefore in imitation and exultation of all things Classical, this age was named as a new, revived, aspiring classical age, i.e – the Neoclassical age. The virtues of the Classical authors and artists were maintained with passionate fervour during this period. You might as well question as to how this was different from the literature and culture that one witnesses in England immediately after the Renaissance. We need to understand that while the Renaissance did bring about a renewed interest and provide access to a wide body of classical literature, it was also pervaded by the spirit of humanism that was a decided take on the rigours of the Church and thereby of religion. In this Unit and the ones that follow, we will see how this streak of humanism gradually gave way to a kind of verbatim imitation of classical rules of composition, whereby style came to gather relatively greater importance over content.

The literature of ancient Greece and Rome is known as Classical literature. Ancient Greece between the period 500 to 320 BCE and Ancient Rome between 70 BCE to 18 CE produced literature that touched excellence unparalleled in history and surpassed the barrier to its time, age and society to become enjoyed by societies across time and societies. The relevance and delight of these texts hardly diminished although the time when they were produced became antiquity. Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes and Menander from Greece are some of the greatest dramatists

in history. With Herodotus, Thucydides and Xenophon the practice of writing history reached a new maturity. Plato and Aristotle with their philosophical writings influenced the very foundation of Western Thought. Classical oratory of Demosthenes and Homer's epics *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are other aspects of this gamut. In Latin literature glory rested with extraordinary intellects like that of Virgil, the greatest of Latin epic poets, Horace, Lucretius, Ovid, Catullus for poetry , Seneca, Cicero, and Caesar for their prose, and Livy for exemplary achievement in writing history.

There is something common in all these works that makes these authors and their works categorised into a single group. Undoubtedly they were born of similar environment close in time. In addition they have some shared characteristics that together inspire and awe all the human reading that was to follow. This excellence is marked by an emblematic economy of words, direct expression, subtlety of thought, and attention to form. Authors who are inspired or influenced by the classical approach are invariably following these ideals of economy, objectivity, and formal considerations.

There was a renewed enthusiasm in learning and study of these materials from the Classical age in the Seventeenth and eighteenth Century England. Not only were these works studied in depth and detail, they were also translated, contextualised, debated and understood exhaustively. The very age was characterized by the response to these texts composed in the Greco-Roman Era and involvement with the contexts therein. Dryden's writings are a case in point. Intense didactic involvement with the in Ancient authors like Horace, Juvenal and a desire to map their taste and expectations characterised Dryden's prose. The desire to create drama and epic in the mode proposed by the practices of the Classical dramatists and Poets was a dominant preoccupation of this time.

The recipe for excellence was with the classical works and authors who betrayed the transience of time and remained relevant thousands years later. Even when their societies disappeared and contexts faded away these works find renewed life and relevance in the context of a different and unfamiliar human ambience. The Restoration Age and the ages following that stood in awe of this strength. They found it suitable to follow the path of these time-transcendent works.

There was another motivation that is responsible for this trend. In Rome the classical period flourished in a time when following the ascendance for Augustus Caesar to throne the Roman world was for the most part free from major conflicts. This created an atmosphere of stability and security. The creative energy could flourish and excel in this atmosphere of political stability. There was a need for such stability and a desire to touch this height of unparalleled excellence in the Seventeenth Century England.

2.8.4 Neoclassicism as a Contemporary Trend

The Neoclassical attitude therefore emerged as a contemporary trend in the wake of Restoration of Monarchy. Revival of interest in the writings of the Greco-Roman classical age and a desire to follow them to the best of capacity was a dominant attitude in that time following the period of Renaissance.

When Charles II returned from France to assume the responsibilities of the throne the British people savoured a long- desired respite from anarchy and hoped for a better time ahead- a better time for society and also a better time for commerce, science and art and culture. This marked the beginning of the Restoration Age. The monarchy was restored in this period and that fundamentally influenced the literature of this era. Restoration Age (1660-1700) was followed by the Augustan age. The Augustan Age associates itself with the name of Emperor Augustus who was the emperor during the time when the Classical Age in Rome flourished. The nomenclature clearly voices the expectation and aspiration of the time- a new Augustan time. They aspired the way culture flourished in the rule of Emperor Augustus. This was reflected in every choice. The literary style, be it prose or verse, bears a noticeable testimony to this.

The revival of interest in the culture of the Classical age is the spirit of Neoclassicism. The neoclassical sensibility had impact on all of the arts, including painting, sculpture, the decorative arts, theatre, literature, music, and architecture. The most predominant impact that it saw was on prose. It was a revolutionary age for prose writing that works as a milestone in the history of English Prose. It must not be forgotten that it was also the Age of Reason. The prose written during this age unfurled itself in many dimensions and was a vehicle to this language of Reason. This is the reason why Restoration or for that matter Augustan prose was markedly different in style from Elizabethan prose. The stylistic preference of the Neoclassical prose writers were almost antithetical in stance to that of Elizabethan prose writers. Yet prose was the most favoured medium of expressions for the literary practitioners of this period. Prose was marked by a strict adherence to the neoclassical ideals. The neoclassical ideal consisted of simplicity, unemotional objectivity, loyalty to form and reticence as opposed to extravaganza.

2.8.5 Neoclassicism and Contemporary Prose

As we have already learnt that Elizabethan Prose was typified by its convoluted prolixity and indirectness. In the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century English Prose

took a new turn. Matthew Arnold says that "English style after the Restoration breaks with the style of the times preceding it, finds the true law of prose, and becomes modern... ".The ornate and figurative language went out of favour. Clarity, directness and economy of expression came to be preferred virtues of English Prose. The style of writing what changed. The vision and the perspective behind using of such prose underwent a sea change as well. The following observation by Boris Ford sums up in brief the dominant sensibility of this age:

> "It is the first age in which we recognize the ordinary man as the norm, but the ordinary man here is not that dreary abstraction the statistically average citizen but a variety of living persons- the merchant energetic in business , the divine addressing his fellow Christians with faithful good sense, the politician busy with elections and votes, the traveller observing life at home and abroad, the country gentleman directing his farms and estates, the engineer designing his roads, canals, and bridges, the lady in her social calls, the doctor, lawyer, soldier, sailor, shopkeeper, servant, and labourer in their occupations and the writer comprehending all these as his public. None of these activities of course was new; what was new was that the whole of life in its ordinary aspects became a source of interest and generally of comedy."

Prose that was written in this age was no longer the cultural prerogative of a select educated aristocratic milieu. Education and literacy spread among common men. The working classes alongside the middle and the upper classes came in the purview of literacy. Enormous amount of prose was composed and printed everyday. This prose was primarily written for the consumption of educated or literate common men and women. Snippets from the ordinary lives and ordinary routines were of interest to common men who were professionally engaged in different fields. The prose literature in this era was influenced by this intent to cater to these different professional fields and eventually spread root into wider fields. Neoclassicism of prose in this era also involved this matter- of – fact production of literature.Intellectuals and artists of this age made self conscious choices towards aesthetic excellence in literature following the footsteps of the Classicists. The rigours of the style adopted in antiquity invited the mind of this age. This manifested in the stylistic decisions and improvisations of the literature of the time.

The literature written during this period (1660 - 1798) can be said to be a commendable example of neoclassical impact on prose. This age can be further divided into three time periods:

- The **Restoration period** (1660- 1700)
- The **Augustan period** (1700-1740)
- The **Age of Johnson** (1740-1790).

Let us first get acquainted with the major literary figures of each of these periods.

The **Restoration period (1660- 1700)** has John Dryden (1630-1700), John Bunyan (1628- 1688), Lord Halifax (1633-1695), Sir William Temple (1628- 1699), John Tillotson (1630-1694), the DiaristsSamuel Pepys (1633-1703) and John Evelyn (1620-1706) shaping and determining the prose of this period.

The **Augustan period (1700-1740)** was transformed by the bold and uncompromising matter penned by Jonathan Swift (1667-1745), Joseph Addison (1672-1719), Sir Richard Steele (1672-1729), and Daniel Defoe (1659-1731). Other Prose writers from this period worth mentioning are John Arbuthnot (1667-1735), Lord Bolingbroke (1678- 1751), George Berkeley (1685- 1753), and Lady Mary Wortly Montagu (1689-1762). Footprints of Sentimentality, Gothic and Romanticism begin to gain ground after this point.

Samuel Richardson (1689-1761), Henry Fielding (1707-1754), Tobias Smollett (1721-1771), Lawrence Sterne (1713-1768), Horace Walpole (1717-1797), Mrs. Ann Radcliffe (1764-1823), Edward Gibbon (1737-1794), Frances Burney (1752-1840), David Hume (1711-1776), James Boswell (1740-1795), Edmund Burke (1729-1797), Earl of Chesterfield (1694-1773) are the noteworthy prose authors from the time period denoted as **The Age of Johnson** (1740-1790).

The prose of Restoration Age was shaped by the prose works of powerful writers like John Dryden. He was the Poet Laureate of his time. Dryden's popularity can be attributed to his widely successful plays and satiric verses. He was a pioneer of prose too. *Of Dramatick Poesie*, published in 1667 is an example of Dryden's prose in the genre of literary criticism that is a momentous contribution to English Prose at this time. Here the author through his speakers refers to the virtues and weaknesses of the Classical authors and the genius of the maestros in the ages that followed.Between 1663 and 1694 Dryden had to write criticisms, on various controversial issues. Notable among them are *Defence of the Essay of Dramatic Poesy* (1668), *Defence of the Epilogue* (1673), *Remarks on the Empress of Morocco* (1674), *Vindications of the Duke of Guise* (1683).*Essay on Satire* prefixed to his *Translations from Juvenal and Persius* (1692), and the *Preface to the Fables* (1700) are also considered to be among his chief works. Before Dryden prose was a medium for Instruction where the reader was hierarchically subordinate to the speaker. With Dryden a conversational style

came into vogue where prose was a way of carrying out social intercourse with refinement.The Narrator's position shiftedfrom the pedestal to the friend's seat.

Bunyan etched an immortal place for himself when *Pilgrim's Progress* saw daylight in 1678. It is a Christian allegory in which the rhetoric of Bible blends with the speech of the ordinary man' everyday ordinary life.It has a moral and religious messagethat Bunyan sends with his deft use of Symbolism. Bunyan wrote several other religious pamphlets but what earned Bunyan his important place in Restoration prose literature is his major works like *Grace Abounding*, *Mr. Badman*, *The Holy War* (1682), and *A Book for Boys and Girls* (1686).

One of the notable prose writers of this time Archbishop John Tillotson is known for his sermons and didactic discourses like *A Discourse Against Transubstantiation* and so on. Tillotson's plain style of preaching blends reason with religion. This style strengthened Protestantism to oppose Roman Catholicism. At the heart of the spirit of Reformation mixing Religion with Reason emerges what can be called a typical style of late Seventeenth Century.

The Diarists Samuel Pepys and John Evelyn chronicled the happenings of their time in the form of their diaries.In their depiction the Great Fire 1666, and the Great Plague (1665-1666) of London come alive. Evelyn and Pepys not only recorded or documented these events in order to enable an understanding of actual historical events. More than a log of daily events their depictions are hallmarks of English prose upholding the virtues of clear reason and the beauty of everyday speech.

The satiric genius of Jonathan Swift, the greatest prose satirist of England dominated the first half of the eighteenth century. In his works like *The Battle of the Books*, *A Tale of a Tub*, and *Gulliver's Travels*, Swift uses with skilful subtlety wit, raillery, sarcasm, irony, allegory to perfection to expose corruption in British society across all social classes. Swift's language stands out for its clarity and precision. His prose style demonstrates an easy mastery. Swift exposes injustice, folly, unreason through his pithy prose.

When Richard Steele started *The Tatler* in 1709 a new vista was opened in the field of neoclassical prose. Periodical essays never existed before and gained a popularity that is of legendary proportions. Although *The Tatler*did not continue beyond two years other periodical journals started and gained immense popularity. In 1711 Steele along with Joseph Addison started a daily publication called The Spectator. It left an indelible mark on English Language. The self proclaimed aim of this periodical was "to enliven morality with wit, and to temper wit with morality" as Addison himself proclaims. To combine entertainment with instruction was the primary

aim of the periodical essayists. It gained huge popularity as it catered to the "middle-class" and its taste for refined culture and literature. Addison through his periodical essays aimed to have "brought philosophy out of closets and libraries, schools, and colleges, to dwell in clubs and assemblies, at tea-tables and coffee–houses". A commendable portion of the readership consisted of women. The periodical essays purposed to improve the morals and social manners of the people as well. The prose style of Steele came with a spontaneity and candour of a coffee-table chit chat. Addison's prose style is in contrast lucid and precise. A polish, refinement, and studied ease graced Addison's prose style.

Daniel Defoe wrote abundantly in the Eighteenth Century on matters pertaining to politics, religion and commerce. His fame rests on works of fiction like *Robinson Crusoe*, *Moll Flanders* and *Roxana*. He wrote numerous pamphlets and published them anonymously. Unfortunately not much of them are available to this day. He ran a periodical called *The Review* from 1704 to 1713. Defoe's episodic novels and journalistic style of writing became extremely popular even after his time, and had long lasting influence.

Having discussed some of the important prose authors of the Restoration and Augustan Age it seems only pertinent to talk about Dr. Samuel Johnson who lent his name to the age that slowly concludes the neoclassical wave and merges into the spirit of Romanticism. Dr. Johnson, noted for his works like *Lives of Poets*, *Rasselas*, and the *Dictionary* is singlehandedly one of the most significant prose writers of his times. He was more of a dictatorial presence inasmuch as a model prose style was concerned. You will read more about him in the last Unit of this course. It is true that previous practitioners of prose like Swift and Addison were extraordinary prose writers in themselves, but they were not really able to offer a standard method that could lead towards the composition of ideal English Prose. Although Johnson's style in *Lives of Poets* is very amiable, clear and crisp as he pens the biographies of English poets till date; yet his prose usually is characterised by a ponderous verbosity. Johnsonian purity is termed often as "Johnsonese" - a style born of imitating Dr. Johnson's purist style defined by the Chamber's Dictionary as "Johnsonian style, idiom, diction or an imitation of it. In effect, this means a ponderous kind of English, full of antitheses, balanced triads, and words of classical origin. Dr. Johnson's literary dictatorship did not last long beyond his lifetime, as the preference for prose style that embraces reason and clarity soon gained prominence as a model for ideal English prose.

Alongside Dr. Johnson and the noted novelists like Richardson, Fielding and Smollett, a huge significance is attached in this period to the political writings of Edmund Burke, and the historical writing of Gibbon.

- **Political writings of Burke**– Edmund Burke (1729-1797) was a master of the English prose. As a follower of the Whig party he represented the citizens of Bristol as their Member of Parliament and showed substantial oratorial skills in the Parliament. Although sometimes degenerating into dullness his speeches often grew powerful in attack and superb in appeal. He was also known to lead the prosecution of Warren Hastings with speeches remarkable for their length as well as substance (1788).

  In English prose Burke's contributions are his purely philosophical writings and pamphlets and speeches. In the beginning of his career Burke was devoted to philosophical writings. Although the philosophical content was ordinary in these pieces, Burke's prose style certainly left a mark on English prose forever with its stimulating language and style. Burke's notable philosophical writings include *A Vindication of Natural Society* (1756), *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1756). The style and ideas of Bolingbroke come under scrutiny in the former piece. It is written with ingenuity although its importance as an original work is compromised at the outset. Burke's attempt at Philosophy in *A philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1756) yields to a work that is lesser recognised for its philosophical merit but more valuable for the literary style and strength.
  Burke's political writings are of eternal value- although the political context of their genesis has disappeared the sheer literary. The political turn of events are quite dizzying in nature. It is impossible to secure a transparent opinion from within it. Burke's astute observation and experience extracts from "the muddy liquid of contemporary party strife the clear wine of wisdom". *On American Taxation* (1774), *Conciliation with the Colonies (1775), Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents (1770), Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), *A letter to a noble Lord* (1795), *Letters on a Regicide Peace* (1797) are important political writings of Burke that immortalise his contribution to the English Prose.

- **Historical Writing of Gibbon**–Edward Gibbon **(1737-1794)** The first volume of *The Decline and Fall of Roman Empire* (1776) bears testimony to the lordly, commanding, majestic prose that Gibbon contributed to English

Literature. Covering the history of a thousand years including all the nations of Europe his work is considered the ultimate work in History in English language. The five consequent volumes of the book were published at a regular interval of two years till 1788. His other important work is his *Autobiography* (1846) which contains information regarding his life. Gibbon for his monumental research and writing is invaluable to English Prose of all times.

2.8.6 Fictional Prose

In this section we shall study a few sample texts from the fictional prose of the concerned era.

You've just read John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress,* a text that shows how the author follows clear and simple language that is free from ambiguity and vagueness. He tries to follow the simple direct style and clarity of the *Bible*. The simplicity and ingenuousness of the biblical prose adds a new dimension to the practice of prose composition of the neoclassical era.

Jonathan Swift wrote for the most part of what is known as the Augustan Age and his satires are a hallmark of his time. His prose with its satiric brilliance exposes the corruption of the society. His bold and manly style of writing is free from superfluous affectation and celebrates the virtues of simple and direct prose, which was typical of this era and also embodied the essential spirit of neoclassic principles. Here is an excerpt from his novel *A Tale of A Tub*:

> In short, what with pride, projects, and knavery, poor Peter was grown distracted, and conceived the strangest imaginations in the world. In the height of his fits (as it is usual with those who run mad out of pride) he would call himself God Almighty, and sometimes monarch of the universe. I have seen him (says my author) take three old high-crowned hats, and clap them all on his head, three storey high, with a huge bunch of keys at his girdle, and an angling rod in his hand. In which guise, whoever went to take him by the hand in the way of salutation, Peter with much grace, like a well-educated spaniel, would present them with his foot, and if they refused his civility, then he would raise it as high as their chops, and give them a damned kick on the mouth, which hath ever since been called a salute.

The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling by Henry Fielding is not only one of the best works by Fielding himself, it is in fact a representative work of the time and is held to be one of the best novels ever written. Fielding calls his work as

"prosaicomiepic" or a comic epic in prose.The neoclassical mode of heroicomical or mock- epic writing is already found in Alexander Pope's *The Rape of the Lock*. What makes *Tom Jones* unique is that it is written in prose and not verse. One more thing that makes Tom Jones unique is its picaresque style where the author follows episodically the "picaro" or a "rogue" protagonist in order give shape to the developing plot.

Here is an excerpt from one of the significant moments of the novel to show the quintessence of Fielding's prose style. It can be noted that Fielding's clear, crisp and pithy prose follows an unaffected direct style.He describes people from different classes, makesreferences to classical texts and contexts and in the process glorifies the neoclassical virtues in the use of his prose.

> Here then this young couple met. They were almost close together before either of them knew anything of the other's approach. A bystander would have discovered sufficient marks of confusion in the countenance of each; but they felt too much themselves to make any observation. As soon as Jones had a little recovered his first surprize, he accosted the young lady with some of the ordinary forms of salutation, which she in the same manner returned; and their conversation began, as usual, on the delicious beauty of the morning. Hence they past to the beauty of the place, on which Jones launched forth very high encomiums. When they came to the tree whence he had formerly tumbled into the canal, Sophia could not help reminding him of that accident, and said, "I fancy, Mr Jones, you have some little shuddering when you see that water."—"I assure you, madam," answered Jones, "the concern you felt at the loss of your little bird will always appear to me the highest circumstance in that adventure. Poor little Tommy! there is the branch he stood upon. How could the little wretch have the folly to fly away from that state of happiness in which I had the honour to place him? His fate was a just punishment for his ingratitude."—"Upon my word, Mr Jones," said she, "your gallantry very narrowly escaped as severe a fate. Sure the remembrance must affect you."—"Indeed, madam," answered he, "if I have any reason to reflect with sorrow on it, it is, perhaps, that the water had not been a little deeper, by which I might have escaped many bitter heart-aches that Fortune seems to have in store for me."[1]

2.8.7 Non Fictional Prose

In this section we shall study a few sample texts from the non- fictional prose of the concerned era.

Here is a selection from Samuel Pepys's *Diary*. In this section Pepys's personal memoir works as a memory of a nation about a momentous and inauspicious event known in history as The Great Fire of London. Noticeable is the vividness and immediacy of the prose which is permeated with a mature, intelligent style of narrating what is observed.

> September 2nd (Lord's Day), 1666. Some of our maids sitting up late last night to get things ready against our feast to-day, Jane called us up about three in the morning, to tell us of a great fire they saw in the City. ... Jane comes and tells me that she hears that above 300 houses have been burned down to-night by the fire we saw, and that it is now burning down all Fish-street, by London Bridge. So I made myself ready presently, and walked to the Tower, and there got up upon one of the high places, Sir J. Robinson's little son going up with me; and there I did see the houses at that end of the bridge all on fire, and an infinite great fire on this and the other side the end of the bridge; which, among other people, did trouble me for poor little Michell and our Sarah on the bridge. ... ...Everybody endeavouring to remove their goods, and flinging into the river, or bringing them into lighters that lay off; poor people staying in their houses as long as till the very fire touched them, and then running into boats, or clambering from one pair of stairs by the water-side to another. And among other things, the poor pigeons, I perceive, were loth to leave their houses, but hovered about the windows and balconys, till they burned their wings, and fell down.

The periodical essayists opened a new horizon in the prose of this age as they brought the serious theoretical issues into the coffee table discussion through their periodical essays. It gained huge popularity as the periodicals gained wide circulation. The most prominent writer of periodical essays was Joseph Addison. Unpretentious, free from affectation and pompousness, Addison wrote with a studied grace in succinct, lucid, and straight forward manner, as you will see in a sample in Unit 16.

2.8.8 Summing Up

In this Unit we have learnt that the prose of Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century was dominated by a neoclassic fervour. The virtues of unostentatious prose served as a vehicle for reason and clarity.These qualities were cherished and practiced by the intellectuals of these two centuries. Diverse kinds of prose were written at this time. Novel and periodical essays gained popularity as soon as these forms were born.The

prose of Seventeenth and Eighteenth century with its astounding achievements left a permanent impact on the growth and development of English Prose.Prose steadily grew to be a vehicle of reason and harbinger of modernity.

2.8.9 Comprehension Exercises

Long Answer Type Questions:

1. What does Neoclassicism stand for? Give a brief idea about the origin and nature of development of Neoclassicism in England.
2. How did Neoclassicism impact the prose of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries?
3. Discuss the Neoclassical impact on non-fictional prose in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth centuries, with special reference to any one author on your syllabus.
4. Discuss the impact of Neoclassicism on fictional prose in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth centuries, with reference to any one text on your syllabus.

Medium Length Answers Type Questions:

1. Which prose forms were born in the Augustan age? How did they enrich the English literature?
2. Assess the contribution of any two notable prose writers of the Eighteenth century with respect to the neoclassical traits displayed in their works.
3. Elaborate the role of Dr. Johnson in the development of prose in English language.

Short Answer Type Questions:

1. Who were the notable prose writers of the Seventeenth century?
2. What are the ideals of Neoclassicism?
3. Write a short note on Gibbon's contribution to English prose.
4. Write briefly on the following:
   Burke's political writings; Jonathan Swift's satires; Dr. Johnson; Periodical Essays.

2.8.10 Suggested Reading

Ford, Boris (Ed.). *From Dryden to Johnson*. Vol. 4 of *The New Pelican Guide to English Literature*. Penguin, 2000.

Kettle, A. *An Introduction to the English Novel*. Routledge, 1951.

Thomson, J.A.K. *Classical Influences on English Prose*. Allen & Unwin, 1956.

Watt, Ian. *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding*. U of California Press, 2001.

NOTES

Module-3
Fictional Prose Literature of the 18th Century

Unit - 9 □ The Beginnings of Prose Fiction

Structure

3.9.1 Objectives

The primary objective of this Unit is to introduce you to the conditions leading to the emergence of the novel in eighteenth century England, and to explore the idea of the novel as it evolved as a literary genre with gusto in this period. In this context, this Unit shall also take up the socio-cultural factors that led to the emergence of the genre, the kind of themes that came to be reflected in the early English novel, and why it gradually gained importance as "a low mimetic form" as Northrop Frye was to later call it.

3.9.2 Introduction

It is not that prose fiction did not exist before this period; and the novel has its literary precedents too, not only in prose but in other forms of narrative. It is however, at this critical juncture in the cultural history of Europe that we see the advent of a "novel" literary form with mass popular appeal. Our concern in this Unit is to explore the reasons behind this phenomenal rise, and how that paved the way for one of the most popular and abiding forms of English literature. Of related importance in this context are the main theories of the novel that may have developed eventually, but are significant in analysing the early novels as well. The third aspect that must be kept in mind relates to the ideological underpinnings of this literary form.

3.9.3 Factors Contributing to the Rise of Fiction

Investigations into origins are theoretically suspect since such queries lead to endless conjectures. It is therefore neither possible, nor is it our aim to identify "the first novel". In fact, you need to understand that it is not fruitful to rely on simple cause and effect analysis. Instead, it is more rewarding to study the coming together of certain conditions – social, political, economic and cultural – at a time when we also see the emergence of certain texts which are later identified as the first novels. A combination of two major overlapping social movements – the spread of democratisation and the influence of the modern philosophical realism may be identified as most critical in understanding the rise of the novel. We shall now study the detailed implications of these two major factors:

- **The Rise of the Middle Class**: In Core Course 3, you have seen the highly complex class dynamics that had set in with the restoration of monarchy, and its concomitant implications on culture. As a follow through to it, the eighteenth century naturally emerged as a time of transitions and major social upheavals in class structure. Feudalism in Britain was noticeably giving way to a form of capitalism and a market economy dominated by trade. This in turn contributed to awareness among authors about their autonomous presence in a market-place that reflected middle-class values. You will definitely remember the beginnings of the rise of a middle class in the previous century; one that did not quite accept the prevalent social-moral codes that the court espoused with the revival of monarchy. The newly emergent literary forms thus reflect the sensibility and taste of the new aspiring class, a class eager to cultivate social prestige and personal success through education. In the novel therefore, realistic depiction of middle class experience takes the place of the adventures of an aristocratic class found in earlier forms of narrative.
- **Increase in Literacy and Readership**: Women and the working classes formed a significant part of the newly emerging class of the reading public. Spread of literacy and advances in print culture enabled greater access to the texts. On the other hand, increasing prosperity led to greater leisure, and increase in the number of readers. Women enjoyed not only leisure but also privacy, a key component leading to the development of the novel. Not only did women form an important section of the novel reading public, many of the early novels are women-centric, and many of the writers of this period

were women. Excluded from other public social activities, they could devote their time to fiction writing.

- **Growth and Proliferation of a Universal Print-culture:** By the turn of the new century, reduced printing costs, the establishment of a distribution network, and an-ever increasing demand for popular literature provided a major impetus to the newly emergent form of prose-fiction. It is in the eighteenth century that the book trade acquired great relevance and books became widely available. The spread of literacy and subscription libraries helped increase the readership manifold, and the book trade became sustainable by a parallel easing of legal restraints on printing. The transition from manual to mechanical mode of printing brought about what may be described as the print revolution, leading to an entirely new relationship between the text and the reader. At the same time, it brought about major changes in the arena of cultural production. The new technology made possible a more widespread dissemination of the traditional material of oral folk culture, and popular texts would often be read out to a collective audience. The exponential rise in book production also went hand in hand with an increase in literacy. The cumulative effect was a blurring of boundaries between elite print culture and popular oral modes of expression. Along with the circulation of information and knowledge, print engendered a spirit of debate and dialogue and enabled the emergence of new forms of literature.

- **Influence of other Forms of Prose Fiction and the Periodical Essay**: Periodical essays, autobiographies and diaries, histories and travelogues, conduct books, and other popular instruction manuals, philosophical essays and religious tracts, – diverse forms of prose, fiction and non-fiction, contributed to the making of the novel in the eighteenth century. Fielding's *Tom Jones*, one of the significant texts of the period, and one which, in its complex hybridity reflects the spirit of the age, draws on several literary traditions. The picaresque narrative comes together with the quest motif found in the medieval and Elizabethan romances in order to foreground the theme of love versus duty. Fielding's flair for drama and his fondness for the mock-epic form are also evident in dealing with the theme of appearance versus reality and in the portrayal of manners representing every social type.

  A similar preoccupation with manners and "taste" is to be found in the periodical essay. A form which emerged in the early eighteenth century, it needs special mention in the context of the novel for the way it used fictional

personae to address the issue of codes of conduct that was so important to the emerging middle-class readership. A significant component of the cultural background of the novel, this was an urban, scholarly form, aiming to discipline and create taste. It is not surprising then that like most other literary as well as popular forms, the periodical essay had a significant body of female readership, with much of its content addressed specifically to women. Similar concerns shape the discourse of the novel, a more inclusive form, one which extended its reach to absorb features of lesser literary genres that were, however, equally adept at blending fact and fiction.

Activity for the Learner

As a project based activity, you may, with help from your counsellor, make a comparative study of cultural conditions in the Elizabethan, Jacobean and Restoration periods with that of the 18th century, and try to account for the respective dominant forms of literary expression in each of these times. This will also help you to demarcate both the immediate and the long standing effects of the Renaissance. Try to refer to the first Modules of earlier Papers for this activity.

3.9.4 The Idea of the Novel

The name "novel" comes from French *nouvelle*/ the Italian *novella*, both of which bear the meaning "new". However, the term was already in use to denote **short narrative pieces** (as opposed to the longer Romances). In this context, you need to understand that the novelty of this hybrid form is perhaps best understood in terms of its contemporaneity. It dealt with the "now" or relevant/recent past, a setting to which the new eighteenth century middle class readership could relate. This relative freedom from classical restraints led to the proliferation of prose fiction, and in the eighteenth century itself there are several forms of the novel.

A new form, the novel took to experimentation enthusiastically and self-consciously, and the early novels started distinct traditions - epistolary, confessional, sentimental, picaresque, rogue-biography - among others. The two competing (and often overlapping) types of the novel in this period were - the **Epistolary** novel, written in the form of letters, in first person narrative; and the **Picaresque** tale of adventure. Derived from the Latin word meaning letter, the epistolary/journal form of narration enabled a more personal perspective, with its emphasis on the protagonist's

personal thoughts and reflections. It also provided scope for greater realism, unlike the third person omniscient narrator novel. The overtly confessional mode of these novels was particularly suited to the presentation of the heroine's feelings and very often this mode was deployed in novels with women protagonists. If the epistolary or confessional novel is introspective, the picaresque looks outward, charting a journey of adventure. The term "picaro" derives from Spanish, meaning "rogue", and while there were novels which are picaresque in the etymological sense, providing a cheerful amoral perspective on settled middle-class life, the term in the broader sense implies an episodic, loosely structured narrative. Male heroes/anti-heroes are usually the central characters in these novels, although there are notable exceptions.

As a literary genre that solely depended on the printed word, the novel made for a private and intimate reading experience, parallel to the individuation of characters in the narrative. At the same time, working within the forces of a market economy meant relative freedom and isolation of the author, thus enabling experimentation. In spite of the universality and popularity of the novel, it is somewhat tricky to pinpoint its specific features, and this is perhaps because as a genre it permits immense scope for diversity. Yet certain general features need to be identified, if only to identify the departures from the conventional idea of the novel. These may broadly be classified on the following lines:

- The novel is usually a long prose narrative that is inclusive and large in scope. It therefore presents a number of characters engaged in a variety of situations.
- Formal realism has been recognised as one of the defining features of the eighteenth century novel and the novel in general. This convention prioritises particulars over abstractions and seeks to portray "real" situations and people. Another important aspect of formal realism is the cause and effect design of the plot. The novel therefore usually deals with predominantly middle-class protagonists in believable, everyday contexts, using familiar, colloquial language. Even *Robinson Crusoe*, the quintessential tale of adventure, which, for the large part deals with a single character isolated from society, presents his extraordinary endeavours in terms of everyday mundane and recognisable activities. It is however the works of Richardson and Fielding, the major practitioners of the genre in the eighteenth century, with their focus on characters from everyday life that best exemplify an engagement with contemporary society, its mores and norms.
- These protagonists of the eighteenth century novel therefore are not stereotypes or stock characters; rather they are individuals with distinct identities. Focus on

the individual's experiences and interiority is thus crucial in the novel. Naming is a key device in this process of identity construction, and the newness of the eighteenth century novel made it possible to draw names from real life, rather than from tradition. This enabled identification of the readers with the characters as well as with the novelist.

- While realism is repeatedly invoked in the context of the early novel, the spirit of experimentation and movements in directions wholly opposed to realism need to be acknowledged in order to understand the scope and diversity of the genre at the time of its emergence. The parodic mode was enthusiastically adopted by authors such as Fielding and Sterne, and the latter took this self-conscious, ironic manner to its extreme with his innovations. Completely disregardful of established conventions, Sterne uses diverse modes such as autobiography, fantasy, the sentimental narrative, travel accounts - only to subvert all with an exuberant display of mock learning. In many ways, he was much ahead of his times, while at the same time making use of many of the popular traditions of his period, including the picaresque, the travelogue and the sentimental novel of sensibility. Like Fielding, his model too is Cervantes, and he is similarly adept at parody, all the more at parodying the very conventions he employs. The most remarkable characteristic of Sterne's style in his masterpiece *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* is unpredictability: the reader is constantly thrown off guard by the play with language and narrative techniques. Comedy and earnestness combine in this dazzling display of experimentation, with its underlying theme of misuse of learning. Sterne's thematic concerns and stylistic innovations anticipate the works of modern novelists, such as Virginia Woolf and James Joyce. Among his major devices are the use of association of ideas to present the chain of thought in a character's mind, playing with different kinds of temporalities and rejecting the rules of grammar. The eponymous protagonist-narrator of the novel routinely invokes Locke's concept of the association of ideas, only to subvert Locke's hierarchy. Sterne rejects the "normal" procedure of thought whereby simple ideas unite to form complex ones. Instead, he embraces irrationality and spontaneity in the chain of associations, a process considered inferior by Locke. Such a style defies the conventions of storytelling to such an extent that characters, events, the narrative itself – become unreliable and are constantly subject to change. Added to this is the rejection of linearity and chronology – demonstrating the impossibility of beginning a first person account of the protagonist's life from the time of his birth. The effect of such a radical

mode of narration is to draw attention to the idea of the alienation of the individual and the impossibility of communication through language.

- One of the features that Sterne shares in common with most other eighteenth century novelists is the persona of the publicly oriented narrator characterised by a conversational style, directly addressing the reader in a familiar manner. Such a feature also pulls against the realistic fabric of the novel, drawing attention to its fictionality. From its very inception, the novel has struggled with the fact-fiction dichotomy in its attempt to present fiction as truth. Apart from formal realism, eighteenth century novelists made use of narrative strategies such as sentimentalism, which worked contrary to the referential principle of realism and relied instead on the agency of emotions.

3.9.5 Representative Themes in the 18th Century Novel

❖ **Social Realism and the Middle Class:** Modern philosophical realism of this period rejected the idea of understanding reality in terms of universal truths and in its place privileged observable particular details. The emphasis shifted to the individual's perception of experience and a notion of identity developing through memory. Realism is most often identified as the dominant mode in eighteenth century representation, and the novel is the form which best exemplifies this desire to project a realistic and authentic vision of everyday middle-class experience. The concerns and values of this new upwardly mobile class, gaining in confidence and desirous of seeing itself represented, is reflected in the realistic novel, which replaced the earlier forms of heroic literature.

Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe (1719)*, often regarded as the seminal work in the history of the novel, is perhaps better understood as a transitional text: while it is obsessively taken up with the notion of authenticity, it remains, in many ways, an extraordinary tale of adventure and heroism. It disguises itself as a record of everyday experiences, presented in minute realistic detail. The exceptional feats achieved by Defoe's protagonist are made to appear normal and commonplace, so much so that Crusoe becomes Everyman, the representative of the enterprising eighteenth century individual. The most remarkable feature of Defoe's mode of representation is his audacious insistence on factuality: he denies altogether the fictional status of his account and denounces the very genre he is credited with pioneering. It is perhaps this

obsession with realism that qualifies *Robinson Crusoe* as an eighteenth century "novel", although in most other ways, this story of the marooned hero isolated from society does not quite share the ideological space of the "novel" genre.

It is with Samuel Richardson's *Pamela; Or, Virtue Rewarded* (1740-41) that we enter the arena of the novel proper, that was positioned firmly in the internal mindscape of the aspiring middle class individual. Both Defoe and Richardson deploy the technique of denying the fictionality of their texts; Richardson, however, shows greater concern for the novel form in his dexterous handling of the epistolary technique and the resulting multiple points of view such a strategy enables. The first person mode of narration continues to be important, and this may be related to the bias towards realism in this period. The autobiographical mode here leans towards the confessional, taking us into the minds of women who inhabit the domestic space. As in Defoe, the themes of social aspiration and individuals carving their own destinies are central to the plot, and the marriage of Pamela to her aristocratic persecutor at the end of the novel demonstrates the ascendancy of the new middle class ethics of virtue and respectability over the libertinism of the nobility.

Fielding's variety of realism is different from that of Defoe and Richardson: he abandons the literal realism of his predecessors to practise a more selective kind of representation which aims to present the truth about human nature. At the same time, the more obvious fictionality of his account is balanced by the sheer energy and spirit that informs the text, making it one of the most enjoyable novels combining romance and comedy. In his masterpiece, *The History of Tom Jones, A Foundling* (1749), he further expanded his theory of the novel defining it as a "heroical, historical prosaic poem". He emphasises the comprehensiveness of the new genre and insists on lifelikeness and a realistic mode of presentation. The first of the novelists to consciously articulate a theory of the novel, Fielding presents us with a broad canvas, giving the novel epic scope and a well-defined structure in keeping with the eighteenth century notion of universal order and reason. At the same time, such a perfect design and the technique of the omniscient narrator directly engaging with the reader works against plausibility, adding to the idea of a fictional construct, a form designed to present a moral vision.

- **Didacticism and the influence of Puritanism**: Among other things done by Puritanism that you have read of in Core Course 3, it also provided a major boost to literacy and individual reading, with its emphasis on the reading of the

Bible in the vernacular. Protestantism prioritised the *Bible* along with the emphasis on the experience of solitary reading. At the same time, there was almost a paranoid obsession with the dangers of unsupervised literacy, specially the effect this may have on impressionable young women. The eighteenth century novel is shaped by the dual concerns of morality and nature. While it was imperative to represent nature in realistic terms, it was also equally important for the author to be conscious of his social responsibility as an instructor. Both Richardson and Fielding, in their own ways, work within a shared framework of the idea of the novel: the idea of a moral universe, in which the actors serve as examples. Fielding's parody of Richardson may thus be understood as both critique and tribute – a rejection of the excessive sentimentality of Richardson did not necessarily mean disagreement with the moral scheme presented in his works. Fielding, more so than Richardson perhaps, was aware of engaging with a new literary form, and entered the literary arena with robust good humour, challenging Richardson's overly sentimental and moralistic sense of propriety. His first novel begins with an intertextual parodic nod to Richardson's hugely popular *Pamela*, and exhibits his characteristic flair for satire combined with easy-going tolerance of human frailty. Yet, the moral ambiguity of a protagonist such as Tom Jones does not go against the overall didactic design of the novel.

Although there were moral concerns about the new genre of the novel, the radical nature of the form was easily disguised by the novel's participation in the discourse on instruction and moral improvement. As the novel gained respectability, literature became a commodity, a profitable venture for authors and publishers. London was the centre of publishing, although there was a steadily growing provincial market for morally uplifting tales such as that of the servant girl Pamela who climbs her way up the social ladder and into respectability. In the figure of one of the pioneers of the novel, Samuel Richardson, we find the dichotomy between instruction and entertainment resolved as he makes easy transition from publisher to author, via the publication of a series of instructive letters. A successful printer, he grew in rank by publishing moral manuals and journals to encourage learning. Later, he also published novels by other writers, including Defoe, Sarah Fielding and Jane Collier.

- **The anti-novel discourse**: The propensity for edification (teaching morals) led to the anti-novel discourse, a phenomenon which grew concurrent with the rise

of the novel. The fear of the novel was, in many ways, a continuation of the fear of the theatre, the earlier form of Puritan response to popular entertainment. The novel became a greater cause for concern because of its intimate association with print, a technology that made for widespread dissemination, anonymity and preservation. While the novel was recognised as a popular and effective form of entertainment, there existed, at the same time, a fear of this young genre, very often regarded as being contrary to knowledge and philosophy. Dr Johnson, in spite of his own familiarity with the major novels of his period, dismissed the novel-reading public of his time as "the young, the ignorant, and the idle". You can understand that this reflected a common anxiety about the 'corrupting' effects of the radical new genre which did not have any literary pedigree in an age when lineage mattered most. At the same time, he was acutely aware of the value of "publishing", an activity he tellingly defined as "to put a book forth in the world". This dichotomy is discernible in the text which is often identified as the first novel: Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, which is a work of fiction cleverly disguised as *fact*, and one which deliberately rails against fiction as dangerous untruth.

Richardson, Fielding and the later writers continue to play on the theme of fact versus fiction, making clear the intent to instruct and improve. Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* (1759), published not long after the carefully designed narratives of Richardson and Fielding, presents a picture of disarray, subverting the idea of realism by taking realism itself to another level. If Richardson's focus is on the inner life of the individual, presented in its multi-layered complexity through manipulation of the epistolary technique, and in unfolding a plot through correspondences in order to present different points of view, Fielding's comic vision seeks to present a vivid picture of mid-eighteenth century England in all its diversity, teeming with satirical sketches of stock characters, representing the truth about nature in an "epic" manner. Sterne's narrative style, on the other hand, celebrates experimentation for its own sake, while constantly engaging with the question of the relationship between reality and realism. The major novelists of the eighteenth century therefore engaged with the anti-novel discourse in their own ways, most often attempting to justify their craft in terms of an overriding moral consciousness. The most subtle and innovative engagement with the current cultural anxieties centring round the novel is seen in the writings of Sterne.

- **Class:** Questions of rank and social status occupy a prominent place in eighteenth century literature. The three most important novels by Defoe,

Robinson Crusoe, Moll Flanders (1722) *and Roxana Or The Fortunate Mistress* (1724) are fictional autobiographies of characters living in the margins of society and take the form of tales of adventure in which the heroic and the commonplace come together. Sharply realistic and moralistic at the same time, his world is populated by solitary protagonists who survive immense odds within the social order or outside it. Though often immoral and unscrupulous according to existing standards of morality, they are shown to be penitent. In *Moll Flanders* and *Roxana*, both the heroines are fallen women, and their struggle to negotiate between money and power on the one hand, and marriage and respectability on the other, acts as a commentary on contemporary society. In his other novels, Defoe experiments with other genres, including travel literature and the historical novel. While *Colonel Jack* (1722) traces the familiar trajectory of the eighteenth century novel of social mobility – from poverty to prosperity and criminality to respectability, *Captain Singleton* (1720) uses travel narrative and account of piracy to yet again raise questions about existing socio-economic practices. If the character of Roxana sharply brings into focus the economic vulnerabilities of eighteenth century women, the character of hero-outlaw Captain Singleton shows how there is not much to choose between legitimate trade and piracy. *A Journal of the Plague Year* (1722), written in the form of a journal, blends fact and fiction to present a fascinating glimpse into a period of the city's past, yet again sympathising with victims and survivors, characters who earn admiration for their perseverance.

If Defoe's narratives tell the story of the sufferings and the rehabilitation of marginalised members of society, Samuel Richardson's novels trace the passage of individuals from one social class to another, showing a society in transition. Success-stories such as that of the servant girl Pamela, and tragedies such as that of the high-born Clarissa can be understood as part of the context of social change, at a time when the rising middle class was consolidating its position with its emphasis on the notion of virtue. As in Defoe, the themes of social aspiration and individuals carving their own destinies are central to the plot. The eponymous heroine of Richardson's first novel, *Pamela; Or, Virtue Rewarded* (1740-41), shocked contemporary readers with her questioning of class hierarchies. At the same time, it illustrated the possibility of success in a society that placed great premium on self-help and enterprise, while adhering to the middle –class notions of respectability. Written in the forms of letters and journal, this novel was the outcome of a commissioned project to compose a manual of letter-writing for the semi-literate. Richardson's next novel *Clarissa,*

or, the History of a Young Lady (1748) is a psychological masterpiece, again using the epistolary form. Structurally, it is a tragedy, nullifying the idea of the reformed rake. Clarissa, unlike Pamela, is from a prosperous background; her persecutors are her family who attempt to marry her off to a detestable wealthy man.

The double-edged nature of the social construct of virtue is best highlighted in Henry Fielding's first foray into fiction *An Apology for the Life of Mrs Shamela Andrews* (1741) which presents a parodic portrait of Richardson's Pamela as a scheming social climber while constantly drawing attention to her virtue. His next work, *The History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews* (1742) also begins as another parody of *Pamela*, recounting the attempted seduction of Pamela's brother by the aunt of Mr B, the villain-hero in Richardson's novel. However, the novel develops independently, presenting the comic escapades of Joseph Andrews and his companion Parson Adams. Fielding abandons the epistolary form of Richardson and introduces the third person omniscient narrator to present a gentle satirical commentary of his time. For this, his model was the picaresque tradition of Cervantes, best illustrated in his masterpiece *The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling* (1749) which is best remembered for its ironic presentation of social hypocrisies and its blend of satire and sentiment. The question of class is raised in the title itself, with the author seeming to question accepted notions of respectability by selecting a roguish orphan as his protagonist. Yet the radical nature of such a choice is undermined at the end: the foundling hero who faces numerous obstacles when he falls in love with the daughter of a wealthy neighbour is revealed to be the nephew of his benefactor, the kind-hearted country gentleman Squire Allworthy. His respectable parentage serves to demonstrate that beneath outward roguery lies essential goodness, and also ensures the restoration of the stability of the social order and class hierarchies. For a better understanding of this, you may refer to the following link that gives you the plot summary of the novel:

http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/tomjones/summary.html

- **Gender/The Woman Question:** Related closely to the questions of class were the question of gender, with the latter perhaps giving rise to more debate. The evolution of the novel is intimately linked with the construction of notions of femininity and the ideal of domesticity. Contemporary advice literature constantly emphasised the need to define and regulate women's behaviour and sexuality, and these concerns are echoed in the related genre, the novel. Blatantly

didactic in nature, fiction of the period sought to protect its literary space and ward off criticism about the ill-effects of novel-reading. The misogynistic critique of the novel focussed primarily on the ill-effects of a genre popular especially among women, both in the role author and reader. It was therefore often regarded as a trivial, even a corrupting medium, leading to idleness and immoral behaviour. Women were regularly warned about the pitfalls of reading novels and romances and as if in an attempt to pre-empt such criticism, the eighteenth century fictional heroines are almost universally portrayed as embodiments of domestic virtue or at least aspiring towards this ideal.

Defoe's women protagonists are anything but virtuous, and are often regarded as transgressive proto-feminists (you can understand this term as implying that these characters in a way, anticipated feminism as a movement that developed later), following their own desires. Drawing on the conventions of rogue autobiography, he unfolds the life and escapades of Moll (*Moll Flanders*) as a character more to be admired for her liveliness rather than condemned for her lapses. *Roxana* presents a darker and more cynical vision, without providing any easy resolution or answers. The events of the novel are presented from Roxana's perspective; yet she does not emerge as a likeable heroine. Although the portrayal of his heroines is marked by moral ambiguity, the didactic framework in his novels ensures conformity to society's expectations.

The epistolary mode, which became more popular as the novel as a literary form evolved, particularly suited the need to articulate the answers to society's unease over the secret desires and motivation of women protagonists. At the same time, such a point of view also justified the novelist's craft, by virtue of functioning as either a confessional or a manual for improvement of women. Letters were a popular and legitimate form of literature from the time of Aphra Behn, whose prose fiction prefigures the rise of the novel proper in the eighteenth century. It is the epistolary mode which again enabled the authors to subvert the dominant patriarchal ideology of passive femininity and modesty and present their heroines as enterprising individuals aspiring to break free from their conventional social roles.

Richardson's protagonists are women, caught between social restrictions and personal desire. The didactic scheme of his first novel is indicated in the title itself, which presents the heroine as the model of virtue which ultimately emerges victorious. Pamela's trials begin when the elderly lady of the estate where she is employed as a servant dies: the latter's son, Squire B, attempts

to seduce and kidnap her, but she resists his advances, and in the end succeeds in reforming him when he comes to know of her concern for his well-being. Nonetheless, Pamela remains an unreliable narrator, and we cannot be completely sure of her motives. Richardson further complicates these notions of class, gender and virtue in his next work, *Clarissa*, which presents a reversal in the didactic scheme, with the punishment of the guilty in place of "virtue rewarded". Clarissa's tragedy begins when she escapes with the help of the villain-hero Lovelace, who increasingly reveals himself as a brutal tormentor, determined to take advantage of the vulnerability of Clarissa. She wards off his advances but is raped and dies of a broken heart. Pamela and Clarissa are both ideals of virtue, yet their personal narratives cannot be taken at face value. Clarissa claims to be wholly truthful, but secretly cherishes feelings for Lovelace just as the latter's cynical amorality is shaken by Clarissa's principles. These tragic protagonists, though they are deeply attracted to each other, represent opposed value-systems. A complex web of correspondences, between Lovelace and his confidant on the one hand and between Clarissa and her friend Anna on the other bring out the moral ambiguities in the central relationship. These "readers" within the text provide us with multiple perspectives, and though the tale is seemingly one of a virtuous heroine violated by an amoral libertine, the subtext draws attention to the ambivalence in the narrative.

Though often left out from accounts of the eighteenth century novel, the women novelists of the period were very popular in their time and played an important role in the development of the genre. Among the major names are: Sarah Fielding (1710-1768), Frances Sheridan (1724-1766), Charlotte Lennox (1730-1804), Frances Burney (1752-1840), and Anne Radcliffe (1764-1823). Like the other novelists of their time, they experimented with different traditions. The work of the women novelists provides a unique perspective on eighteenth century life. Frances Burney not only presents a satirical portrait of social hypocrisies, but more importantly, explores the question of female identity through her women-centric novels such as *Evelina* (1778) and *Cecilia* (1782). Charlotte Lennox's famous novel *The Female Quixote, or, The Adventures of Arabella* (1752) offers a parallel perspective through parody, and sets up a dialogue between the novel and the romance, denouncing the latter. Sarah Fielding, the sister of Henry Fielding experimented with genres such as the sentimental novel and didactic literature for young readers, specifically girls.

- **Spirit of Enterprise:** The early novel betrays a certain restless energy, both

in terms of form and content. The Protestant spirit of enterprise and hard work that formed the guiding principle of the upwardly mobile working and middle classes during this period of quick transitions is clearly manifest in the themes and subject matter of these novels. The popularity of *Robinson Crusoe*, the landmark text that in many ways defined the agenda of the novel, attests to the importance of labour and self-help in a society geared towards progress in terms of social mobility. Defoe's protagonists display a characteristic initiative for action and flair for adventure in spite of their marginalised status. Though obviously related to the religious ideology of Protestantism, such exuberance is clearly in excess of any straightforward notion of virtue, as can be seen in the accounts of Moll and Roxanna. The relationship between the notions of virtue and enterprise forms the subject matter of Richardson's *Pamela,* the exemplary story of a servant-girl who succeeds by marrying her aristocratic persecutor. This also serves as a testimony to the overriding value of work-ethic in a culture that prioritised tenacity and enterprise over rigid class hierarchies.

- **Travel/Quest motif:** From Robinson Crusoe to Roderick Random or Tom Jones, the protagonists of these early novels eagerly embrace the life of adventure. Perhaps this accounts for the widespread use of forms such as the *bildungsroman*, the picaresque and the romance in these novels. The popularity of travel literature in this period is evident from the proliferation of historical and semi-fictional accounts. Defoe capitalised on this trend in *Robinson Crusoe* by not only sourcing material from actual memoirs but also by creating a framework which lends credibility to the fictional narrative. Fielding redefined the novel by accommodating the spirit of picaresque within a broad moral vision. In the works of the later novelists, Smollett and Sterne, the novel mostly moves in the direction of the episodic tale of adventure, lacking the tight structure of the works of Richardson and Fielding. Smollett's rogue-heroes are, in the end, also reformed and assimilated into the mainstream. The escapades of the tellingly named Roderick Random or Peregrine Pickle enable the author to launch a sharp satire against the prevalent malpractices and hypocrisies of his time. *The Expedition of Humphrey Clinker* (1771) is a more experimental work, combining the epistolary and picaresque traditions in which a set of characters write to each other, describing their travels. The different perspectives provided by the diverse characters add up to a delightfully comic

picture. Smollett's innovations can also be seen in this use of multiple perspectives and intertextual references - to his own earlier novel *Ferdinand Count Fathom*. Combining satire, sentimental correspondence and ludicrous humour, this text has an overall effect of sheer gaiety.

- **Realism versus Sentimentality**: Realism and sentimentalism are often understood as diametrically opposed traditions, with realism's focus on the mundane and the everyday, and sentimental literature's emphasis on affective storytelling. While formal realism generally prioritises the public sphere or man in society, in sentimental fiction the emphasis is on the individual's interiority and subjectivity. The affective appeal of sentimentalism, as opposed to the referential logic of realism, made the former particularly apt for voicing the desires of women characters. Women novelists of the period therefore readily adopted the mode. Sarah Fielding's *Adventures of David Simple* (1744) is an early example in this genre, although the sentimental novel became increasingly more popular in the latter half of the century. Richardson's first two immensely successful novels *Pamela* and *Clarissa* present the woman of feeling, while his later work *Sir Charles Grandison* in a way demonstrates how the portrayal of a virtuous hero with focus on the public life of action fails to sustain interest. Nonetheless, the ideal of the man of feeling was an important construct in eighteenth century culture with its emphasis on refinement and taste. "Sentimental novel" was a label frequently used by the writers of the time, whose highly charged and emotive fiction can be understood in part as a reaction to Enlightenment ideas of reason and also in terms of the influence of philosophers such as Rousseau, David Hume and Adam Smith. Rousseau's idea of the natural goodness of man and Adam Smith's and Hume's stress on the relationship between morality and action find reflection in these novels of sensibility.

  As a genre, the novel of sensibility became predominant in the second half of the eighteenth century, and towards the end of the century the ideal of sentimentality had moved towards a pejorative notion of excess of feeling. Parodies of the sentimental novel began early, Fielding's *Shamela* being an important example. In Sterne we find a more complex blend of wry humour and sentiment, with his witty take on Smollett's *Travels Through France and Italy* (1766). Sterne's *Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy* (1768) parodies not just Smollett's ill-humoured account, but the very genre of the travelogue with greater focus on the protagonist's experiences and interactions

than on descriptions of travel or destinations. The narrator is Parson Yorick, the "sentimental traveller", through whom Sterne engages with the contemporary notion of sympathy to present a nuanced understanding of the various aspects of such a philosophy. The well-meaning protagonist who is at the same time readily susceptible to amorous scrapes makes for a text which combines irony with genuine feeling. In place of the usual easy equation between virtue and feeling, in Sterne we find an awareness of the double-edged nature of sentimental benevolence, the possibilities of self-indulgence under the cover of tenderness and charitable fellow-feeling.

While the novel of sensibility developed later in the century, it has to be remembered that sentimentalism is one of the driving and defining forces of the eighteenth century novel in general. If realism insists on authenticity, sentimentalism relies on emotion in such a project. The rivalry between the two modes is seen in the proliferation of parodic and satirical literature which ridiculed excessive sentiment and hypocritical posturing in the name of virtue. The target of these attacks is the manner of presentation or the surfeit that is associated with sentimentalism, not the moral consciousness underlying it. Although realism and sentimentalism are often regarded as opposed traditions, eighteenth century prose fiction therefore saw the coming together of these modes in a way that ultimately points to their unity of vision. Both traditions share a common agenda of moral action as ideal, with both attempting to define virtue and moral agency in diverse ways. These modes seldom operated in isolation; instead, eighteenth century literature shows how the politics of suffering and sentiment lends itself to effective realistic presentation.

3.9.6 Major Theories of the Rise of Fictional Prose

The seminal work on the theory of the novel is Ian Watt's *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding*, first published in 1957. Since then, several other theoretical works have attempted to explain areas not explored by Watt's thesis. Watt links the emergence of the novel to the rise of the middle class and its requirements, and emphasizes the notions of originality and authenticity in the idea of the eighteenth century novel. He relates modern philosophical individualism to realism, a mode which he considers to be foundational in the evolution of the novel as a form. Later theorists of the novel have questioned the linearity and the gaps in Watt's account and have drawn attention to forms of the novel that do not adhere to the conventions of formal realism. Watt has also been critiqued for failing to take into account the sizable number of women novelists of the period. Later

theories point out the importance of other modes such as the satirical and the sentimental, which trace their lineages from traditions different from realism. The eighteenth century English novel is perhaps best understood as a hybrid form, combining features of multiple traditions. The search for prototypes of the novel will take us back to the sixteenth and seventeenth century prose narratives or to the even earlier popular verse narratives of the Middle Ages, the Romances. At the same time, the novel borrowed liberally form current literary and non-literary forms, thus bringing together old and new traditions.

3.9.7 Summing Up

In this Unit you have learnt about the factors behind the rise of the novel as a literary genre at this point of time, its earliest beginnings and the ways in which the new genre contributed to a unique trend in literary history hereto. You must have noticed how closely, right from its beginnings, the novel has come to be associated with ways of life of a large section of society in a way that no literary type has ever been. This will be a major ground behind the abiding popularity and interest of the novel in succeeding times. With help from your counsellor, you may analyse why this is so. Remember, Northope Frye called the novel a 'low mimetic form'. You are definitely expected to relate this in the larger context of this literary type.

3.9.8 Comprehension Exercises

Long Answer Type Questions:

1. What were the factors leading to the emergence of the novel in the eighteenth century? Discuss the rise of the new genre in the context of the larger intellectual and social changes in the period.
2. Discuss literature's relation to reality in the light of the emergence of realistic fiction in the eighteenth century.
3. What were the major genres and traditions that contributed to the shaping of the novel in the eighteenth century? Write your answer with reference to the major novels of the period.
4. Critically comment on the diverse eighteenth century concepts and forms of the novel, with reference to the defining texts of the period.
5. Show how the discourse of didacticism and sentimentality formed a central part of the novel writing enterprise in the eighteenth century. Comment on the relation between realism and sentimentalism in the fiction of the period.

Medium Length Answers Type Questions:

1. Show how and why the picaresque tradition gained prominence in 18th century fiction.
2. Write a note on the major women novelists of the period and give reasons for their popularity.
3. How did the print culture evolve in the 18th century? What was its contribution to the spread of the novel?
4. Write a short note on the major theories on the rise of the novel.

Short Answer Type Questions:

1. Show how the travel or quest motif formed an important part of many of the major texts of the period.
2. Write a short note on the parodic and satirical fiction of the period.
3. Discuss in brief Fielding's idea of the novel.
4. Write a short note on Sterne's anti-novelistic techniques.
5. Write a short note on Richardson's *Pamela* as a psychological novel.

3.9.9 Suggested Reading

Allen, Walter. *The English Novel: A Short Critical History*. Penguin, 1970.

Backscheider, Paula R. and Catherine Ingrassia (Eds). *A Companion to the Eighteenth Century English Novel and Culture*. Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.

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Wiley, Basil. *The Eighteenth Century Background*. Beacon, 1964.

Unit - 10 □ The Major Novelists of the Eighteenth Century

Structure

3.10.1 Objectives

In Module 3 Unit 9, we have traced the beginnings of prose fiction in the 17th and 18th centuries, and have also indicated the socio-cultural responses that served as enabling conditions for this new literary mode to flourish. In doing so, we have taken up in some detail, the works of the major novelists who are mentioned in this Unit. The objective here is to acquaint you in further detail with the work of the major novelists of the period. While the first three novelists mentioned here were born in the 17th century, most of their mature work was published in the 18th; and to that effect they show continuities across two centuries. This Unit will therefore take up in a sense the carrying down of trends across the 17th and 18th centuries.

3.10.2 Introduction

The English novel culminated from a previous rudimentary structure to its fully developed form in the eighteenth century. It largely catered to the sensibilities of the English middle -class and played a major role in fostering the contemporary societal ideals. The British novelists mainly focused their writing on the maintenance of this prevalent class consciousness, and aptly based the characters of their works on the commonly- accepted public perceptions and attitudes. There were obvious journalistic influences that contributedto the emergence of this particular writing style, for example Swift's social satires and Defoe's factual works. Drawing both from realism as well as the imaginative (heroic romances and the picaresque tradition), the novel as a literary form mainly drew upon some broad themes that appealed to the English readers of the 18th century. Themes such as love and marriage, pleasure and grief, social status, rise and fall in the fortunes of the main protagonist owing to circumstances beyond one's control, division between the rich and poor, quarrels caused by greed, and most importantly family life and morality featured extensively in these novels. Since historically this was a period of transition between the old classical order and the emergence of new learning, the writing style also adapted the mood of leisure and literacy of the broader populace. There was a marked decline in political writing, and the rise of new philosophy (drawn in from Europe) along with the emergent Romantic spirit of fresh idealism, brought on an enlightened interest in human life and nature among the writers and the readers.

3.10.3 Dating the Major Novelists & Their Works

Across the Modules of this Course, you will come across several novelists, at least the major ones. It is therefore prudent to set down some of the noteworthy ones in a tabular manner for you to comprehend easily. So, here we go ...

Date	Name of the Novelist	Literary Work
1704	Jonathan Swift	*A Tale of a Tub,The Battle of the Books*
1719	Daniel Defoe	*Robinson Crusoe*
1722	Daniel Defoe	*Moll Flanders*
1726	Jonathan Swift	*Gulliver's Travels*
1740	Samuel Richardson	*Pamela*

Date	Name of the Novelist	Literary Work
1742	Henry Fielding	*Joseph Andrews*
1744	Sarah Fielding	*David Simple*
1747-48	Samuel Richardson	*Clarissa*
1748	Tobias Smollett	*Roderick Random*
1749	Henry Fielding	*Tom Jones*
1749	Sarah Fielding	*The Governess or, The Little Female Academy*
1751	Tobias Smollett	*Peregrine Pickle*
1752	Charlotte Lennox	*The Female Quixote*
1753-54	Samuel Richardson	*Sir Charles Grandison*
1759-68	Lawrence Sterne	*Tristram Shandy (9 volumes)*
1764	Horace Walpole	*The Castle of Otranto*
1766	Oliver Goldsmith	*The Vicar of Wakefield*
1768	Lawrence Sterne	*A Sentimental Journey*
1778	Fanny Burney	*Evelina*
1794	Anne Radcliffe	*The Mysteries of Udolpho*
1796	Fanny Burney	*Camilla*
1796	Matthew Gregory Lewis	*The Monk*
1800	Maria Edgeworth	*Castle Rackrent*

We will now discuss some of these novelists in a little detail.

3.10.3(a) DANIEL DEFOE (1660-1731)

Defoe was a dissenter, hailing from the middle-class who contributed to a lot of journalistic writings including proposals to reform the English language, women's education, overall improvement of the roads and banking system in England. His first novel ***Robinson Crusoe*** (1719), which is obviously syllabised, brought forth an unprecedented view of the conditions of man's existence and his relation with Nature. He had a matter-of-fact style of presentation and wrote the novel as first-person account of a ship-wrecked trader who is left stranded on an island, far away from the material necessities of western civilization. Devoid of everyday comforts, Crusoe

displays a sense of pragmatic endeavour and piety amidst his alienation. His tale becomes an allegory for British conquest, resourcefulness and success, even if it comes at the cost of his non-white 'subordinate' Friday. The novel eulogizes the indomitable will of man, upholds divine deliverance and redemption and ultimately provides a basic origin story of social relationships.

Defoe's later works such as ***Moll Flanders*** (1722) and ***Roxana*** (1724) focus on the dreary and corrupt life of urban social spheres. The evils of money, unchecked ambition and immorality are highlighted, and the constant referral to humble English middle-class values sets the tone of the novels. Both the female protagonists are shown as independent thinkers, even though the society that they must thrive in provides them with the most sordid of options to secure financial stability. Defoe maintained a journalistic style of writing, concentrating on prudent observations of human life and avoiding any kind of overt romanticizing.

3.10.3(b): JONATHAN SWIFT (1667-1745)

In 1704, Swift published two of his most hard-hitting satires, ***Battle of the Books*** and ***A Tale of a Tub***. While the former presented adebate between ancient and modern books, where Swift sides with his patron Sir William Temple's support of ancient writers, the latter critiques the existing principles of theology in England. As a socio-political and religious allegorist, Swift made his preference for reason over delusional optimism clear.

Swift was well-known for being a misanthrope and his bitterness towards the human race finds savage expression in the allegorical ***Gulliver's Travels*** (1726) written in four parts. Swift keeps the narrative intriguing with the use of humour and imaginative subversions of reality. In Book I, Lemuel Gulliver reaches the land of Lilliputians- an utopian look at European ways of life where everything is in the diminutive scale and Gulliver towers over all life forms. Swift also builds in a political allegory of Queen Anne's reign in the first book.In Book II, Swift attacks human vanities by placing the explorer Gulliver in the land of Brobdingnagians , where he discovers his own insignificant existence in comparison to the giantsand also witnesses the disgusting nature of human bodily functions. In Book III, Gulliver voyages to Laputa, a country of impractical philosophers who are clumsy in building anything with precision, but excel in abstractions such as music and mathematics. In the final book, Gulliver goes to the land of the Houyhnhnms, a race of horses both noble and rational, and shockingly identifies in the bestial Yahoos, who serve them, the worst horrors of his own race. At the end of the imaginary travels, the reader is made aware of the complete wickedness and hypocrisy of mankind by the author and

his satirical style. You will read in greater detail about this work in Module 3 Unit 12, where two of the four books are syllabised.

3.10.3(c): SAMUEL RICHARDSON (1689-1761)

He was a 51- year old London printer, who took to writing his first novel ***Pamela* or, Virtue Rewarded"** (1740), after remembering a real-life story about an innocent maid servant, who successfully resisted her master's attempts on her virtue and eventually went on to marry him. Richardson came upon the idea while compiling a volume of model letters for the masses, especially the one entitled **"A Father to a Daughter in Service, on hearing of her Master's attempting her Virtue"**, which he later developed into a complete epistolary novel. In the novel, Pamela hails from a humble, poor family and is employed by a high-born lord's family, and throughout the plot the idea that an individual can break the shackles imposed by class distinction in society is highlighted by focusing on Pamela being rewarded for her values in the end. The male protagonist of the novel, Squire B. is depicted as vain, cruel, untruthful and bent on seducing Pamela at every opportunity. Pamela, even though she resists every attempt at her honour, is shown to secretly love and admire him in return. Even though Pamela appreciates the finery of clothes and her improved living circumstances in the squire's house, there are repeated reminders of the need for virtuous poverty and at one point she leaves the scene of temptation to return to her humble roots. The reformation of the character of the rake hero, who undergoes a complete moral transformation in the end and proposes marriage to Pamela, may be hard for modern day readers to empathize with, yet Richardson's *Pamela* was successful in aligning its core religious and moral earnestness with the 18th century readers. In 1742, Richardson published *Pamela-II*, which gives a thorough account of Pamela's gloomy life after marriage and her further struggles in keeping Squire B's fidelity in their marriage.

Richardson's next two works, ***Clarissa*** (1748) and ***Sir Charles Grandison*** (1753-54), continue with the epistolary style (letter-writing form) and are both long, detailed and heavily concentrated on characterization of the noble and good-hearted. Clarissa is born rich, beautiful, and virtuous, only to find her material comforts taken away afterthe loss of her Harlowe fortune by an unlucky turn of events. She is depicted as a suffering saint-like figure, fallen from grace and despised by all owing to the wickedness of Lovelace, and only finds redemption in the end though a tragic death. *Sir Charles Grandison* continues with a sentimental tone and the patterns of social relationships that take a closer look into the motivations and feelings of individual hearts. The novel was published in seven volumes, and depicts a long-drawn life

story of the hero who is the epitome of sincerity and good fortune, bringing forth again the discussions on reputation and character, morality and civility.

3.10.3(d): HENRY FIELDING (1707-54)

Fielding, a trained barrister, initially tried his hand at writing burlesque plays, and eventually excelled as a novelist, showcasing the apparent hypocrisy and shallowness of society in a comic light. In 1742 he published ***Joseph Andrews***, written in the picaresque tradition and a quite obvious parody of Richardson's *Pamela*. By reversing the gender of the main protagonist in his novel, Fielding focusses on the need of morality in all spheres of society, giving equal importance to the protection of male or female virtue and chastity. Joseph Andrews loses his employment in the house of his rich mistress, who is shown as a widowed aunt of Squire B; equally depraved and prone to exploitation of her subordinate. By contrasting lust and greed against Christian morals, Fielding underlines the ridiculous nature of conventional understanding of a person's reputation. The misadventures that befall the hero Joseph, his best friend Adams and his beloved the servant girl Fanny, while travelling in the 'real' world, acts as an eye-opener to those who are truly naïve and trusting in their personal morality.

In his other famous novel ***Tom Jones*** (1749), Fielding again draws attention to human foibles, like lack of kindness and selfishness and re-evaluates conventional morality though the depiction of his passionate hero Tom Jones in the mock-heroic tone. The other characters like the gullible Squire Allworthy, the villainous Blifil and the persecuted Sophia, add to the socially motivated nature of the plot and help reveal Fielding's aim of placing more importance on frankness and genuine emotions over pretentious goodwill. His last novel ***Amelia*** (1751), shows the doleful sufferings of a middle-class housewife and brings out the true nature of domestic and social evils.

3.10.3(e): LAWRENCE STERNE (1713-68)

Sterne's ***Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy***, which was published in nine volumes over a decade's time, introduced a new form of novel-writing in English. A self-conscious style was developed by the author, who portrays the extremes of sentimentality alongside jests and parodies in the plot. The inhabitants of Shandy Hall, like Tristram, Walter and Uncle Toby share their life's stories and anecdotes, interspersed with humorous observations, witty dialogues and rhetorical misunderstandings. the novelist experimented with the form by intentionally keeping blanks and typographical marks all over the narrative. Thus the reader is actively asked to participate in filling up the narrative and play a part to complete the eccentric

story. A microcosm of human society is presented through the characters who combine their ridiculous oddities with human excesses of sentimentality.

Sterne's ***A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy*** (1768) again combines morality with crude humour and feeling. It is a combination of a travelogue and a picaresque novel, with gaps interspersing the narrative again to invite the readers to form a closer bond.

3.10.3(f): TOBIAS SMOLLETT (1721-71)

Smollett published his partly-autobiographical first novel ***Roderick Random*** in 1748, continuing the true picaresque tradition of following a hero's adventures and misadventures, but mostly sprinkled with fictional accounts of exaggerated violence. The hero is a young Scotsman, who embarks on dangerous experiences across land and seas, to finally marry his beloved Narcissa and return home to his inheritance. The plot is episodic, digressive, and often unapologetic in depicting the brutalities of life in general.

Smollett's works show more of the influence of Fielding than any other writer, and his next two works ***The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle*** and ***The Adventures of Ferdinand, Count Fathom***, combine humour with the vibrancy and colour of real life situations. Characters are often depicted as commoners, the language used by them coarse and the speed of the progression of plot imitates the rambling nature of a picaro's (Spanish for 'rogue') life in general.

His last novel, and by far the most popular is ***Humphrey Clinker*** (1771),which depicts the opinions of a middle-aged gentleman Matthew Bramble, through letters, and included the tropes of mistaken identity and silly misunderstandings, which are neatly cleared up in the end. The novel manages to bring together the sentimental issues of goodness of the human heart and comic experiences, as Smollett focuses more on the need of hard work in mankind to preserve community life.

3.10.3(g): WOMEN NOVELISTS

An important aspect of 18th century fiction was the appearance of a number of female novelists. They primarily concentrated on the social and domestic scenes of life; the depiction of manners and acceptable social behaviour being the driving factor of most of the plots. The keeping of private diaries and journals was common for women and often their private musings and observations in general would form the outline of the novels.**Fanny Burney** (1752-1840) published her first novel ***Evelina*, or the History of A Young Lady's Entrance into the World** in 1778 anonymously,

which was an immediate success. From the point of view of her naïve heroine, Burney artistically calls out the hypocrisies and pretensions of upper class society and powerful men in general whotook advantage of their position and rank. But she manages to keep the tone light and comic, making sure that the trials and tribulations of her heroine are finally resolved with the help of kind characters in the end. Her second novel ***Cecilia*** (1782) also looks at the defects of contemporary societal conventions with a hint of irony. She was hailed by Dr. Johnson for being an expert in creating unique characters, often caricatures with exaggerations, nevertheless amusing.

Charlotte Lennox (1730-1804), the writer of ***The Female Quixote*** (1752) received praise from her contemporaries such as Richardson and Fielding. In this picaresque novel, the main protagonist Arabella, much like Cervantes' Don Quixote, thinks herself to be the idealized heroine of old romances and ends upcreating fantastical situationsin her imagination. **Maria Edgeworth** (1767-1849) wrote about Ireland and its social conditions, with her novel ***Castle Rackrent*** (1800) offering a glimpse of life of the Irish gentry . **Sarah Fielding** (1710-1768), the sister of Henry Fielding, wrote ***The Governess*** **or, The Little Female Academy** (1749) which is considered to be the first novel written for children. Her first novel ***The Adventures of David Simple*** (1744) was a sentimental romance, published anonymously.

Mrs. Anne Radcliffe (1764-1823) was esteemed as the greatest proponent of the Gothic novel in England, and her novels of terror with psychologically- disturbed characters, kept the readers on tenterhooks. Radcliffe's ***The Mysteries of Udolpho*** (1794) and ***The Italian*** (1797), as well as **Charlotte Smith's *Emmeline*, or the Orphan on the Castle** (1788) successfully managed to combine the domestic with the other-worldly, human emotions with fantastic exoticism, mystery with reason.

One thing to note about these women novelists is that the range of issues they address in their works is no small one. Yet, notice that many of them have written anonymously. What do you think could be the reason behind this?

3.10.4 Publication Industry and Readership

The rising popularity of the periodical press in England, ensured the publication of literary journals like Defoe's *Review* (1704), Steele's *The Tatler* (1709) and Addison's *The Spectator* (1711). The journalistic style of writing found way in essays as well as prose narratives such as political satires and religious tracts. There was sufficient publication of historical writings and biographies and the old ornamental style of prose writing (a derivation of earlier medieval romances) was slowly replaced

by a relatively 'middle style'- straight-forward and direct. By 1760, King George III was in power along with the Tories, and the forces of French Revolution across the sea, brought new inspiration to literature in England. Simplicity in writing forms was embraced and the attention was shifted to mundane, commonplace subjects. Philosophers like Edmund Burke and David Hume catered to the rising interest in new learning, and historians like Edward Gibbon made way for the revival of the study of antiquities. With the growth in prosperity of the middle-class, men and women had time enough to peruse voluminous novels. There was a noticeable shift in the demand of fictional prose catering to bourgeois morality, over popular drama of the last century, and asteady readership for novelsdeveloped.

Henry Mackenzie's novel ***The Man of Feeling*** (1771) belonged to the sentimental school. The plot of **Oliver Goldsmith's** ***The Vicar of Wakefield*** (1766) offered a simple handling of life's troubles as the innocent Dr. Primrose responded to all crisis in his life with great humility and fortitude. Additionally, the rise of the Gothic genre that combined romance with fear of the supernatural, captured the imagination of the readers, with **Horace Walpole's** ***The Castle of Otranto*** (1765), set in medieval Europe and **Matthew Lewis'** ***The Monk*** (1796) getting great praise and attention. Typical tropes of, Gothic novels included eerie castles, haunted mansions, apparitions, moving pictures and elements of horror and cruelty. So you notice how there was a diverse readership of the novel, from the very wide range of themes that were being taken up by contemporary novelists.

3.10.5 Summing Up

- Richardson's success as a novelist firmly established the fact that the middle-class readership preferred a strong moral note in the fictional works of the time. His focus on the fundamental problems of human experience was carried forward by the later Victorian novelists.
- Fielding exposed hypocrisy and selfishness as the greatest of vices in his novels, and preferred openness of heart and zest of life in his characters. He adopted a mocking tone to ridicule the accepted notions of morality in society, and draw out the foibles of pretentious characters.
- Smollett introduced a new note of violence and cruelty in his works and did not shy away from drawing a picture of the brutal realities of life. His depiction of sea voyages and adventures across distant lands have a note of reality in them.

- Sterne combined sorrow with comical reflections in his novels. He experimented with the novel form by intentionally keeping blanks and gaps in the narrative, allowing the reader to make interpretations on their own.
- The rise of the Gothic school and the Sentimental school offered the readers originality and dramatic variety of plot, characterization and dialogues in the novel form.

3.10.6 Comprehension Exercises

Long Answer Type Questions:

1. Write an essay on the contribution made by Samuel Richardson to the English Novel.
2. How did Henry Fielding make a parody of conventional morality in his writings? Discuss with at least two examples of his work.
3. How did Smollett and Sterne combine sentimentality with humour in their works? Discuss with examples.
4. Analyse Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* as an allegorical work.

Medium Length Answers Type Questions:

1. What were some of the features of Gothic novels in England in the 18th century? Discuss with examples.
2. Discuss some of the common themes found in the works of the women novelists of the 18th century. Give suitable examples.
3. Discuss in brief the publication history and readership of 18th century novels in England.

Short Answer Type Questions:

1. How did Sterne experiment with the format of novels?
2. Discuss with examples the use of the female picaresque tradition in Defoe's works?
3. Discuss the contribution made by Fanny Burney to the English novel.

3.10.7 Suggested Reading

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Unit - 11 □ Daniel Defoe: *Robinson Crusoe*

Structure

3.11.1 Objectives

In continuance of the broad objectives that we outlined in Module 3 Unit 9, this Unit will specifically narrow down on *Robinson Crusoe* as one of the earliest complete novels in English literature that captures a range of issues. As a text that carries varying appeals across different age groups, our objective here will be to comprehend Defoe's novel as one of the earliest attempts in the genre at combining fact and fiction with realistic overtones.

3.11.2 Introduction

Robinson Crusoe, published in 1719, was Daniel Defoe's first novel, and it immediately attracted a large middle class readership. This was both because it was an exciting adventure story and also because it had lessons to impart that would be very contemporary in the given scenario. We shall come to that in course of this Unit. In the eighteenth century a text like this could gain wide currency because encapsulated the ambitions and aspirations of an emerging middle-class in England and was shaped

by the spirit of the times. In the present time when the art of fiction is a well established form, Defoe's text can be read by students of literature as an example of an early novel that tries to confuse the reader by trying to pass off fiction as fact. The truth-fiction dichotomy and the use of techniques that can sustain the plausibility and probability of time and action became important features of the form. You will read the work basically because it gives some idea of how the novel as a genre evolved; and for what it represents of the mercantile interests that shaped the destiny of Britain in that century. Renewed interest in the novel hinges on a postcolonial reading of an Enlightenment text that gives us some idea of how 'other' nations and peoples were considered in those times. With these perspectives in mind, we shall now proceed with the Unit.

3.11.3 Defoe's Literary Career

Daniel Defoe today is synonymous with arguably his most celebrated creation Robinson Crusoe, the eponymous hero of his first novel. Even as kids you must have heard of this character and of the novel in some form or the other! You will however be surprised to know that Defoe came to fiction-writing quite late in his literary career. In fact, by the end of the first decade of the eighteenth century, he was already a prolific writer of a miscellaneous body of work, including political and religious pamphlets, biographies, travel accounts, histories and a vast range of journalistic writing – all of which played an important part in shaping his later fiction. His years of experience as a journalist imparted an air of objectivity to his accounts that becomes evident in his eye for detail. In particular, his journalistic pieces are significant in the manner in which they pave the way for his fictional experiments. Focus on the human interest aspect and eye-witness accounts mark his journalistic style; these being strategies later put to good use in his fiction. His familiarity with a variety of popular genres enables him to adapt these in his fictional narratives. After the success of *Robinson Crusoe*, he wrote several other fictional biographies, including a sequel to the text which catapulted him to fame. However, *Crusoe's Farther Adventures* could not recreate the magic of the first work. His other "novels", *Moll Flanders, Roxanna, The Adventures of Captain Singleton, Colonel Jack* and two works of historical fiction: *A Journal of the Plague Year* and *Memoirs of a Cavalier* exhibit the characteristic flair of Defoe's style: a dexterous blend of realism, romance and adventure makes the tales come alive. Of these, apart from *Robinson Crusoe* which you will be studying in detail here, *Moll Flanders* deserves special mention. Published

in 1722, *Moll Flanders* is the story of a tough, streetwise heroine whose fortunes rise and fall dramatically. Both works straddle the border between journalism and fiction. *Robinson Crusoe* was based on the true story of a shipwrecked seaman named Alexander Selkirk and was passed off as history, while *Moll Flanders* included dark prison scenes drawn from Defoe's own experiences in Newgate and interviews with prisoners. That the protagonist is a struggling woman who is driven by the urge to attain respectability in a society that values worth by money, makes the novel a very crucial one in literary history. His focus on the actual conditions of everyday life and avoidance of the courtly and the heroic made Defoe a revolutionary in English literature and helped define the new genre of the novel.

Having briefly summed up the literary brief of Defoe's career, it seems important as also interesting to say a few words on the makings of the man; which in a large way influenced his literary world. Born in the very year of the Restoration, Daniel Foe (that was his original name, which he got changed at 35 to sound more aristocratic!) was the third child of parents who were Presbyterian dissenters. This meant that despite being a bright student in school, he was barred from attending Oxford or Cambridge, and had to pursue higher studies in a Dissenters' institution called Morton's Academy. Though Defoe abandoned his early plans of being a Presbyterian minister, yet his Protestant values endured throughout his life despite discrimination and persecution, and these values are expressed in *Robinson Crusoe*. In 1683, Defoe became a traveling hosiery salesman. Visiting Holland, France, and Spain on business, Defoe developed a taste for travel that lasted throughout his life. His fiction reflects this interest; his characters Moll Flanders and Robinson Crusoe both change their lives by voyaging far from their native England. A fervent critic of King James II, Defoe became affiliated with the supporters of the duke of Monmouth, who led a rebellion against the king in 1685. When the rebellion failed, Defoe was essentially forced out of England, and he spent three years in Europe writing tracts against James II. When the king was deposed in the Glorious Revolution of 1688 and replaced by William of Orange, Defoe was able to return to England and to his business. Unfortunately, Defoe did not have the same financial success as previously, and by 1692 he was bankrupt, having accumulated huge debts. Though he eventually paid off most of it, he was never again entirely free from debt, and the theme of financial vicissitudes—the wild ups and downs in one's pocketbook—became a prominent theme in his later novels. *Robinson Crusoe* contains many reflections about the value of money.

3.11.4 The Fact - Fiction Dilemma in Defoe's Novels

Defoe's novels are mostly in the form of fictional biographies narrated in the first person, pretending to be 'fact'. Apart from minute observation and realistic detail, Defoe's use of narrative frames gives his texts a documentary status. The rhetorical strategy deployed in each of his fictional works operates on the same principle of erasing the presence of the authorial voice, and equating the first person narrative voice as "real", providing a true account of the speaker's experiences. The introductory 'editorial' voice further insists upon the factuality of the narrative, and highlights the dual purpose of presenting such a personal history to the reading public: such tales serve to instruct as well as entertain. Edification and instruction are thus prioritised over entertainment in this scheme, both by the 'editorial' voice and the first person narrative voice. The latter usually distances himself/herself from his/her previous follies and misdemeanours by adopting a penitent stand. Emphasis on reform and return to virtue thus form the thematic core of Defoe's adventure tales, reflecting his deep-seated faith in the Puritan ethic of work and journey towards social and moral progress. Parallel to the outer journey towards progress and struggle for survival therefore, runs an inner spiritual quest for self-improvement. In most of his narratives, ordinary or even less than ordinary individuals find themselves positioned in extraordinary situations. As a recurrent theme, this will be found to effectively synchronise the modern convention of realism with the earlier tradition of romance and adventure.

- **Why and how then does Defoe apply this technique in *Robinson Crusoe*?**

  Often called the first novel, *Robinson Crusoe* is a text that repeatedly and insistently denies its fictionality. It is this 'reality effect' that is today very often identified with the new genre. Despite his own avowed aversion to fiction, the entrepreneur in Defoe was quick to detect the commercial potential of books in an age when readership was fast multiplying. He made the move from journalism to fiction without acknowledging that such a transition had taken place, and without seeming to be aware of the novelty of his enterprise. Prose fiction did indeed exist before *Robinson Crusoe*, but it is this canonical text with its shift away from mythical heroes of the earlier narratives, its focus on the Enlightenment virtues of self-sufficiency and rationality, and its matter-of-fact documentary style of capturing reality that set the tone for the new fiction of the period. This was a fiction which directed itself to the needs of the fast-growing new readership, the emergent middle-class, which could identify

with the individualism of Defoe's heroes (and heroines) and admire the Robinson Crusoe variety of heroism. Thus while *Robinson Crusoe* is found wanting in one of the primary traits of the novel - the presentation of man in society - the unreality of Crusoe's situation and his heroic achievements in the face of overwhelming odds is masterfully covered up by the sheer wealth of mundane, everyday details, and through a process of universalisation, presenting the protagonist as a representative of humanity in general, and of the newly emergent class, the rational economic man in particular.

3.11.5 *Robinson Crusoe* – The Storyline

The novel is purportedly a record of the true adventures of the eponymous hero of the title, prefaced by an editorial note introducing the protagonist to the readers. The first person account that follows can be roughly divided into three parts, the first describing the hero's life before he is marooned on the island, the second detailing his struggles and experience as a solitary survivor on the island and the third part charting out his return to civilisation.

Crusoe's story begins with details of his family background: he is the young son of a wealthy York merchant. He always had a desire to go to the sea, and runs 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." 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.

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.

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.

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. 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 symbolical 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.

Crusoe's journal comes to an end at this point, thus marking the closure of an important rhetorical strategy within the larger narrative, a device which contributes to a sense of the real and more importantly, helps to construct identity, offering insights into Crusoe's character. Yet, the subtext provides vital giveaways which reveal the fabricated and fictional nature of the journal: he deliberately gives a wrong date for his first entry in the journal, matching it with the day of his arrival on the island. Anachronisms mark Crusoe's account, pointing to the subjective and unreliable nature of any narrative. By the time his journal ends, Crusoe is well settled in the island with two homes, self-sufficient and lord of all he surveys. He continues his life on the island by keeping himself busy in different activities and in acquiring new skills.

The next disruption in Crusoe's orderly existence comes when he finds a footprint on the shore, a discovery which terrorises him and makes him run to the shelter of his "castle". At first he thinks it is the doing of the devil, then reasons it must be the mark of a cannibal. His fears are further confirmed when he discovers human skulls and bones, and after this he seldom ventures far from the security of his enclosure. While at first his attitude is non-judgmental and resigned to the will of God, he later turns aggressive and is ready to attack the savages, who visit his island again. Though his faith in God was shaken by the discovery of the footprint, another event makes him realise how fortunate he has been, in spite of his many travails. 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 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.

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

revulsion 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 civilization. Although he is genuinely fond of Friday's company, he does not completely trust him. There is, however, one area in which the civilized master's firm 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 recognize 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.

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". 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.

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".

3.11.6 Important Themes in *Robinson Crusoe*

- **Spiritual journey and regeneration**: The novel can be read as a spiritual autobiography or a Christian allegory in which Crusoe, like the Biblical prodigal son, disobeys his father and as a result can return home only after he undergoes much suffering and is truly penitent. Repeatedly, he is warned for his waywardness, but his repentance is always short-lived, forgotten as soon as he is out of his crisis. He is finally converted halfway through the novel, although doubts continue to plague him as he questions the cruelty of his fate. The design of Providence is an important theme in the novel, the course of the action exemplifying not only Crusoe's extraordinary survival skills, but equally how fortunate he is: he emerges mostly unscathed from his many predicaments. A benign Providence seems to be protecting him, and Crusoe himself recognizes this occasionally, especially at the time of his religious reawakening that follows his illness. So his "island of despair" metamorphoses into Eden, and he is Adam in the primordial garden, a land filled with wondrous opportunities where he is lord of all he surveys. At other times, he is cast in the mould of Job, whose trials finally end when he

is rewarded by god for his patience. Defoe's narrative exudes the Protestant ethic of salvation through work and surrender to the will of God. Crusoe's spiritual journey is presented in the shape of his relationship with God, and his regeneration comes when he finds comfort in the word of God, the Bible.

- **Conflict between Puritan morality and capitalist economic interest**: In *Robinson Crusoe*, the Puritan ethic of work coexists with the capitalist motto of economic individualism, combining spirituality and pragmatism. Crusoe, from the beginning is keen to advance his position through trade, and does not pay heed to his father's wishes. Parental authority is thus defied in favour of personal gain or interest. In terms of the Christian allegory, while Crusoe seems to be duly punished for his insubordination, his experiences differ from that of the parable of the prodigal son in one important respect: unlike the latter, he does not inherit his wealth from his father, nor does he return bankrupt; he earns his immense fortune through sheer hard work and perseverance. Once back home, his spiritual awakening does make him give away his wealth and he is able to curb his acquisitive instincts. However, it is important to keep in mind that Crusoe's variety of Protestant faith is not, in the final analysis, in conflict with the profit principle that guides his actions. The two ideologies in fact work together, with the evangelical drive providing the justification for colonising the heathen "other".
- **Economic individualism and colonisation**: *Robinson Crusoe* is perhaps the most celebrated proto-colonial text and its hero an early colonist who very significantly, establishes, not a republic but a kingdom. He is the proud owner of his possessions, including the slaves he acquires. Although both Xury and Friday are devoted to him, he treats them as dispensable commodities. While Coleridge regards Crusoe as "the universal representative" of mankind in general, James Joyce assesses his persistence, efficiency and practicality as qualities in keeping with Crusoe's spirit of economic individualism and the principle of private enterprise. Crusoe's universal status may be brought to question if we see the way Defoe depicts in detail his hero's adventures in an alien land while devoting little time to Friday's experiences in England. The difference is also one of quality: while Crusoe is presented as a commanding figure, exercising mastery over his surrounding and the other characters he meets, Friday is loyal servant who if he at all initiates action, he does so to either protect or entertain the white Europeans. The bear-baiting episode in England shows Friday in such a role; moreover,

it is all the more significant since it is the only time Friday lies when he boasts of having killing bears in his own land. This may be read as a corruption of Friday's natural honesty as a result of his contact with civilization.

- **Man and nature**: Robinson Crusoe symbolizes 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.
- **Attraction/Repulsion towards the "other":** While Crusoe exhibits the characteristic revulsion of the white man towards the "cannibals" and savages he encounters, he is, at the same time, inexplicably drawn to the other. He is more at home in his island, leading a solitary existence, than when he is back in civilization, amidst family and friends. The only genuine bond he forms is with Friday, and although he cannot completely trust him nor treat him as his equal, he admires the latter for his qualities. This attraction for the other can be explained in terms of colonial discourse which regards the colonised races as at once attractive and threatening. At another level, Crusoe's repeated journeys to distant lands across the seas may be read as the expression of his indomitable spirit of adventure, rebelling against middle class values. Crusoe's identity as an imperialist is largely shaped by his Protestant evangelism, his deep-seated hatred of non-Christians. This explains the exceptional status that Friday enjoys – Friday converts to Christianity and his behaviour is more exemplary than many European Christians.
- **Race, Class and Family**: For a text which has at its centre a man isolated from society, leading a solitary life of a castaway in an island, *Robinson Crusoe* is a text surprisingly obsessed with hierarchies. The account begins with the violation of paternal authority, with Robinson running away from home in spite of his father's wishes, and in the course of the novel we find him duly punished. This act of rebellion against familial hierarchy is mirrored in the theme of turning away from God the father and returning to the fold after his spiritual awakening. Although he escapes from society for a life at

sea, Robinson himself is acutely aware of class distinctions, aware also of his own position. After settling down on the island, Crusoe feels he is the proud owner of the realm, and this sense of ownership is most forcefully and graphically portrayed in his relationship with Friday. The polarities as well as the ambiguities in the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised are played out in the Crusoe-Friday relationship, a strange kinship in which one cannot do without the other. This mutual dependence lasts till Crusoe is delivered safely to his land, among his community. After this point, Friday is no longer needed and neither the author nor the narrator is interested in what became of him. Apart from establishing his domination over Friday, Crusoe is equally quick to assert his superiority over the Europeans who arrive on his island and actually pretends to be a royal governor. One final point needs to be made about Crusoe's sense of hierarchy: the issue of gender. *Robinson Crusoe* is a text embedded in patriarchy and the absence of women in the narrative is telling. Once back home in civilized society, Crusoe, in keeping with its norms, does acquire a wife; however, she figures so marginally in his emotional landscape that he does not even name her. An interesting parallel is his "naming" of Friday: in a way both Friday and Crusoe's wife remain nameless, we do not get to know their (real) names.

3.11.7 Important Characters in *Robinson Crusoe*

- **Robinson Crusoe:** Perhaps the most striking aspect in Defoe's portrayal of his protagonist is the way he presents him in near complete isolation, and not as a social being, as was the general norm in eighteenth century literature. It is Crusoe's physical and spiritual solitude that defines and shapes him. Yet the hero of Defoe's castaway narrative is curiously unmindful of his loneliness; in fact, he seems very much at home in his island paradise, and actually feels threatened when he sees signs of other humans. If his solitude is extreme, it is archetypal, representing the universal isolation of each individual, trapped in his own subjectivity. Crusoe is too busy building up and extending his property to be weighed down by lack of society: his possessions, including the domesticated animals and later Friday take the place of human company. Perseverance and resourcefulness therefore are the hallmarks of Defoe's hero, a man who evolves from a naive young sailor to a toughened and experienced survivor. His evolution is traced through stages – the first is the capitalist stage in which the restless young man repeatedly runs away to sea in the

pursuit of profit. As a castaway, reason takes over as the guiding principle, presenting Crusoe's daily battle for survival in terms of an eighteenth century manual of self-help. At the same time, he continues to follow the profit principle, building up his empire meticulously and single-handedly. The final stage follows Crusoe's spiritual conversion, after which he recognises the role of providence in his life and the value of faith. The spiritual evolution of the protagonist enables us to read the narrative as a Puritan guide for youth, a religious allegory in which Crusoe is cast in the role of the prodigal son or exile who returns as the ideal eighteenth century Englishman, guided by reason and morality. He is also Adam in the primeval garden, learning to recognize his frailties in the course of his adventures. Unlike Adam, he has no female counterpart; yet lack of female agency does not rule out the significance of the issues of gender and sexuality in this narrative. In a sense it may be suggested that this apparent absence point to an important subtext, one in which the masculine protagonist owns and tames the feminine wilderness of the island.

- **Friday:** The introduction of Friday is a brilliant narrative strategy in a text that tells the experiences of the protagonist alone on an unpopulated island – a new character is introduced just when the story tends to get tedious. Friday's appearance is part of the sudden and dramatic series of events which upset Crusoe's settled way of life on an island he had claimed as his own. The character of Friday has drawn critical attention in the light of contemporary post-colonial theory, which take into account his role in terms of race, gender and sexuality. The obvious interpretation is to read Friday as Crusoe's alter-ego, the colonised other, the archetypal slave/servant to Crusoe's imperialist master. Crusoe's role is that of the instructor, tutoring the savage in the ways of civilization and true religion. Yet Friday stands out from the other savages Robinson Crusoe encounter and describes, and in more ways than one, he makes Crusoe question his assumptions regarding the so-called savage races. His deep religious faith, his honesty and gratitude, his close attachment to his family – all the make Crusoe wonder about his innate racial inferiority. Indeed, these qualities serve to present him as a foil to the hero himself, making the latter appear in a negative light. Crusoe's faith was never his strong point and although he undergoes a spiritual awakening, we do not really see him change in a fundamental way. From the beginning, he is seen as someone eager to break free of the ties of family, leaving for the sea against his father's wishes. At the end of the novel, when he returns to England and acquires a family, he does seem much interested in them, and readily gets over his wife's death. The

simplistic master/pupil or superior/inferior binary is therefore brought to question through the presentation of Friday as "noble savage", someone who willingly decides to serve his master rather than return to his people. In many ways, Friday is closer to the Europeans than to other savages, in terms of his appearance and his behaviour. The chief and only point of difference seems to be his religion, yet in this area too, he is finally a better Christian than Crusoe, one whose version of the religion endorses and supports imperialism. Friday is treated as an object and Crusoe never once enquires about his name nor shows interest in his language, and once they return to England, Crusoe has little use of him. Yet the Friday-Crusoe bond is stronger than any other relationship portrayed in the book. It is all the more significant because of the complete absence of any female figure on the island and Crusoe's total disinterest in women and marriage.

3.11.8 Plot and Structure

The first "novel" in the English language is remarkable for its elaborate and contrived structure, although it gives the impression of real life experiences recounted in a straightforward manner. Defoe carefully creates the reality effect framework by means of an editorial introduction, and then allowing the protagonist take over in first person narrative. The editorial Preface, the journalistic style and attention to minute detail accounts for the verisimilitude yet it must be recognised that these are carefully planned narrative strategies. The Editor is not a real life character, but part of the fiction perpetrated by Defoe. At the same time, the Preface denies the fictionality of the account and this prepares the ground for our entry into an extraordinary tale. In fact, the text we now celebrate as the first novel, insistently claims that it is "history", worth narrating for its very incredibility. The editorial preface then simultaneously acknowledges the implausibility of the events narrated and avows their truth. A further dimension is added by the journal, which provides another temporal order, a sense of immediacy and greater authenticity, recording the events as they take place. While it also serves as yet another story within a story frame, thus it becomes difficult to distinguish between the two narrators - the solitary Crusoe on the island documenting his experiences for himself, and the Crusoe who recounts his adventures for readers once he has returned to human society. The distinction between, the journal and the later reminiscence, between private and public is deliberately blurred, in order to create an effect of seamless continuity. With its masterly suspense-building, the deliberate deployment of the introduction, crisis, resolution pattern and clever use

of recurrent themes, this complex text belies its apparent loose, episodic form. The work can be neatly divided into parts: the first introductory or preparatory phase in which a young Crusoe runs away from home and lands repeatedly in trouble because he does not heed the advice of his well-wishers. The second part of his adventures starts when he finds himself marooned on the uninhabited island. This crucial phase is further divided by Crusoe's vision and spiritual reawakening from which point the text takes a new turn. The final part of his experiences takes us back to Europe, and his journey over land to England. The "strange" adventures of the archetypal rebel and exile engaged in perpetual voyage or quest is framed by a return to convention and conformity at the end of the book. Robinson Crusoe is remembered most iconically as the island-hero but the novel ends with him returning to human society, back home in England, where he marries and settles down as a family man. Such reassuring circularity is at the same time rendered exciting with the promise of "further adventures". He is the kind of protagonist who always yearns for more and this is true not only of his capitalist acquisitive instinct, but also seems to apply to the author's desire to capitalise on the possibilities of such a method of storytelling. Although throughout the text there is only one protagonist, the interest never flags, and Defoe introduces new and dramatic events or characters at points where the storytelling is at the risk of becoming monotonous.

There is a circularity in terms of events and characters as well, making for thematic unity. Crusoe the rebel son finds a foster father in first his friend's father, and next in the Portuguese Captain. In terms of a Christian allegorical reading, the father-figure stands for God the father, the guiding spirit and Crusoe represents everyman, journeying towards salvation. Crusoe himself in turn acts as a father figure to two young boys he takes under his wing in the course of his travels, though his role as a father figure leaves much to be desired. Both Xury and Friday he treats as objects although they are emotionally attached to him. His treatment of Xury prefigures his relationship with Friday and perhaps one of the reasons why he develops a stronger bond with the latter is because of Friday's faith. The Xury-Friday parallel is evident not only in terms of their nature and relationship with Crusoe, but in terms of the events that unfold involving them. For instance, the bear-baiting episode featuring Friday is prefigured by an earlier incident in which Xury similarly killed a wounded lion. The presence of Xury and Friday in Crusoe's story serves to highlight one of the major themes of the text - slavery in its many forms. Crusoe himself is a slave at one point of time, and yet while he strongly desires and cherishes his independence, he does not question the institution of slavery. Instead, we see him selling into slavery immediately after their escape from the Moors. This is because

slavery and trade/profit are closely interlinked in Crusoe's world. Religion here plays the key role of justifying one type of slavery over another, and in validating western colonial enterprise. The island over which Crusoe establishes his sway is also at another level the ideal space where the solitary individual struggles to discover himself and his faith. The structure of the novel is thus shaped and bound together by the twin impulses of Protestant faith and economic gain. Structurally as well as thematically, the text is a case-study of accumulation-principle at work, with details piling up to represent Crusoe's steady rise from the state of nature to a civilized man in possession of an empire of his own.

3.11.9 Summing Up

While *Robinson Crusoe* is a landmark text breaking away from earlier traditions, it reinvents the older myths, giving them a new direction. Thus at one level the text works as a brilliant tale of adventure in the mould of the earlier romances, although the mythical hero of the past is replaced by the new age Protestant middle class individual. Yet in spite of his apparent ordinariness, Robinson Crusoe impresses us with his amazing ability in not only surviving extreme odds, but also emerging successful from his adversities. At the same time, Defoe's hero would have reminded his readers of the extraordinary experiences of a real-life castaway, Alexander Selkirk, whose adventures gained much popularity. While capitalising on this kind of travel writing, Defoe made use of yet another popular genre of the period - conduct literature primarily aimed at youth, texts which took on the role of providing spiritual guidance. Crusoe's life therefore can be read as a spiritual autobiography or allegory representing the journey of the human soul towards salvation. This seventeenth century tradition is given a contemporary twist in the eighteenth century context of proto-capitalist enterprise so that the protagonist is now a bourgeois Puritan, who, as James Joyce points out, is indeed "the true symbol of the British conquest."

3.11.10 Comprehension Exercises

Long Answer Type Questions:

1. 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?
2. How does Crusoe embody the idea of the "economic man"? Explain with reference to Crusoe's experiences before and after he is marooned.

3. Critically examine Crusoe as an ideal representative of the Christian faith.
4. How does Friday act as a foil to the character of Crusoe? Assess the relationship between the two and bring out the multiple tensions inherent in such a bond.
5. Show how *Robinson Crusoe* exhibits the forces and contradictions of imperialism at work. How is Protestant evangelism linked to this colonial enterprise?
6. 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?
7. Comment on the plot and structure of Robinson Crusoe. How far is it true to describe it as an episodic tale of adventure?
8. How does Defoe combine and experiment with varied genres in *Robinson Crusoe*? How far is it true to label the text as the first novel? What are the features of the eighteenth novel in *Robinson Crusoe*?
9. What is the connection between Crusoe's willed separation from his family and his fated isolation on the island? If the novel is indeed a spiritual text, then what comment is this isolation on the island making on his behaviour toward his family?

Medium Length Answers Type Questions:

1. What purpose does the editorial preface serve in *Robinson Crusoe*?
2. Comment on the theme of the prodigal son in the novel. How does Defoe work out Defoe's troubled relationship with his father and father-figures in his life?
3. What is the significance of the Xury episode? Does it prefigure Crusoe's later bond with Friday?
4. Bring out the significance of the bear-baiting episode and the role played by Friday in this incident.
5. Why does the novel end with the promise of further adventures? Does this hint of a sequel strenghten or undermine the sense of circularity in the plot of the novel?

Short Answer Type Questions:

1. Why does Crusoe embark on yet another voyage in spite of promising to repent during his ordeal at sea?

2. What are the two significant items maintained by Crusoe which serve to document his experience on the island and provide a sense of temporal order?
3. Give two examples of Crusoe's enterprise and ability to transform adverse conditions into profitable ones.
4. Why does Crusoe react with fear when he sees footprints on his island? Why is he persuaded that it is the work of either the devil or of a cannibal?
5. Which real-life castaway is said to have inspired the tale of Defoe's fictional hero?

3.11.11 Suggested Reading

Ellis, Frank, H. *Twentieth Century Interpretations of Robinson Crusoe*. Prentice Hall, 1969.

Seidel, Michael. "Robinson Crusoe: Varieties of Fictional Experience". *The Cambridge Companion to Daniel Defoe*. Ed. John Richetti. CUP, 2009.

Shinagel Michael ed. *Robinson Crusoe*, Norton Critical Edition. 1993.

Watt, Ian. "Robinson Crusoe, Individualism and the Novel". *The Rise of the Novel*. U of California Press, 2001.

Unit - 12 □ Jonathan Swift: *Gulliver's Travels* Books I & II

Structure

3.12.1 Objectives

In this Unit, we take up another contemporary novel that has cast an abiding appeal on readers across ages for very different reasons. With Swift's stated objective of "vex(ing) the world rather than divert(ing) it", *Gulliver's Travels* will be discussed in this Unit as a novel that makes unique use of satire in prose fiction for the first time in English literature.

3.12.2 Introduction

Can you recall the age at which you first read *Gulliver's Travels* either in the original or translation? Or maybe saw it on your television screens for the first time!

Indeed *Gulliver's Travels* remains popular as a classic of Children's literature, but then, that is only one perspective to this novel. Reading Jonathan Swift's work is still enjoyable and relevant as it deals with contemporary themes like individual versus society or rationality versus emotion, power or strength in the context of corruption and righteousness. It also shows how societies and cultures need to be understood in relative terms and this takes on a very physical dimension when we see Gulliver in the land of Lilliputs and then his stay in the country of the Brobdingnags. In dealing with this abiding text, this Unit will show you that there is in life, no absolute truth or reality; and that perspective or ways of seeing become much more important. The aim will also be to show how in some ways, *Gulliver's Travels* was a critique of reason and even empirical truths that defined the Enlightenment period in Europe and Britain. As we read the nuances of the text, you will discover how other ways of comprehending the world could to a large extent curb Euro-centric pride and ambition especially in the age of colonisation and commerce. You must also remember that Swift, being Irish, was an outsider to England and himself belonged to a colonised country. This makes it an interesting text for us in India as we are able to appreciate the humour and ridicule that underlies this narrative satire that appears like a popular travelogue, but is really much more than that. While your syllabus contains only the first two books, we expect that you will definitely find time to read up the entire work out of interest at leisure!

3.12.3 Jonathan Swift – A Literary Biography

Jonathan Swift (1667-1745) may be regarded as one of the most colourful, controversial, and in a sense, tragic personalities of the 18th century literary scene. He was born to English parents in Dublin. He was a posthumous child, largely dependent on the goodwill of his uncle for his upbringing. He studied at Kilkenny and at Trinity College Dublin where he became a Doctor of Divinity. The circumstances of his birth engendered in him, a fierce sense of pride and a sensitivity which remained with him till the end of his life. He visited London frequently. At first he worked as secretary to the statesman and author, Sir William Temple. Here he also tutored eight-year old Esther Johnson, the Stella of his posthumously published (1766) *Journal to Stella*. Later he became the unpaid propagandist for the Harley-St.John Government then in power. After the fall of this Government following the death of Queen Anne he returned to Ireland where he was ordained as the Dean of St.Patrick's Cathedral in 1713. Though Swift had problems in denying his English parentage, his Irish tracts particularly *The Drapier's Letters* and *A Modest Proposal* justify the love and respect

he had earned for himself as an Irish Patriot. Swift died in Dublin in 1745. He gave a third of his income to the Irish poor who were usually Catholic. Swift, a staunch Anglican priest did not differentiate when helping the needy. The following are his most important works:

1. *The Battle of the Books; A Tale of a Tub* (1704)
2. *The Bickerstaff Papers* (1708)
3. *The Examiner* (ed.); Meditations on a Broomstick (1710)
4. *An Argument against Abolishing Christianity*, *The Conduct of the Allies* (1711)
5. *A Proposal for Correcting the English Language* (1711)
6. *Drapier's Letters* (1724)
7. *Gulliver's Travels* (1726)
8. *A Short View of the State of Ireland* (1728)
9. *A Modest Proposal* (1729)
10. *Conversation* (1738)
11. *Verses on the Death of Dr.Swift* (1739)

➢ *Gulliver's Travels* in Perspective

Gulliver's Travels was published under a pseudonym in London in 1726 by the publisher Benjamin Motte. The publisher had, as Swift complained to his friends, without the writer's permission, censored certain parts of the books because he found them too satirical. In 1735 Faulkner published the *Travels* with necessary corrections and additions according to Swift's dictates. Most of the later editions follow Faulkner.

The title page bears the following inscription-

TRAVELS INTO SEVERAL REMOTE NATIONS OF THE WORLD BY LEMUEL GULLIVER, FIRST SURGE0N AND THEN A CAPTAIN OF SEVERAL SHIPS.

The readers naturally expected another travel book with the promise of unknown wonders about remote places. Writing travelogues was very much in vogue in the 18th century. This could perhaps be linked with the expansion of overseas trade and colonization. This form of popular literature was marked for exaggerated accounts of sea-faring traders and sailors who returned home after their adventures. Swift himself was fond of travel literature and had written in 1720 about reading many "diverting books of history and travel". (Corr, II, 430).

In the same years he annotated *A Relation of Some Years of Travaile into AFRICA and Greater Asia* (1634) by Thomas Herbert. Swift had then complained "If this book was stript of its Impertinence and Conceitedness and Tefious digressions, it would be almost worth reading, and would be two thirds smaller than it is" (Prose Works, V, 243). The following year he wrote to Ford that he was then writing a "History of my Travells, which will be a large volume and gives Accounts of Countreyes hitherto unknown" (Corr, II, 381).

These references suggest that *Gulliver's Travels* could have started as a parody of the genre of eighteenth century travel books. The most famous of the contemporary travel books is Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* published in 1716. In the stylistic feature of accumulating precise details to create a sense of authenticity or verisimilitude and also in the choice of the protagonist as an average middle class narrator, Swift is close to Defoe. But Swift's irony as opposed to Defoe's earnestness sets the two books apart.

Among the other inspirers of Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* was *The Memoirs of Martinus Scriblerus* . It is work of collaboration among members of the Scriblerus Club which satirizes false learning and scholarly pedantry. Martin too visits the 'ancient Pygmaean Empire' before the 'Land of Giants', the most humane people in the world, then the 'Kingdom of Philosophers', who govern by Mathematics', he concludes with an account of how the traveller 'discovered a vein of Melancholy proceeding almost to a disgust of his Species', *The Memoirs of the Extraordinary Life, Works and Discoveries of Martinus Scriblerus* was published in 1741. However, the ideas incorporated in the work germinated during the Scriblerus Club meetings in 1714. Among the members of the club were John Arbuthnot (1667-1735), John Gay (1685-1732), Robert Harley (1661-1724), Alexander Pope (1688-1744) and Swift. The short lived club enjoyed another short span of life in the mid 1720s. The renowned novelist Sir Walter Scott published a multivolume edition of Swift's works in 1814, with notes and life of the author. In its introduction appearing in Volume-II, he mentions certain sources 'of inspiration for Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. Among them is Lucian's *True History*- a fictitious journey through the imaginary countries prefaced by an introduction, in an exquisite vein of irony on the art of writing history. From the *True History* of Lucian, Cyrallo Bergerac took his idea of a *Journey to the Moon* and Rabelais derived his yet more famous *Voyage of Pantagruel*. Swift consulted the books but he is more indebted to Rabelais who satirizes severely the various orders of the law and clergy of his period. Rabelais was one of Swift's favourite authors. A translation of his works by Peter Motteux was published in London in 1694. In 1697 William Dampier published his *A New Voyage Round the World*. Though

Gulliver was by no means a pirate, he has much in common with the hardy seamen with his insatiable curiosity and prejudices of a thoroughbred English man. Here Dampier, Crusoe and Gulliver form a true English triumvirate.

After completing his *Gulliver's Travels* Swift wrote to Charles Ford on 14th August, 1725-: "I have finished my Travells, and now I am transcribing them, they are admirable things, and will wonderfully mend the world rather than diverting it."

It is the great fortune of posterity that whatever the creator's ostensible intention may have been, *Gulliver's Travels* has not only vexed but diverted and entertained the world. John Gay in a letter to Swift on 17th November 1726 said, " From the highest to the lowest it is universally read, from the cabinet council to the Nursery. The politician to a man agree that it is free from particular reflections, but the satire on general societies of men is too severe."

In any study of *Gulliver's Travels* we must bring into account both the fantastically entertaining effect along with the strong satirical element. Before we study the various aspects of the first two books of *Gulliver's Travels* it would be convenient to survey the four books briefly.

3.12.4 The Plan of *Gulliver's Travels*

The first two books of The Travels are by far, the most interesting, though the last book has invited several scholarly controversies and debates. The third book which was incidentally written after the fourth, in spite of its hilarious patches and serious reflections, is generally agreed to be the least appealing. Though you have only the first two books for your study, it is essential to know, at least in brief something about each of the four voyages that Gulliver embarks upon.

- **Book 1**

True to the style of a travelogue the book opens with an account of Gulliver who like Robinson Crusoe belongs to the 'middle-station' of life. He was the third of five sons of a small estate owner of Nottinghamshire. He studied in Emmanuel College and later worked as an intern for an eminent London surgeon, Dr. Bates. These facts along with references, to his struggle with scanty allowances from his father, establish him as a prototype of an average middleclass Englishman. Precisely because of these easily identifiable qualities, his fantastic adventures related in a matter-of-fact dead pan tone, and the psychological changes that he undergoes ground the narrative in a familiar reality.

Not happy in his job as an intern, Gulliver sets out on a voyage and suffers a

shipwreck but is able to save himself by swimming ashore to the island of the Lilliputs who are tiny six inch tall people. They imprison Gulliver but provide him with food and shelter. In return Gulliver rescues them from foreign invasion. Later on, learning about their plan to starve him to death, Gulliver escapes, and is rescued by a passing ship.

- **Book 2**

Ten months after his escape from the Lilliput island, Gulliver, once more on an adventurous voyage is left on an island of giants known as Brobdingnags. Here Gulliver shows the magnanimity of the giants but he also goes to some length to make us aware that a magnifying glass enlarges both positive and negative qualities. The massive sized Brobdingnagians also exuded a rank physicality which would not have been evident in smaller creatures.

He is taken home by a farmer and is well cared for by the farmer's daughter Glumdalclitch. Later the Queen buys him from the farmer and is presented in the King's court as an entertaining toy. The farmer's daughter is allowed to stay in the palace to look after Gulliver who learns the native language and gives accounts of his country to the king, and in the process exhibits the flaws of European society. On outings Gulliver is usually carried in a box. An eagle picks up the box and drops it in the sea and an English ship rescues Gulliver from the box.

- **Book 3**

This book recounts several voyages. Gulliver first reaches the island of Laputa. It is a flying island and can at will, hover over the neighbouring islands or towns when they revolt. The Laputans are strange people with fixed gazes and heads frozen to a permanent tilt. They can converse only after being roused by flappers. Swifts's journey to Balnibarbi and the visit to the Academy of Lagado is fascinating with the account of the strange experiments that were conducted there. On his visit to Luggnagg, he is shocked to see the immortal Struldbruggs who drag along their decrepit bodies with no hope of relief. After leaving Luggnagg, Gulliver goes home via Japan.

- **Book 4**

Gulliver's last voyage is to Houyhnhnm land which is inhabited by horses that are totally rational beings. Bereft of all passion and emotions, they run a kingdom, with the bestial irrational humans known as Yahoos who occupy the margins of the country. Gulliver idolizes the Houyhnhnms and tries his best to hide his resemblance with the Yahoos. He is soon found out and banished. He is taken home by Captain

Pedro de Mendez of a Portuguese ship. Gulliver is unable to get over his loathing for the Yahoos and after his return spends most of his time in the stable. We thus see what havoc takes place if passion and rationality are polarised. We are reminded of Swift's remark to Pope that the foundation of his attitude towards humankind seen in the narrative is based on the view that human beings were not rational beings, but creatures capable of rationality, - not animal rationale, but *rationis capax*. He was aware that the world could easily become disordered and resemble chaos. His satire is concerned with concrete aspects of human nature and the human predicament and his effort is to maintain a balance between reason and passion, order and disorder. Since you have the first two voyages for detailed study, you need to take a closer look at the first two books.

3.12.5 Detailed Summaries – Books I & II

❖ **Book 1**

So let us come back to the Lilliputs. The fantasy of the tiny people concretised through mathematically precise description has enthralled readers of all ages all over the world. Nowhere in this book do we find descriptions with generalising adjectives or adverbs. At the very outset, we are struck by the image of Gulliver, later to be named Man Mountain helplessly fettered to the ground with 6-inch high human figures crawling all over him. In the helplessness of Gulliver and the littleness of the Lilliputs who can easily be quashed to death in hordes at a time, we can trace the ultimate fragility of the human predicament. Neither size nor numbers, matter. Only understanding and cooperation does. Though Gulliver is irritated by the creatures crawling all over him and stinging him with poisonous arrows, he does not hurt any of them. The Lilliputs reciprocate by providing him with food and drink and shelter. They ignore the fact that this causes a strain to their stock of food. In deference to Swifts world view we should here, remind ourselves that generosity did not inspire the Lilliput decision, but sheer practicality. The tiny people were afraid that they would not be able to dispose off Gulliver's huge corpse if he died.

The book is replete with precise descriptions of articles and activities. These bring home the fact that the perspective of observing something very small may indicate freshness, novelty and delicacy along with triviality and pettiness. Swift cleverly gives the inventory of Gulliver's possessions from the Lilliput point of view, so that even readers take a fresh new look at such articles as a watch, a knife, and coins. In *Robinson Crusoe* too there are detailed descriptions of articles that he

is able to rescue from the wrecked ship. Verisimilitude that authenticates the everyday was used to make the fictional narrative appear to be true.

From the satirical point of view the description of the Lilliputian emperor's entertainment, is important. The images are amusing in themselves. They also have topical satirical significance. But what is most interesting is the fact that they have a general and universal implication. Look at the following lines from the text for example:

(All textual quotations are from the Norton Critical Edition of *Gulliver's Travels*)

The emperor had a mind one day to entertain me with several of the country shows, wherein they all exceed Nations I have known, both for Dexterity and Magnificence. I was diverted with none so much as that of the Rope-Dancer, performed upon a slender white Thread, extended about two Foot, and twelve Inches from the ground. Upon which I shall desire liberty, with the Readers patience, to enlarge a little.

This Diversion is only practiced by those persons who are candidates for great Employments, and high Favour , at court. They are trained in this art from their youth, and are not always of noble Birth, or liberal Education. When a great office is vacant either by Death or Disgrace (which often happens) five or six of those candidates petition the Emperor to entertain his Majesty and the court with a Dance on the Rope, and whoever jump the highest without falling, succeeds in the office. Very often the Chief Minister themselves are commanded to shew their skill, and to convince the Emperor that they have not lost their Faculty. Flimnap, the Treasurer, is allowed to cut a caper on the strait Rope, at least an Inch higher than any other Lord in the whole Empire. I have seen him do the summerset several times together upon a Teacher fixed on the Rope, which is no thicker than a common packthread in England. My friend Reldresal, principal secretary for private Affairs, is in my opinion, if I am not partial , the second after the Treasurer; the rest of the great officers are much upon a par.

These Diversions are often attended with fatal Accidents, whereof greats numbers are on Record. I my self have seen tow or three candidates break a limb. But the Danger is much greater when the Minister themselves are commanded to shew their Dexterity ; for by contending to excel themselves and their Follow, they strain so far, that there is hardly one of them who hath not received a Fall ,and some of them two three. I was assured that a year or two before my arrival, Flimnap would have infallibly broke his NECK, if one

of the kings cushions, that accidentally lay on the ground, had not weakened the Force of his Fall.

If you remember John Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel* in Paper 3, you will recall that it was a satire on contemporary politics. Here you see even Swift doing the same in *Gulliver's Travels.* So you see this was a contemporary trend of reflecting the hectic political activity of the period and its implications on social psyche. As students of literature, we need to grasp these significations as also see how these texts, their topical allusions notwithstanding, have continued to retain abiding significance within the canon.

The absurdity of visualising people in power jumping on ropes, is amusing enough. Contemporary readers must have regarded the exercise of identifying of oblique topical references as invigorating. For instance, Flimnap is the Whig prime minister Sir Robert Walpole. His political dexterity in retaining power was well known. The reference to Flimnap being saved from being injured by a fall by the king's cushion, refers to Walpole's indirect approach of pleasing the king through his mistress, the Duchess of Kendal. There are several other thinly veiled topical references to important members of the British parliament. We cannot however, ignore the fact that at this point, Gulliver is identified with Bolingbroke while Reldresal the Lilliputian treasurer, resembles Swift's friend Carteret. The Emperor of Lilliput is King George himself, thinly veiled.

Modern readers would not be interested in the identifying game, had it not been for the general truth that Swift expresses. For example, political success is largely dependent on extraneous factors and skillful game-manship fraught with danger. The Lilliputian two party system may be compared with the Whig and Tory party system in England. The comic reference to the furore over the end from which an egg should be broken, or over the size of the heels of the shoes to be worn by party members indicates the pettiness to which parliamentary disputes could descend. The extremely grotesque image of the compromise of wearing shoes having heels of two different sizes resulting in a hobble, depicts the result of uneasy political adjustments.

There are numerous examples of such comic satire having both topical and universal applicability. Though Gulliver is not consistently Swift's mouthpiece, his refusal to help the Liliputs to subjugate the Blefuscian kingdom, expresses Swift's anti war and anti imperialistic stance. It was more directly and eloquently reflected in *The Drapier's Letters.* Let us look at Gulliver's response to the King of Lilliput :

His Majesty desired I would take some other Opportunity of bringing all the rest of his Enemy's Ships into his Ports. And so unmeasurable is the Ambition

of Princes, that he seemed to think of nothing less than reducing the whole Empire of Blefuscu into a Province, and governing it by a Vice-Roy ; of destroying the Bin-Endian Exiles, and compelling that People to break the smaller end of their Eggs, by which he would remain the sole Monarch of the whole World. But I endeavoured to divert him from this Design, by many Arguments drawn from the Topicks of Policy as well as Justice : And I plainly protested, that I would never be an Instrument of bringing a Free and Brave People into Slavery. And when the Matter was debated in Council, the wisest part of the Ministry were of my Opinion.

Swift was forced to leave England after the fall of the Tory Government because he refused to see eye to eye with the ruling power. Similarly, Gulliver is forced to escape Lilliput Island via Blefuscu, to save himself from being tortured, starved and poisoned to death. Swift expresses his attitude towards ambitious politicians by showing the ingratitude of the Lilliputians towards Gulliver despite his immense help in dousing the palace fire with his urine and saving them from foreign invasion. Gulliver's account of Lilliput society highlights in many entertaining ways the shortcomings of English Society in general and the defects of his political enemies in particular.

❖ **Book 2**

Gulliver's second voyage takes him to a land of Giants. They are called The Brobdingnagians. From a Man mountain looking down at tiny creatures swarming around him he is reduced to a midget looking high up at the giants. Swift shows how a change of perspective can change the same mountain into a mole-hill. Let us hear Gulliver speaking:

In this terrible Agitation of Mind I could not forbear thinking of Lilliput, whose Inhabitants looked upon me as the greatest Prodigy that ever appeared in the World: where I was able to draw an Imperial Fleet in my Hand, and perform those other Actions which will be recorded forever in the Chronicles of that Empire, while Posterity shall hardly believe them, although attested by Millions. I reflected what a Mortification it must prove to me to appear as inconsiderable in this Nation as one single Lilliputian would be among us. But, this I conceived was to be the least of my Misfortunes: For, as human Creatures are observed to be more savage and cruel in Proportion to their Bulk, what could I expect but to be a Morsel in the Mouth of the first among these enormous Barbarians that should happen to seize me? Undoubtedly Philosophers are in the right when they tell us, that nothing is great or little otherwise than by Comparison.

We can well understand Gulliver's plight. As we proceed with his adventure we also learn that it is a constant process of exposing and satirising human pride. It is therefore quite obvious that the tone and mood in this book is more serious. In the first book, despite the satire, there is an air of toy-land fantasy. The mode of narration however is the same. Specific dates, weights and sizes are given to create a convincing picture of realism.

The book starts with Gulliver's sense of terror at the prospect of being crushed to death by the over sixty feet high giants. He is bruised and hurt unintentionally by a farmer when he is picked up by him. The farmer's wife reacted to him at first by screaming and 'ran back as Women in England do, at the sight of a toad or spider'. Later on closer observation he is accepted. A sense of lurking danger surrounds Gulliver all the time. He trembles in fright when the farmer's ten-year old son takes him by his leg and dangles him in the air. He trips over a boulder-sized crust of bread and falls on his face. He is attacked by mastiff-sized rats and partridge sized hornets. He narrowly escapes from drowning in a bowl of cream. He is cradled by a monkey and carried in a precarious state from one roof top to another and was nearly choked to death when the creature stuffed him with chewed products from its mouth. A hideous gigantic frog jumps over him to and fro and covers him with filthy slime. The book is replete with such incidents, which are amusing for an observer and terrifying for the sufferer.

Yet ironically enough the Brobdingnagians are friendly protective and generous people. The farmer's daughter takes loving care of Gulliver, they make meticulous arrangements for his comfort and protection. True, he is exhibited as a showpiece but they show genuine concern for his comfort. When the Brobdingnagian Empress buys off Gulliver, they retain the farmer's daughter Glumdalclitch to look after him. Gulliver develops a strong affection for his little nurse who was just forty feet tall. It is almost an inversion of the Swift-Stella relationship because while looking after him she also teaches him. She had lovingly stitched seven shirts of the finest material for Gulliver which, by average human standards, would be as fine as sack cloth. Similarly when the Queen gets Gulliver clothes made of finest silk, they feel quite rough on the skin. Here Swift the realist even in his flights of fancy points to the fact that magnification does not merely enlarge what is worth glorifying, one has to accept the negative aspects too. Thus Gulliver finds the stench from the skin of the royal maids-in-waiting overpowering; the large pores of their skin and their massive breasts nauseating. Swift describes the men too but the details about women are a part of his demystification of feminine beauty. The description of the royal dinner furthers this

point. Each mouthful of food that the queen munches on, is equivalent to the amount which could feed 'a dozen English farmers'. She crunches on lark-wing which is nine times as large as that of a full grown turkey. Gulliver describes this as a 'nauseous sight'. Royalty has been totally deglamourised, and the parameter of size proves instrumental in this.

The most shockingly repulsive description is that of a public execution. A criminal's head is decapitated at a stroke and blood sprouted like a jet fountain over seventy feet high and the head rolled with a resounding thud. These details do not detract from the total impression of the Brobdingnagians as magnanimous, intelligent and practical people. Their language was clear, uncluttered and masculine though unable to hold any abstract concepts. Their knowledge was devoted to what could be applied for practical well being. They had a very clear cut notion of Right and Wrong. The impression is most strongly reflected in Gulliver's interaction with the Emperor. We will deal with this later.

By contrast, the Lilliputs are often enough quite vicious and mean minded. They shower Gulliver with poisonous arrows. This is understandable. It reflects the insecurity of little creatures confronting another creature who is hundreds of times larger than themselves. However the reason why he is allowed to live, does not speak highly about them. Gulliver is kept alive only because they had no idea about what they could do with his carcass, after killing him. Later they plan to starve him to death and dispose of his body in parts. This shows total lack of gratitude for Gulliver's act of saving them from foreign invasion. Swift clearly shows that even an apparently dainty world can harbour the meanest mindset. Yet he maintains a playful tone, an indication of Gulliver's confidence in his superior strength. Here we are tempted to believe that Gulliver is Swift's mouthpiece, though we will later discover how far it is from the truth.

The tables are turned In the Second Voyage. Initially Gulliver makes a fool of himself. An element of boisterous fun in the description of his vulnerability prevents his proud strutting from becoming despicable. Gulliver himself recalls that 'All the mirth for some days was at my expense'. Later, in his interaction with the king, Gulliver becomes the representative of all the evils that plagued Western Civilization. The Brobgingnagian king rather than Gulliver, becomes Swift's mouthpiece. The vehemence of the king's attack against human pride, or his shock on hearing about power-hungry politicians indulging in destructive warfare, clearly echoes Swift's savage indignation.

Let us have a closer look at this section of the text: We see that the Brobdinagian king's attitude to Gulliver, as he learns more and more about English politics in particular and Western civilization in general, changes from indulgent condescension to open contempt and then to hatred. Gulliver had several long sessions with the king. After hearing Gulliver's proud account about his country, the king reacts:

> *Manners, Religion, Laws, Government and Learning of Europe...the king taking me up on his right Hand, and stroaking me gently with the other, after an hearty Fit of laughing, asked me whether I was Whig or Tory. Then turning to his first Minister, who waited behind him with a white Staff near as tall as the Main-mast of the Royal Sovereign he observed how contemptible a thing was human Grandeur, which could be mimicked by such diminutive insects as I.*

Swift ensures that the Brobdingnagian King's opinion about European civilization is not an impulsive outburst but a considered observation. He makes Gulliver recount the fact that the king has five long sessions with him. He took notes about what Gulliver had said regarding contemporary history, about the political and judicial systems and the advancement of modern warfare. On the sixth session the king asked pertinent questions which reflected his doubts:

> *He asked, what Time was usually spent in determining between Right and Wrong ands what degree of expence. Whether Advocates and Orators had Liberty to plead in Causes, manifestly known to be unjust, vexatious or oppressive. Whether Party in Religion or Politics where observed to be of any Weight in the scale of justice...*

Swift was particularly averse to the idea of maintaining a standing army. He continuously opposed the view that the Duke of Marlborough was bringing glory to the country by waging expensive wars on neighbouring countries. He makes the Brobdingnagian king echo his sentiments:

> *He wondered to hear me talk of such chargeable and extensive Wars; that, certainly we must be a quarrelsome people or live among very bad Neighbours, and that our Generals must needs be richer than our kings...above all he was amazed to hear me talk of a mercenary standing Army in the midst of Peace, and among a Free People.*

The Brobdingnagian king reacted violently when Gulliver spoke about the modern advancement of war whereby thousands of men were killed, and cities razed to the ground. The king felt that some 'evil Genius, enemy of mankind, must have been the

first Contriver.' The king showed great interest about the new areas of knowledge and learning that Gulliver described but he reacted with the now famous remark which could well be Swift's own :

> *He gave for his Opinion, that whoever could make two Ears of corn or two Blades of Grass to grow upon a spot of Ground where only one grew before, would deserve better of Mankind, and do more essential Service to his Country than the whole Race of politicians put together.*

Swift was an ardent advocate of knowledge used for practical benefit. This however does not mean that he thought that the Brobdingnagian state was ideal. He therefore makes Gulliver observe-'

> *The Learning of the People is very defective, consisting only in Morality, History, Poetry and Mathematicks wherein they must be allowed to excel. But the last of these is wholly applied to what maybe useful in Life, to the Improvement of Agriculture and mechanical Arts; so that among us it would be little esteemed and as to Ideas, Entities, Abstractions and Transcendentals I could never drive these conceptions into their heads.*

Gulliver's sense of pride in the belief that he belonged to a more sophisticated society, as we have already seen, is repeatedly debunked by the Brobdingnagian king. According to him, contemporary European civilization meant nothing but :

> *....an heap of Conspiracies,Rebellions, Murders, Massacres, Revolutions, Banishments, the very worst Effects that Avarice, Faction, Hypocrisy, Perfidiousness, Cruelty, Rage, Madness, Hatred, Envy, Lust, Malice ,or Ambition could produce.*

The Brobdingnagian king deals a final stroke in demolishing the Eurocentric pride of a superior civilization with his outburst at the end of chapter six of the book:

> *I have gathered from your Relation, and the Answers I have with much Pains wringed and extorted from you, I cannot but conclude the Bulk of your Natives, to be the most pernicious Race of little odious Vermin that Nature ever suffered to crawl upon the Surface of the Earth.*

Such outbursts are against human pride and not against Gulliver. The king continues to interact with him and treat him well. Here through the voice of the king we see Swift, the priest, exemplifying the dictum 'Hate the sin and not the sinner'. This is also reminiscent of Swift's remark that he hated different classes of human beings but loved individuals. Similarly, we have already seen the Brobdingnagian

king echo Swift, the advocate of peace and the practical philosopher, who thought knowledge was important only if it added to the well-being of the people in general.

It is quite apt that Gulliver's second voyage, fraught with accidents, should end with an accident. An eagle picks up the box in which Gulliver travelled, and dropped it into the sea. An English ship rescued him. Gulliver was left to adjust to a change of perspective because the normal human world appeared miniaturised for him for quite some time.

Having given you this brief though analytical account of the two books, let us now discuss the *Travels* from a few specific angles. It will help you in gaining a deeper insight about the book. You must however supplement this with your reading of the original text.

3.12.6 *Gulliver's Travels* as a Novel

Gulliver's Travels was written about one and a half decades before what literary historians describe as the beginning of the great English novelistic tradition. The great tradition of the English novel started with the publication of Samuel Richardson's epistolary novels, *Pamela* (1741) and *Clarissa* (1742); Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones* (1749) and *Joseph Andrews* (1742); Tobias Smollett's *The Adventures of Roderick Random* (1748) and Lawrence Sterne's *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* (1760 – 1767).

The varied nature of the novels which we have just mentioned, suggests that even in its early developmental stage, it was a widely inclusive genre refusing to be contained within narrow definitions which are coined mainly for convenience. From the ideas given in Module 1 Unit 3, you may roughly define a novel as a lengthy prose narrative, where ordinary characters reveal themselves through sustained interactions with other characters within or outside their social milieu. The resulting conflicts may have happy or tragic consequences. In the context of the growth of the novel, a primary characteristic was the element of realism that marked its difference from the romance or fantasy literature.

The novel as a genre, started flourishing in response to the growing demands of a newly emerging reading public, tired of romances, and clamouring for stories, with which they could identify. A great number of women – wives and daughters of the newly emerging class of well to do traders, formed a part of this class. Also it was middle-class morality and values that became the proper subject matter of the novel and the themes hinged on everyday concerns. Initially, the demands for light reading material, were met by the essays, periodicals and travelogues. Keeping in mind a

demand for realism, all fictional works were prefixed with 'a true history of...or a true story of...' This was to catch the initial attention of readers. It was then left to the writers' skills to sustain it.

Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), as you have gathered earlier, is regarded by many literary historians as the first English novel. Here, we have an average God fearing man as a hero. His adventures are made plausible by a stylistic device of accumulating minute descriptive details as circumstantial evidence of truth. Crusoe stands out as a non- heroic hero, who, through diligent hard work, tames his hostile environment, for survival. However, if Defoe's travelogue is to be considered as a novel, it is one, at its very rudimentary stage. There is no interaction of characters, and a barren island can hardly be called a social milieu. There are no women characters. Crusoe's experiences have no impact upon his personality.

Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* has many characteristics of a novel. Like Crusoe, Gulliver is introduced as an average middle class Englishman. Gulliver too, is made to use minute circumstantial details to establish the truth of his adventures. In the process of his descriptions, Gulliver exposes his character. In the land of the Lilliputs, he is a gentle Man Mountain who could, if he wanted, overrule the insect like Lilliputians. But his sense of honour prevents him from doing so. In the land of the Brobdingnagians, he perceives himself as an insect like creature, always under the threat of physical harm. In the third voyage, he is a stunned observer, watching the meaningless activities of star gazing Laputians. In the fourth voyage, he is a cowering creature, terrified at the prospect of being identified with the beastly Yahoos. In each of the island adventures, the fantastic creatures are described in details. Some of them, such as the Lilliputian king and his Secretary of state, are given individual characteristics. Similarly, the Brobdingnagian king, Glumdalclitch the little nurse, the Houyhnhm master and the Sorrel Nag have been particularised. Gulliver's rescuers have also been individualised in outline after each adventure. We can also picture his poor neglected wife, whom Gulliver finds repulsive at the end of his fourth voyage. This makes Gulliver different from the lonely Crusoe, the undisputed coloniser in an uninhabited island. Yet, critics do not regard *Gulliver's Travels* as a novel.

The chief reason for not categorising *Gulliver's Travels* as a novel, is not the fantastic nature of the protagonist's adventures. The illusion of reality created, could have well made it a fantastic novel of adventure. What prevents its acceptance as a novel, is the fact that the adventures are **episodic** in nature, each adventure standing alone without leading on to the next. Swift's conception of Gulliver as a character, is very **fluid**. At times, Gulliver is a sober, upright person, with a keen power of observation. At other times, he is made to strut pompously like a clown, praising his

country for the wrong reasons. Gulliver is alternately made a mouthpiece for Swift's satire, and his butt. We the readers, at such moments, become aware that instead of an individual, we are confronting a mere vehicle, which Swift uses to expose the maladies of European civilisation. Swift introduced Gulliver as a real person following the convention of writing 'True histories'. An introductory letter and a frontispiece portrait was used to reinforce the claim. After securing the attention of the readers, Gulliver is used at will, by his creator, in his devastating satirical journey. *Gulliver's Travels* remains a great satirical narrative, with scope for multiple layers of interpretations. It has many novelistic characteristics, but it is not a novel.

The problematic nature of Swift's first person or 'I' narrative technique, is another obstacle that comes in the way of regarding *Gulliver's Travels* as a novel. Gulliver is supposed to be writing about his adventures, after completing his four voyages. At the end of the last voyage, he is depicted as a mentally disoriented person. How then does he recount his earlier experiences in the voice of a normal innocent voyager? This does not detract from Swift's satirical intent, but it destabilises the psychological consistency that a novel demands.

3.12.7 Swift's Allegorical Vision

You have first come across the term 'allegory' in your study of Middle English literature; and subsequently in John Bunyan. So you know that an allegory is a literary device almost like an extended *metaphor*. It is a rhetorical tool that uses symbolism, imagery, actions to convey complex ideas and concepts in a very practical way. One of the best known allegories in English literature is of course John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678) which Swift admired a lot. The objects of satire in Swift's narrative cover various aspects of human life and society like the physical, political, intellectual and moral issues. The book as a whole may therefore be seen as an allegory of the decline in human values that distinctly subverted the Enlightenment project of progress.

In each book Swift satirises a particular set of institutions, values and systems. In Book I where Gulliver reaches the land of Lilliputs, Swift's allegory covers several aspects of contemporary English politics and the Party system as it was practiced in England in the post-Restoration period. The size of the people here is symbolic and the dwarfishness of Lilliputians stands for triviality and shallowness of the English society of Swift's time. Swift refers to the high-heels and low-heels the Tories and Whigs of his age. Similarly Big Endian represents Catholics and little Endian stands

for Protestants. So topical religious and political issues and concerns are allegorically referred to through a delightful fantasy tale.

In the second voyage, Gulliver visits the island of Brobdingnag that is inhabited by giant-like people. Swift used the perspective of size to highlight the imperfections and deficiencies of human beings. Through the conversation between Gulliver and the King, English customs and notions of power are critiqued. Gulliver gains a new way of looking at familiar things.

Through his investigation into ideas and beliefs prevalent in the remote nations that he travels to, Gulliver re-examines war and conflict in the context of European civilization. Swift through his allegorical method draws parallels between Lilliput's desire to enslave an already defeated Blefescu hinting at the strained relationship between England and France. He also indirectly criticized European imperialist arrogance that used the civilizing mission for brutal oppression which masked their chief motive which was greed. Patterns of war and destruction are woven into the allegorical motif here to explain the political systems that Swift is satirizing. Allegory and satire are therefore difficult to separate in the book, and the story operates throughout on two levels of comprehension.

It would be interesting to place Gulliver in the position of Christian, the protagonist of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, whom you have seen in Core Course 3. The chief difficulty here lies in the fact that Gulliver, unlike Christian, is a comic figure. Christian, during his adventurous journey, overcomes all his enemies who figure as various temptations and reaches the Crystal Palace. Gulliver is repeatedly saved and rescued by others. Gulliver becomes more and more confused with his subsequent journeys till he suffers from total mental dislocation. Here the allegorical interpretation will hold, if we regard Gulliver as the reverse allegorical figure who leads us from confusion to confusion to expose human vice as well as vulnerability – a vulnerability where unlike Christian, Gulliver does not have the option of choice. This is not limited to the island adventures alone. The circumstances that land him on the islands are also important. In the Lilliputian adventure, Gulliver is ship-wrecked. This merely reflects human susceptibility to the vagaries of fortune. Gulliver then gains insight about the meanness, ingratitude, jealousy, cruelty and power-hungry aspects of humans, in a miniaturized version. Gulliver, as a confident man mountain, escapes from the apparently pretty land of petty ambitions, cruelty and meanness.

In the second voyage, Gulliver's confidence is shattered by the cowardly desertion by his ship-mates. The process of realizing his weakness continues with numerous accidents in Brobdingnagian land, where his assertion of cultural superiority is snubbed

by the Brobdingnagian king's contemptuous remarks that the people belonging to Europe were odious vermin. Significantly enough, it is an accident which releases him from the island. He regains confidence among his own people despite the contemptuous remarks of the Brobdingnagian king. Gulliver is wiser, less confident, but still sane. The circumstances leading to the third voyage, are more cruel. He is set adrift on the sea in a canoe. His adventures show the so-called speculative creatures who have to be reminded about everyday realities with floppers. Gulliver, despite further knowledge about human weaknesses, remains sane. In the fourth voyage, Gulliver is deserted on a lonely island by his own crew. After experiencing thee cruelty, treachery and cowardice of his own kind, Gulliver is ready to accept the fact that animals can be superior to human beings. It is therefore not surprising that he is enamoured by the rational Houyhnhnms. The filth and bestiality of the Yahoos, is a further step in Gulliver's knowledge of human kind. Why then does Gulliver who adjusted at home after the earlier adventures, is unable to do so, after the fourth voyage? Gulliver could not accept the fact that he was a Yahoo. The Houyhnhnms unceremoniously banished him from their kingdom. Shorn of the last vestige of pride, a mad Gulliver finds comfort in stables. Gulliver's madness is not caused by the knowledge he acquired through his adventures. It is a result of his inability to accept his human identity in totality. *Gulliver's Travels* can then be regarded as an allegory, not through the clarity of vision acquired by the protagonist, but through the insight the readers, as vicarious sharers of his adventures, gain.

The idea of human limitations was a constant preoccupation of Enlightenment England. John Locke (1632-1704) had expressed this very strongly in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding.*

Our knowledge being so narrow as I have showed, it will give some light into our present state of mind, if we look a little into the dark side, and take a view of our ignorance, which being infinitely larger than our knowledge may serve much to the quieting of disputes. Locke therefore suggests that we should confine our thoughts within the contemplations of those things that we are within the reach of our understanding. (Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding.* 280)

Enlightened Europe's concern was not only about the limitations of the human mind, but also about his position in the universe. As Swift's friend Alexander Pope in his *Essay on Man* positions man between extreme rationality and bestiality-

Placed in this Isthmus of a Middle State...
He hangs between in doubt to act or Rest...

In doubt to deem him God or beast...
In doubt his Mind or BodyTo Prefer ...

(Alexander Pope. "Essay on Man" ii, 3-8 in John Butt ed. *The Poems of Alexander Pope*, London & New York, reprinted 1989, page 516)

Likewise, Pascal in his *Pensees* (1670) warns:

> It is dangerous to show men how much he resembles the beasts without showing him his greatness. Likewise, it is dangerous to let him see his greatness without his lowliness. It is more dangerous still to leave him in ignorance of both Man must not remain ignorant of two aspects of his nature, he must be aware of both. (Leon Brunschvig ed. *Complete Works of Pascal*, Vol II page 36)

Swift, the Anglican priest, was acutely conscious of the depravity inherent in post-lapsarian man. It was however for the enlightenment satirist to proffer Reason that acts as a spiritual anchor and antidote to prevent descent into total bestiality. But Swift in his own unique way, also shows us that the Reason, the very factor of redemption, can through misuse, make a civilized Yahoo worse than the filthy Houyhnmhnmland Yahoos. The Houyhnhnm master banished him from his country saying "when a creature pretending to reason behaved as humans do he dreaded lest the corruption of that Faculty must be worst than Brutality itself."

The allegory does not take us to any final destination. It simply urges human beings to know about their inherent bestiality and use their capacity of reason to rise to the level of decent living epitomized in the behaviour of the captains of the ships who rescued him, particularly the Portuguese captain of the last voyage, Pedro de Mendez. The allegoric journey also provides other exemplary characters, such as the Brobdingnagian king and Glumdalclich the little giantess who looked after Swift in his second island adventure. Ironically enough, no divine intervention for salvation has been offered by Swift, the Dean and Doctor of Divinity.

3.12.8 *Gulliver's Travels* – Parodying the Travelogue

Travelogues or several volume anthologies of travel writing were popular with readers in the eighteenth century. Most readers found a vicarious sense of adventure in reading these accounts. Indeed, the narrative is about the travels of Gulliver to new and remote places where he encounters people he had not even heard about. So the course of the prose narrative/novel is about discovering new countries, exploring new cultures and connecting with alternative worlds. The European Enlightenment was also about acquiring empirical forms of knowledge, and travel and travel experience provided opportunities for accumulating data about other lands and other people.

In the sixteenth century, it was customary for sons of upper-class and aristocratic English families to send their sons on the 'Grand Tour', a journey to sites of culture and civilization in Europe, to complete their education as 'gentlemen'. In the eighteenth century, which saw the rise of the middle-classes, merchant-adventurers made voyages to far-away lands to trade, acquire wealth and fortune so that they could come back to their country and lead a comfortable life.

In the context of European colonisation and the entry of England into the race for new colonies, material resources and even control and power, travel established the idea of cultural encounter. Gulliver meets other people and races and learns about how they live – their social conditions, political institutions, customs, ideas and problems. In turn he interacts with the 'other' (which refers to cultures, races, peoples that are not familiar) and tries to tell them about England and the systems prevalent in his own country. Just as he forms his views about the places that he visits and the peoples that he interacts with, the other people also form their own opinions about Gulliver and the English nation. Refer to how the King of the Brobdingnags reacts to the European enterprise and their idea of superiority.

In fact, Swift is raising several questions through the use of the form of a travel book. Travel writing was always a representation of a culture from a particular perspective which was perhaps not an absolute truth. The fact-fiction dichotomy persisted and travelers vouched for the authenticity of what they wrote by establishing that these were eye-witness accounts and mere reportage of what they saw.

Swift diligently maintained all the paraphernalia of travel books including the style of writing and the use of maps. Gulliver, the narrator, is given a specific local habitation, with details of his family background. He was born in Nottinghamshire as the third of five sons. He studied in Emanuel College and in Cambridge. He was apprenticed to Mr. James Bates, an eminent surgeon in London. He did not like his work and he left his job to learn navigation and other parts of Mathematics. He married Mary Burton, second daughter of Mr. Edmund Burton Hosier, in Newgate Street, from whom he had received a portion of four hundred pounds. Thus, Gulliver is established as a real person. The Frontispiece has an engraving of the portrait of Gulliver. The resemblance of this portrait with Swift himself, has tricked many readers into believing that Gulliver is Swift's mouth-piece and not just a persona. On the other hand, we often overlook a trail of cues to enable us to view his travel book from multiple perspectives rather than Gulliver's view-point alone. The Front page of the Faulkner edition of the book has the inscription "Splendide Mendax" or splendid lies. This suggests that we are invited to enjoy this book not merely as a parody but also to ponder over the fantastic episodes as pointers to some truth. Here

we are perhaps invited to discuss allegorical truths beyond the comic fantasies and brutal satirical thrusts.

Through his many travels, Gulliver is reductively treated as a comic figure rather than a heroic explorer. He 'discovers' lands by accident and the unknown inhabitants observe him, his behaviour and customs and often ridicule him for his physical dimensions – his largeness or smallness. He becomes a curiosity to be exhibited to others. This is a complete reversal of the way in which the Europeans very aggressively viewed other-ness and difference in other nations of the world. European pride and superiority is thus critiqued through Gulliver, and on hindsight, Swift's narrative proposes dimensions of a counter-colonial discourse from within the colonial nation.

At the end of his voyages, Gulliver gains what is more in the form of self-discovery. European travelers contributed empirical and material knowledge for the progress of their nations. Gulliver becomes totally confused in the end – he has gained neither wisdom nor rationality through his travels. Thus the travel-education link is called in question.

In the first two books, Gulliver perceives the world through sense-perception. This form of experience is described by John Locke as forming the foundations of knowledge. The Queen of Brobdingnag holds up Gulliver to see his reflection in the mirror – he can also see the Queen. The mirror is used as a metaphorical tool by Swift to project the idea of **self-refexivity** and reflection. This may refer to the relative nature of things which gives a perspective to knowledge.

3.12.9 Misanthropy in *Gulliver's Travels*

Misanthropy is the general hatred, distrust or disdain of the human species or human nature. A misanthrope, or misanthropist is someone who holds such views or feelings. The word's origin is from Greek words misos, "hatred") and anthrôpos, "man, human". Swift has been accused of misanthropy by many critics. For instance, his contemporary, Jean Earl of Orrery, in his *Remarks on the Life and Writings of Dr. Jonathan Swift* (1732) states 'In his last part of his imaginary Travels, Swift has indulged a misanthropy that is intolerable. The representation that he has given of human nature, must terrify, and even debase the mind of the reader who views it...'

Sir Walter Scott, in the introduction to his multi volume edition of *Swift's works* (1814) remarks that the fourth book of the *Travels*, 'hold mankind in a light too degrading for contemplation.' Forgetting the fact that Swift lived for twenty years after the publication of *Gulliver's Travels*, Scott suggests that the narrative reveals 'signs of incipient mental illness which took hold of him in the last days of his life.' Scott

grudgingly admits that we are compelled to admire the explosive power of Swift's misanthropic outbursts, though the impact on humanity was bound to be negative.

The Victorian novelist, William Thackeray held similar views. In the 20th century, renowned critics such as F R Leavis state, 'We have then in his writings the most remarkable expressions of negative feelings and attitude that literature can offer' (Leavis, *Determinations.* 105).

Swift himself helped in the nurturing of such negative views. In a letter to Pope, written on 29th September, 1725, he remarked 'I have ever hated all Nations Professions and Communities and all my love is towards individuals...I hate and detest that animal called man, although I heartily love John, Peter, Thomas and so forth...' Though the word 'hate' appears repeatedly, this passage refutes the charge of misanthropy, for the love for individual relationships overshadows any vague concern for abstractions. This accounts for the positive representation of the Brobdingnagian king, Glumdalclitch, the child nurse who looked after Gulliver, in the Brobdingnagian land, Captain Pedro de Mendez, Gulliver's rescuer in his last voyage. It also explains Swift's warm relationship with his numerous friends, which his massive volumes of correspondence, supports.

In general, readers have been disturbed by the intensity with which Swift exposes the vices inherent in the human animal. What provokes the savage indignation which lacerates his heart, is not the inherent bestiality in humans, but the misuse of the higher faculty of reason, which is also an integral part of human beings. Swift is infuriated by the criminal activities of the human race, which beasts are incapable of committing.

A world which has witnessed the destruction and massacre in two World Wars, a world which trembles in fear at the recurrent butchery of terrorists, should admire Swift's foresight, instead of criticizing his misanthropy.

A satirist can never be a misanthrope. His aim is the betterment of society. He uses his misanthropy as a trope to warn Man against the danger of falling into Yahoo like depravity if the higher faculties are not cultivated and put to good use. The warning note comes most succinctly through the Houyhnhnm land master, who banishes Gulliver because he was afraid that a human brute with even a rudiment of reason, could put it to use, in a most destructive manner. This is a reiteration of what the Brobdingnagian king had said after Gulliver had proudly described the destructive power of the newly invented war weapons.

Swift's mode of description may be disturbing, but it exposes an angry reformer rather than a sullen misanthrope, - a reformer who uses his fury as a satirical weapon to goad human beings to use the better part of his nature, to suppress the worst.

3.12.10 *Gulliver's Travels* – A Menippean Satire

All scholars, much to their delight and difficulty, know that the satirical contents of *Gulliver's Travels*, invites a multiple level of interpretations. C. H. Firth, in his lecture published in *The Proceedings of the British Academy* – Vol IX (1919 -20) has focused on the topical political allusions in the first and second books of *Gulliver's Travels*. He has tried to codify the actual historical figures and events which Swift had in mind, while writing. We have referred to them in our general critical survey of the books.

Modern scholars feel that while being important, overt attention to topical factors, detract focus from the more important universal relevance of the work. A modern reader would find it more interesting to look at the book as a Menippean Satire. The term refers to long fictionalised usually prose narratives, with multiple satirical voices aimed at general human lapses. Menippean Satire derives its name from the Greek cynic Menippus. None of his works survives, but his spirit is reflected in the works of Lucian of Samosata (125-180 CE) and Marcus Terentius Varro (116-27 BCE). Menippean Satire is therefore also known as Varronian Satire. The chief characteristic of such satire is that it targets out types, and not individuals.

Contemporary scholars such as Northrop Frye have classified Swift's *A Tale of a Tub*, *Gulliver's Travels*, Thomas Carlyle's (1795 – 1881) *Sartor Resartus*, Lewis Carroll's (1832 – 1898) *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, and its sequel *Through the Looking Glass* and Robert Burton's (1577 – 1640) *The Anatomy of Melancholy* as good examples of such Satire.

In *Gulliver's Travels*, Swift places Everyman, Gulliver in diverse situations. He then makes him describe his society in a positive light. This allows the reader to gain a triple perspective. First, Gulliver's own perception of what he is describing; second, the reader's viewpoint ; and third, the perspective of the listener to whom Gulliver is speaking, which is usually the authorial view. For instance, we may regard the Brobdingnagian king's voice as Swift's own. If Gulliver is Everyman, the reader is vexed into recognizing himself in his pompous trotting and praising of western civilization for atrociously wrong reasons. One of the standard devices of Menippean Satire is defamiliarization. Swift achieves this by placing his protagonist in diverse situations, to allow his readers to look at the familiar world through different perspectives. In the first two books, the changes are in magnitude. In the third, it is about individual perception, while in the fourth, there is a total metamorphosis with beasts behaving rationally, and the human kind depicted as bestial. The single protagonist Gulliver, is made to speak in multiple voices, because his function keeps

changing; sometimes, he is the authorial voice, and at other times, he is the butt of his satire. Multiplicity is also achieved by Gulliver's changes in perspectives about himself. The superior Man Mountain of the first voyage, becomes a groveling insect like creature, quivering at the prospect of physical harm, in the second. In the third voyage, Gulliver looks on with horror, at the goings on of speculative scientists. The most horrific picture in this voyage, is that of the Struldbergs people gifted with immortality, without the gift of eternal youth. The spectre of these ancient creatures dragging their decrepit bodies with no hope of relief, crashes the general romantic myth associated with immortality. In the last voyage, Gulliver desperately tries to hide his human or Yahoo identity, with all its bestiality, as he prostrates himself before rational animals, the Houynhnhms. Another method of defamiliarisation in Menippean Satire, is to initiate a dialogue with ghosts. Swift does so, in this third book, in which, among others, Brutus is brought into the scene, to emphasize the corruption in the present state of affairs.

Metamorphosis is another trope used in Menippean Satire. It is not used literally in *Gulliver's Travels*. However, its figurative application is strongly evident. Gulliver does not change literally, but he undergoes dramatic psychological changes about his perception of self. Metamorphosis is also an epic device, but it is employed differently here. Thus while having the traces of a Menippean Satire in the true sense of the term, Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* expands beyond the scope of satire. In Gulliver's disorientation, Swift diagnoses the attitudinal disbalance of civilized human beings regarding their perceptions about themselves and about the society they live in. What Swift depicted as a European phenomenon, is today, in the backdrop of two world wars, and mindless commercialisation, a global truth.

3.12.11 Summing Up

The purpose of this Unit, as stated at the outset, has been to provide you with multiple dimensions to read a text that has truly universal appeal over ages and generations. In course of this Unit, we have thrown light on how the contemporary milieu has in a big way been responsible for the making of Jonathan Swift the novelist. Attention has been paid to reading relevant issues as may be found in the first two books of Gulliver's travels to the land of Lilliput and Brobdingnag. New terms that you have come across in this Unit include 'Misanthropy' and 'Menippean Satire'. You have also seen how several ideas of the Enlightenment have influenced the writing of *Gulliver's Travels*. You can now engage in discussions with your counselor on the various aspects raised in miniature in this Unit.

3.12.12 Comprehension Exercises

Long Answer Type Questions:

1. How does Swift establish his protagonist Gulliver as a real individual?
2. How do the shifts in perspective in *Gulliver's Travels* help Swift in his satirical intent?
3. Would you consider *Gulliver's Travels* as a novel? Give a reasoned analysis on the basis of your reading of Books 1 and 2.

Medium Length Answers Type Questions:

1. How was Swift affected by the prevailing popularity of Travel Literature? Show with instances from the text.
2. In what sense can we regard *Gulliver's Travels* as an allegory?
3. Would you from your reading of *Gulliver's Travels* consider Swift to be a misanthrope?
4. Discuss *Gulliver's Travels* as Menippean Satire.

Short Answer Type Questions:

1. Discuss the importance of the scatological elements in *Gulliver's Travels*.
2. Give a brief account of Gulliver's interaction with the royal authorities of Lilliput.
3. Show how Gulliver manages to 'come' out of the land of Brobdingnags. What is the deeper significance of this?

3.12.13 Suggested Readings

Text

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Unit - 13 □ Lawrence Sterne: *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*, Book 1

Structure

3.13.1 Objectives

In this chapter you are going to learn about Laurence Sterne's *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy Book I* as a representative prose fiction work written in the period between 1759 and 1767, spanning a total of nine volumes. On your syllabus however, you have only Book 1. As a fictional prose written in this time, it was influenced by the dominating neoclassicist trend, of which you have read in Mod 2 Unit 8. The fiction not only reflects the time it belongs to, the time also writes itself in the fiction it cradles. In the beginning you will learn about Laurence Sterne and the authorial influences. Then you will learn about the story itself- what is going on in *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy Book I*. Thereafter we shall take a brief overview of the characters and themes handled in the selected section of the novel. At the end we shall learn about how the work has been received by the posterity and eventually sum up our matter in brief. The chapter will end with a few suggestions for the expected questions and reference books for enhanced reading.

3.13.2 Introduction

To briefly repeat what we have already said in the previous Unit, the emergence of the novel as a form in the Eighteenth century saw its flourish in multifarious directions. Samuel Richardson with his *Pamela* (1740) and *Clarissa Harlowe* (1747-48) popularised the epistolary form of novel. The demand of prose content that can be consumed by literate and ordinary middle class reading public was high at this time. It is responsible for the variety of the prose that started to gain acceptance amongst the reading public. As you have seen in Module 3 Unit 10, Daniel Defoe with his *Moll Flanders* (1722) and *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) awakened the interest in the episodic form of novel. Subsequent authors like Fielding and Smollet brought their unique individualistic aspects to the corpus of the newly birthed form of novel writing. Laurence Sterne's novels still bore the singular personality of their author – not simply in the peculiar blend of humour and pathos but also in the formal experiments that introduced elements of surprise for readers of ages to come. The unique humour of Sterne was rooted in his appreciation of the satirist spirit of Jonathan Swift in *A Tale of a Tub* and Alexander Pope's *Art of Sinking in Poetry*. He was well read in Miguel de Cervantes (1547-1616), Francois Rabelais (1494-1553). Hence, elements from the canon of Cervantes and Rabelais were inescapable in his works. Cervantes's *Don Quixote* is a Spanish novel that left a lasting impact on the development of consciousness in Europe and the world. Rabelais too with his comic vision in *Gargantua and Pantagruel* strengthened the evolution of humanist thinking. Sterne, enriched by such intellectual traditions, exercised his delicate digressive style to assault all kinds of pedantry and scholasticism in a light hearted manner establishing his moral preferences that however would be incomplete without the empirical spirit of John Locke, the leading philosopher of his time. It would be apt to note at this point that John Locke (1632-1704), an empirical philosopher is known for his advocacy of empirical approaches of Scientific Revolution. Lockean principles are the fundamental basis of modern society , its technological progress as well as liberalism. Locke in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1860) assumed that the world could be attained through sensesand threw new light on the working of human intelligence. He argued that at birth the human mind is a *tabula rasa* (blank sheet). Locke was concerned with liberating time from any motion or restrictive barrier. Man's idea of duration of his own self and the duration of the objective world can be distinguished. For Locke "time was a convenient assumption, not an actuality." Sterne's first novel can be seen to be an application of all these Lockean premises as such.

3.13.3 Laurence Sterne: A Bio-Brief

Laurence Sterne was born on November 24, 1713 at Clonmel, in Tipperary, Ireland. His education in a school near Halifax, Yorkshire continued till 1731, the year of his father's demise. He completed Undergraduate studies at Jesus College, Cambridge between 1733 and 1737, and received his M.A in 1740. In the meanwhile he took to the Order of the Church and obtained a living as Vicar of Sutton on the Forest in Yorkshire. He married Elizabeth Lumley in 1741. After composing a couple of Verses and Sermons he published a political romance *The History of a good Warm Watch- Coat* (1759). In 1759 and 1760 the first two parts of his first novel *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy* came out. Since then till 1767 this trendsetter work was published in nine volumes gradually. Between 1762 and 1766 he travelled between London, France and Italy because of ill health. Sterne died in 1768 while visiting London in connection to the production of his second novel *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy*. These two novels "Unique in English literature, … are the accurate reflection of the singular personality of their author"says Edward Albert in his *History of English Literature*.

3.13.4 *Tristram Shandy Book I* – Critical Summary

The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy is a novel about the life of Tristram Shandy as the very title suggests. At the very outset the conventional reader with his expectations ofevents, information, and actionsis disappointed.What Sterne offers is something unprecedented in nature. He does not gratify reader expectations. In stead of this he leads readers to a different path. This path is made up of anecdotes, observations, ideas, and seemingly extraneous details. The instant gratification of readers' desire is denied time and again in this novel. A linear progression of events from birth to growth is not what this novel offers. It offers instead the subjective perspective of the narrator, the incidents that lead to a holistic perception of the events, and thus elucidates the microcosm of the Shandy-an universe impacted by macrocosmic preoccupations.

The first Book of *Tristram Shandy* consists of 25 chapters. Here is briefly what goes on in each of them-

- **Chapters I-V**

Chapter 1 – The whole of the first chapter is dedicated to the thoughts concerning the conception of the protagonist- Tristram Shandy. "'Tis not a halfpenny matter"

says the narrator. Tristram's story begins *ab ovo* i.e.,- from the very egg (ovum). In fact, it is for the general information of the reader here, that the entire first book does not see Tristram getting born. It is only in the **fifth chapter of the Book III** that the immediate details of Tristram's birth are depicted. Till then the readers are guided through the relevant facts associated with Tristram's birth. Digression is one of the prevalent spirits of the novel. Sterne quite ostensibly dedicates chapters in this book to the very act of digression. As he does so Sterne goes on to launch his satiric attack on pedantry – be it academic, medical, legal or clerical — through the layers of the narratives in *TristramShandy*. The odd circumstances of his conception form the theme of the first book – had his parents "....minded what they were about when they were then doing" says the narrator and argues, that the mental and physical disposition of the parents have a profound impact on their future child's personality and fortunes. As an example he says that the moment of his conception was attended by a distractedness on the part of his parent which in turn interrupted in the process of his conception! The narrator observes that his mother, quite obliviously, reminded his father to wind up the clock, just as they were able to conceive the baby. The distraction at the heart of his conception.The absence in presence, the sense of time lost in the sense of time is a bemusing theme casting a spell from the very outset. The idea is complex without a doubt. The novel always tries to reach out to the zone of inexpressible in the human experience. The satire here is pervaded with a neo-classical sophistication.

In the **second chapter** the author mourns this act of interruption and remarks how it "scattered and dispersed the animal spirits" intended to assist his growth and development in the womb. He thus defends his point by referring to a theory in which a tiny, fully formed human—a *homunculus*—was thought to exist inside each sperm cell. In fact, the "HOMUNCULUS" or the "the very small human or humanoid creature", historically held to be "a microscopic but fully formed human being from which a fetus was formerly believed to develop", is already present in the semen of the man fathering the child. This idea of a miniature fully formed human in "HOMUNCULUS" generated from an idea popularised by alchemy in the sixteenth century. The narrator observes that the *homunculus* may appear "low and ludicrous" "in this age of levity" but he maintains that the *homunculus* is " created by the same hand ,— engendered in the same course of nature, — endowed with the same course of nature, — endowed with the same loco-motive powers and faculties with us:- that he consists , as we do, of skin, hair, fat, flesh, veins, arteries, ligaments, nerves, cartilages, bones, marrow, brains, glands, genitals, humours, and articulations; — is a Being of as much activity ... as my Lord Chancellor of England."

Sterne debunks the spirit of scholastic wit and exploits thehumour. "We know that Swift despised old pedantic learning, but it provided him with excellent comic material and the discipline of disputation did much to mould his art"observes D. W. Jefferson in his famous essay. He further defends that "Sterne is perhaps the last great writer in the tradition"... "of learned wit found in Augustan comic and satirical writing and "the speculative freedom" and "dialectical ingenuity" that is frequented in the scholastic tradition of Swift and Pope.

"My Tristram's misfortunes began nine months before ever he came into the world" observes uncle Toby in **Chapter three**. Tristram's father shared this anecdote with Uncle Toby which in turn was shared by him with Tristram himself when he grew up. Uncle Toby's character will be developed in greater detail later in the novel. Here it is also observed that Tristram's father was an excellent natural philosopher.

Chapter Four is dedicated to please readers and all those people in the world "who find themselves ill at ease, unless they are let into the whole secret from first to last, of everything that concerns you". "Only for the curious and inquisitive " Tristram writes that he "was begot in the night , betwixt the first Sunday and the first Monday in the month of March, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighteen. I am positive I was." Mr. Walter Shandy was a country squire, and a former Turkey merchant, i.e., a dealer in goods from the near East . He was extremely exacting. His obsession with order and exactness made him wind up the household clock on the same day of every month. The thoughts for conceiving an heir for the family also coincided with this habit of his. Unfortunately this "unhappy association of ideas which have no connection in nature" impacted Tristram's life forever. Unable to hear the said clock wound up Mrs. Shandy questioned about this when Tristram's birth was under way. At this point Sterne refers to "sagacious Locke, who certainly understood the nature of these things better than most men."

Humour in Sterne's novel from the core of its ostensible pedantry has enthralled the contemporary readership. The learned readers enjoyed the learned references in Sterne's novel. Sterne's intended laughternever failed to hit its audience.Not only that, it showed way to centuries beyond and as a guiding light, as a bridge between antiquity and post modernity served its cause. John Locke's 'Essay Concerning Human Understanding' (1690) had an important influence on modern psychological theory. In *Tristram Shandy* Sterne devotes himself to tracing the associations remarked upon by Locke. He carries out an application of Lockean theory:thus Sterne derives upon irrational, yet "universal" associations triggered by the word "nose", his idea of "Hobby horse" among many other things. Even in this chapter Sterne follows the typical Lockean waywhen he explains the misfortune plaguing Tristram at his birth.

In **chapter five** the author says Tristram Shandy was born in November 5, 1718. Sterne fast forwards to Tristram's birth on November 5, 1718 when he was "brought forth into this scurvy and disastrous world of ours". "I have been the continual sport of what the world calls Fortune"- observes the narrator as he comes to the end of this chapter. He effortlessly establishes digression to be the theme of the novel rather than the plot itself.

- **Chapters VI-X**

In **Chapter 6** the author proclaims that "I have undertaken, you see, to write not only my life, but my opinions also". As he writes he asks the readers for their patience. He claims autonomy over his style and pace. He says "let me go on and tell my story my own way". The whole of Chapter 6 is centered on this statement – " my dear friend and companion, if you should think me somewhat sparing of my narrative on my first setting out , — bear with me, —— , and let me go on , and tell my story my own way : — or if I should seem now and then to trifle upon the road , — or should sometimes put on a fool's cap with a bell to it, for a moment or two as we pass along, — don't fly off, — but rather courteously give me credit for a little more wisdom than appears upon my outside;- and as we jogg on, either laugh with me, or at me, or in short, do any thing, — only keep your temper." This is the author trying to get his readers used to the style of narrative to be employed persistently in the novel, and realign them to an idea of what to expect from the book. This helps the reader understand the passions that drove the author to compose the work. This also helps a reader to adapt his or her expectations to the mannerisms and stylistic choices the novelist makes.

Chapter 7 introduces the village midwife who assisted at Tristram's birth. She is described as "a thin, upright, motherly, notable, good old body of a midwife". It informs the reader of the scarcity of midwifery service. The narrator further points out that she had been left a widow in great distress with three or four small children in her forty seventh year.The parson joined his interest with his wife's in the whole affair, in the words of the narrator "to get her a little instructed in some of the plain principles of the business in order to set her up in it" as"within six or seven long miles riding there was no one that it would be doing a seasonable kindness to the whole parish". As Sterne reports that "the good woman was fully invested in the real and corporeal possession of her office together with all its rights, members, and appurtenances whatsoever" he makes fun of the legal jargon and its verbosity. He further jokingly refers to Didius, a pedantic Lawyer in order to draw a satiric shadow of Dr. Francis Topham, a frequent opponent of Sterne's in the Church politics of

York, where he lived. Sterne also refers to Dr. Richard Mead as Dr. Kunastrokius (Latin *cunnus*, female genital). Sterne's satire reaches a pithy peak as he continues "when that great man, at his leisure hours, take the greatest delight imaginable in combing of asses tails , and plucking the dead hairs out with his teeth , though he had tweezers always in his pocket? " Tristram does, however, offer some remarks on who was hired and trained by the parson's wife.

In **chapter 8** is found a statement on hobby-horses, and a Dedication. Hobby horses were originally figures in the old morris dances. Sterne's use of the term to refer to obsessive or fixed ideas derives from the child's toy: a stick with a horse's head attached. The narrator takes up the subject of "hobby-horses"—those obsessions and passions that give life its zest. In most cases, he says, these hobbies are harmless, and in some cases they even do good by keeping people too busy to be malicious.

Chapter 9 remarks on the preceding Dedication, its virginity and its value. He presents a generic dedication for his book, which he then proceeds to hawk to anyone who might wish to buy it. Tristram even offers to erase a chapter of his novel to make room for all the titles and noble deeds of his patron.

Chapter 10 essentially deals with Parson Yorick and his habits, his horse that was "full brother to Rosinante", the steed of Don Quixote de la Mancha. Rosinante faithfully accompanies quixote in his entire journey and for Yorick the concerned steed performs a similar loyal duty. At the beginning however, it briefly mentions the midwife. Yorick was a clergyman who had a genuine concern for his congregation. He was also a man of wit.

"In the first years of this gentleman's life, and about the time when the superb saddle and bridle were purchased by him, it had been his manner, or vanity ... to run into the opposite extream. – In the language of the county where he dwelt, he was said to have loved a good horse, and generally had one of the best in the whole parish standing in his stable always ready for saddling; and as the nearest midwife, as I told you , did not live nearer to the village than seven miles, and in a vile country, — it so fell out that the poor gentleman was scarce a whole week together without some piteous application for his beast , he had never a heart to refuse him ; the upshot of which was generally this, that his horse was either clapp'd, or spavin'd , or greazed..."

The following two chapters are about Yorick's life. The preceding sentimental discourse of Yorick provokes the author to insist upon the reader the following two chapters containing a "sketch of his life and conversation"and "moral". The narrator urges and "insists upon" the inclusion of these two chapters at this point. The reader has no way left but to comply.

➢ Chapter XI-XV

Chapters 11and 12 are dedicated in entirety to Parson Yorick, the latter being a section on his sad death (1748). It is followed by twopages covered in black ink. The significance of the blank back page as a structural component of the novel is for the reader to ponder upon. Sterne's Yorick is a descendant of the jester Yorick who appeared in Shakespeare's Hamlet. His ancestral inheritance is his delight in witty jokes with little consideration for their reception. Sterne typically digresses into the ancestral details among other things, mentioning *Saxo-Grammaticus's* Danish History and his travels through Denmark. "This unwary pleasantry" of Yorick's humour has its consequences as he falls out of favour with his fellow clergymen and and is also prohibited from advancement in the church hierarchy. Sentimental narrator also offers details of his sad death (1748) and that of the tombstone engraved with the words, "Alas, poor Yorick!"

Two pages covered in black ink

In a significant act of interruption the narrator here adds two printed pages covered in black mourning ink before he proceeds to the next chapter. This is quite strange and conventionally unacceptable to put two pages marked with black ink in the midst of a written text. Yet in this novel Sterne makes ample usage of various kinds of para-textual devices like this. At the heart of such an act is the question, "**How far can our experience be contained in language**?" Linguistically constructed coherence does not account for a great part of human experiences, feelings and emotions.The theatricality that these two blank pages as para-texts introduces to the novel makes the readers pause and wonder into a silent exploration of the grief, shock and the pathos of Yorick's death. There are many similar para-texts in this novel which further strengthen the narrator's point of view. The tragicomic in Tristram Shandy is further emphasized by these devices. The raw and real life poses us with many stumbling joints where speech fails the man. This kind of complexity and inundation grows more typical with time as the ushering in of the modernist and postmodernist styles place such silences at the very heart of human experience and obtain a boldly renewed relevance for the usage of such paratextual devices.

Chapter 13 is about the "second fruitless return to the midwife" as the search for the ideal circumstances for birthing their baby, i.e., Baby Tristram is at full swing. She was a highly respected person in her small social circle which the narrator intends to provide a map of "the end of the twentieth volume". The necessity of mapping the midwife's social circle is postponed till the twentieth volume. It suggests the foresight of the narrator regarding the planning of his life-story. It also suggests

the boundary of what the narrator considers relevant for the absolute knowledge of his birth.

Chapter 14 while referring to Tristram's mother's marriage settlement, sets out on a digressive journey that momentarily seems out of control of the narrator.He therefore appreciates and admires the "unforeseen stoppages" in his story and their ability to provide a journey with an everlasting quality as he calculates the prospect of "writing and publishing two volumes of my life every year" to be a "tolerable bargain".

Chapter 15- In this chapter the narrator after a great search ferrets around and rescuesthe marriage settlement of his mother, Mrs. Shandy and lays it for the perusal of the reader. This contract is a parody of the legal language which says in many different ways over and over again the same thing in order to keep under control life that is innately slippery in quality. The chapter except for bringing alive the experience of ineffectuality of a legal contract and subsequently his mother's right to lie in London, justifies itself finally by saying "How this event came about,— and what a train of vexatious disappointments, in one stage or other of my life, have pursued me from the mere loss, or rather compression, of this one single member, — shall be laid before the reader all in due time."

- **Chapters XVI-XX**

Chapter 16 as well as **Chapter 17** are based on Mr. and Mrs. Shandy's coming down to the country from London. The first 25 miles has his father in a pettish kind of mood which in chapter 17, narrator asserts is "none of the best moods"owing to the "cursed expence, which he said might every shilling of it have been saved". The false alarm and the return from Londonends up in Chapter 17 where he lets "her know that she must accommodate herself as well as she could to the bargain made between them in their marriage deeds; which was to lye- in of her next child in the country to balance the last year's journey.Whether this counts as "perseverance" or "obstinacy" on Tristram's father's part the narrator refuses to say.

Chapter 18 delineates the anticipations – "scruples and uneasinesses " of Walter Shandy on his wife's lying-in (seclusion before and after childbirth) in the Country and his measures against careless delivery. The preoccupations of birth that these lines are ridden with are mixed with the inheritance of humanistic studies in Latin. For weeks they argue about whom to hire: she favours the unnamed village midwife. Mr. Shandy proposes to hire a "man-midwife" considering him to be more professional and of a scientific temperament. Despite Mrs. Shandy's victory in the argument

Walter decides to have the "man-midwife" standing by in case his services are required.

Chapter 19 A profound belief in the power of names to shape a person's destiny pursues Mr. Walter Shandy, as this chapter reveals to the readers. His theories on names good and evil are the exclusive theme of this chapter.Naturally Walter exercises extreme care in the naming of his son, lest he be doomed to a life of mediocrity or worse. Sterne arrives upon his ultimate ridiculous when he shows how Mr. Shandy had a rather"unconquerable aversion for "Tristram" – which is the name his son has been destined for rather than Trismegistus, the intended one. The "shadow" "between the conception / And the creation/ Between the emotion/ And the response/... Between the desire / And the spasm/ Between the potency/ and the existence" is foreshadowed ['The Hollow Men', T.S.Eliot] earlier than ever expected. In his father's opinion, Tristram, a "melancholy dissyllable of sound," is the worst name a man can have and is convinced one is doomed to a "mean and pitiful" life with such a name.

In **Chapter 20** the readers find an insertion of a memorandumalong with a response to it. It works as a humorous digression in the novel where the possibility of conferring baptism even when the infant is so enclosed in the womb of its mother through a "small nozzle" is discussed at length. The Latin memorandum might a stumbling block to a reader not proficient in Latin-which was an inherent part of education of the time when the novel was published. The view of "Les Docteurs de Sorbonne" [the theologians of the University of Paris]on baptism(A Christian religious ceremony of sprinkling holy water on a person's forehead to symbolize purification and regeneration into the Christian Church, often accompanied by name-giving)further emphasizeson the obsession ofthe theologians with miniscule, unreasonable details. This tendency which he observes in clergymen, lawyers, philosophers, and physicians all alike amuses the narrator. It is interesting to note the easy conversational style of the narrator, and how he sometimes addresses the reader as "Madam", and sometimes as —"Sir" or "your Honor" and sometimes even quizzes the reader about details from previous chapters.

➢ Chapter XXI-XXV

It is hard to say what **Chapter 21** is about, if not for digression. The day of Tristram's birth is vivified in the initial lines of this chapter and it goes on to talk about the repute of SHANDY FAMILY , Aunt Dinah and Uncle Toby and Mr. Shandy's divergent attitudes towards the ignominious event of her marriage with a coachman and so on.

It would be unjust to omit the reason or the laughter for which the readers will revisit this noveltime and again in the history of English Literature. Some of it can be found in this very chapter:-

i) Thus, ... our knowledge physical, metaphysical, physiological, polemical, nautical, mathematical, aenigmatical, technical, biographical, romantical, chemical and obstetrical, with fifty other branches of it, (most of 'em ending, as these do, in *ical*) have, for these two last centuries and more, gradually been creeping upwards towards that Áêìç (Acme) of their perfections , from which, we may form a conjecture from the advances of these last seven years , we cannot possibly be far off.

When that happens, it is to be hoped, it will put an end to ... all kind of knowledge...

ii) ... unless it was with his sister-in -law , my father's wife and my mother, — my uncle Toby scarce exchanged three words with the sex in as many years;— no, he got it, Madam, by a blow. ——A blow! – Yes, Madam, it was owing to a blow from a stone , broke off by a ball from the parapet of a hom- work at the siege of Namur , which struck full upon my uncle Toby's groin. — Which way could that effect it? The story of that Madam, is long and interesting ; — but it would be running my history all upon heaps to give it you here. ...

iii) — My father, as I told you, was a philosopher in grain, — speculative, — systematical; — and my aunt Dinah's affair was a matter of as much consequence to him , as the retrogradation of the planets to *Copernicus*: — The backslidings of Venus in her orbit fortified the *Copernican* system, ...

Chapter 22 "Digressions, incontestably, are the sunshine; — they are the life, the soul of reading". The autotelic purposes of Sterne's novel are exposed in **Chapter 22** as it teems with metanarrative references as in such hyperboles. This chapter is notable for the author's testimony on his work: "In a word, my work is digressive, and it is progressive too, — and at the same time." He goes on to offer a "digression on digressions," in which he commends the previous chapter for its "masterstroke of digressive skill." The narrator reproves the reader to pay attention to his artful style of narration and vows to keep on digressing for another 40 years' worth of volumes, or as long as "life and good spirits" allow. It is notable here that while writing this Laurence Sterne was already having symptoms of tuberculosis, an incurable and fatal illness in his time. Tristram too succumbs to the disease in coming volumes and wears a laughing and brave spirit before the unconquerable illness.

The advantages of discerning a person's character from their "hobby-horse" are recounted. Thus, he assures to describe Uncle Toby not in terms of his outward appearance, but by analyzing his peculiar hobbies and fascinations.

Chapter 23 "I have a strong propensity in me to begin this chapter very nonsensically" and so does it begin. At the very beginning the author boldly asserts the presence of the quality of nonsense in his writing. He not only prepares the reader on what to expect,he also outspokenly establishes his aesthetic preferences, his philosophical bias and thereby his chosen mode of representing reality. He goes back to Momus, a Greek figure who personifies mockery and goes on to evoke Virgil's *Aeneas* and traces the errors typified in the evoked contexts with an objective to avoid these mistakes while portraying his Uncle Toby's character.He finally concludes that he will draw"Uncle Toby's character from his hobby-horse".

Chapter 24 "A man and his Hobby Horse, tho' I cannot say that they act and re-act exactly after the same manner in which the soul and body do upon each other: Yet doubtless there is a communication between them of some kind, and my opinion rather is , that there is something in it... "- the narrator carries his indecisive discourse on Hobby Horse and Uncle Toby which siphons off to Sterne's typical inconclusiveness.

Chapter 25 focuses on Uncle Toby's misfortunes at the siege of Namur, where Toby's pelvic bone was "dismally crushed" by a chunk of falling stone. During his recovery from this injury Toby took a room at the London home of his brother Walter. Here the visitors often ended up asking him to describe the siege itself in which he got his wound. Tristramhas later also made fun of the military mien of Uncle Toby and his associate Corporal Trim and represented in simple terms the attitude of loyalty and chivalry. In truth Sterne here consecrates his childhood personal experiences as a child of an infantryman.

3.13.5 *Tristram Shandy Book I* -Major Themes

The novel *Tristram Shandy*, as we have already learnt, is more importantly about "how" a story is told than "what " is told in the story.Different metanarrative tendencies underline *Tristram Shandy*as a novel about itself – what attracts the readers across centuries is the brilliance of the authorial devices that break away from the traditional curving a path of its own. By way of digressive excursions several contemporary and universal considerations occupy the matter.In this connection the themes of **Impotence**,

Digression, **"Live and let live"**, **Time and mortality**, **wisdom and foolishness**are woven into the deep structure of the novel.

- **Impotence :** Tristram from the very beginning laments his failure to develop a perfect body – his body too long, nose too short and lungs weak and animal spirits unpredictable. The fear of a failed venture, the shadow of impotence looms large on the consciousness of the narrator. The plan to tell the whole story is also led to an impotence by the recurring digressions. Somewhere lost between the anticipation and execution Tristram's narrative foreshadows the thinking man of the Modernist Era.
- **Digression :** Digression is the very spirit of the author, and he makes several remarks to validate his endorsed philosophy. He observes- "By this contrivance the machinery of my work is of a species by itself; two contrary motions are introduced into it, and reconciled, which were thought to be at variance with each other. In a word, my work is digressive, and it is progressive too,—and at the same time." He further asserts that "Digressions, incontestably, are the sunshine;——they are the life, the soul of reading!—take them out of this book, for instance,—you might as well take the book along with them".
- **"Live and let live" :** Tolerance and the "live and let live" motto establishes itself as the author resiliently manipulates his way through the overwhelming divergent polyphony of the milieu of his novel. It is in the motto of Eugenius's advice to Parson Yorick. It is functional at every level of the narration concerning his birth as the detailed summary of each chapter would reveal to you.
- **Time and Mortality :** Preoccupation with clock-time is from the very start a constant accompaniment. Birth and the uncertainty around it is almost sloppily engulfed by the consideration of a well-planned future. Time as registered in clock-time is very different from the time perceived by human mind. These two consciousnesses intersect at every point in the novel creating a layered consciousness of the temporality of existence.
- **Wisdom and Foolishness :** The novel sets out with the very idea of responsibility, knowledge, planning and action governing the birth of the central character- Tristram. Tristram observes "had they duly consider'd how much depended upon what they were then doing;—that not only the production of a rational Being was concerned in it, but that possibly the happy formation and temperature of his body, perhaps his genius and the very cast of his mind;—and, for aught they knew to the contrary, even the fortunes of his whole house might take their turn from the humours and dispositions which were then

uppermost;—Had they duly weighed and considered all this, and proceeded accordingly,—I am verily persuaded I should have made a quite different figure in the world, from that in which the reader is likely to see me."

This foreknowledge which Tristram calls essential betrays humans most of the times leading to "foolishness". Throughout Book I the narrator gives ample examples of human folly as he talks about his life-course.

3.13.6 *Tristram Shandy Book I* - Characterisation

When we discuss a novel we discuss about the characters of the novel. For a novel like Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* the purpose is defeated from much before. The story is not about characters at all. The characters are incidental to the whole novel. Sterne sets out to write about the life of Tristram Shandy. The life of Tristram Shandy is not merely a collection of incidents and actions as conventional readers are used to encounter. The narrator begins with a conversational style - a style that defers rather than divulges and through the exercise suspends the readers in a web of a journey of digression. Thus what one might expect to take place in Chapter I, Book I, actually takes place in the Chapter V, Book III- the momentous birth of the protagonist which is supposedly the initiation point of the entire novel. The story is more about the style of story- telling and numerous other digressions and less about a neatly structured plot-line with neatly outlined characters to grace it.

It is true that by means of reading one comes across certain human beings who inhabit the society. It goes without saying that these characters do have their characteristic traits that lend to the comic humour of the novel. A detailed outline of such characters is attempted below.

Is a novel less about characters and more about its own proposed mode. By means of its telling, the novel embraces certain predominant metanarrative qualities that make it more autotelic in nature pushing the limits of the novel as its own end. Thus by the end of Book 1 all the characters that are introduced in the span of its story are barely in their embryonic stages at the most. The mild digressive manner in which the narrator recounts his parson Yorick, Uncle Toby, parents, midwife are all what the reader is left with. In addition to this a great account is revealed on the thought and predilections of the narrator himself. The character of the narrator is known for his intellectual escapades and the decisions that he is prompted to as a result of those escapades rather than any physical actions. A great part of the drama of Tristram Shandy is a drama in the mind, especially a well- read mind conscious of its history, scope and choices. Thus the chapters on Parson Yorick too are rather expositions on itself rather than the character itself.

Whatever little we the Book 1 enables the readers to sum up of the above characters is as follows:-

Tristram Shandy is the narrator of the novel whose vision, ideas and philosophy colour the perception of the readersand what they understand of the novel. Although he professes his life to be a misery his observations and utterances are full of comic humour that entertain the readers preventing them from getting bored. A brief look into the Critical Summary Section itself will make it amply clear how Tristram carries on the business of telling the story of his life. Although he is concerned with the depiction of his birth moment, he introduces a number of characters, situations, artefacts, ideas and numerous other digressions justifying the presence of all of these as a necessary tool to understand the moment of birth and conception of the HOMUNCULUS – the mini-man that would grow into Tristram Shandy. He makes a whole tour of the intellectual history of mankind in the West in order to tell the story of his conception. In the process of doing this he does not irritate or annoy the reader so much as he amuses him/ her. Tristram's reader is sometimes a man, sometimes a lady- and he is unapologetic about his whims that he introduces in his writing.

Tristram is in love with pedantry and also attacks it. He is not only sentimental but also sympathetic. His depiction of Uncle Toby and Yorick testifies to his extraordinary sympathy for his fellow human beings. The instances of this will be found through a brief and careful look at the critical summary provided earlier. All that we know of Tristram through the Book I of this novel is his ideas, emotions, intellectual and personal attitudes and preferences and his wide learning in an essentially subjective manner. Use the Critical Summary to delineate Tristram's character in nicer details. You can clearly show that Tristram largely is a summation of what he thinks rather than a conglomeration of his actions and activities. In this Laurence Sterne works a marked difference in the entire oeuvre of Eighteenth Century Novels and radically changing the reader – expectations from a novel.

Walter Shandy, Tristram's father is an extremely knowledgeable man who had interest in subjects as varying in range as Natural Philosophy to Political polemics. He is given to precision and exactness. He was a kind brother to Uncle Toby and a very organized man who retired from his business and settle in his countryside home. At the beginning , Tristram tells us that he was a Turkish Merchant. In the course of the story we learn of his argumentative disposition and his philosophical turn of mind. Mr. Shandy is repeatedly disappointed in his planned execution of Tristram's birth, delivery and naming.

Uncle Toby, introduced in Vol. 1, is almost entirely preoccupied with a single "hobby-horse": studying military fortifications and recreating them in miniature on the Shandy estate. The concluding chapters of the Book I depicts in detail the tragedy of Uncle Toby. The tragic tone is also interspersed with humorous observations. The single mindedness of Uncle Toby accounts solely for all the humour and all the pity that a reader is supposed to feel for him.

Parson Yorick is a quixotic character that rather evokes Hamlet's Yorick, the jester. He was also responsible for the availability of the midwife in the parish.It is one of the notable characterizations of the novel when Sterne devotes two whole chapters to delineate the history of the good hearted and good natured Parson Yorick.He begins "Yorick was this parson's name, and, what is very remarkable in it, (as appears from a most ancient account of the family" ... " the family was originally of Danish extraction, and had been transplanted into England as early as in the reign of Horwendillus, king of Denmark, in whose court, it seems, an ancestor of this Mr. Yorick's, and from whom he was lineally descended, held a considerable post to the day of his death".The author further digresses to add that "it has often come into my head, that this post could be no other than that of the king's chief Jester;—and that Hamlet's Yorick, in our Shakespeare, many of whose plays, you know, are founded upon authenticated facts, was certainly the very man.

The tragic fate of Parson Yorick, a close family friend of the Shandies is described with much passion by the narrator.

Trust me, dear Yorick, this unwary pleasantry of thine will sooner or later bring thee into scrapes and difficulties, which no after-wit can extricate thee out of.—— In these sallies, too oft, I see, it happens, that a person laughed at, considers himself in the light of a person injured, with all the rights of such a situation belonging to him; and when thou viewest him in that light too, and reckons up his friends, his family, his kindred and allies,——and musters up with them the many recruits which will list under him from a sense of common danger;—'tis no extravagant arithmetic to say, that for every ten jokes,—thou hast got an hundred enemies; and till thou hast gone on, and raised a swarm of wasps about thine ears, and art half stung to death by them, thou wilt never be convinced it is so.

...Yorick scarce ever heard this sad vaticination of his destiny read over to him, but with a tear stealing from his eye, and a promissory look attending it, that he was resolved, for the time to come, to ride his tit with more sobriety.—But, alas, too late!—a grand confederacy with ***** and ***** at the head of it, was formed before the first prediction of it.—The whole plan of the attack, just as Eugenius had

foreboded, was put in execution all at once,—with so little mercy on the side of the allies,—and so little suspicion in Yorick, of what was carrying on against him,—that when he thought, good easy man! full surely preferment was o'ripening,—they had smote his root, and then he fell, as many a worthy man had fallen before him.

Yorick, however, fought it out with all imaginable gallantry for some time; till, overpowered by numbers, and worn out at length by the calamities of the war,—but more so, by the ungenerous manner in which it was carried on,—he threw down the sword; and though he kept up his spirits in appearance to the last, he died, nevertheless, as was generally thought, quite broken-hearted.

What inclined Eugenius to the same opinion was as follows:

A few hours before Yorick breathed his last, Eugenius stept in with an intent to take his last sight and last farewell of him. Upon his drawing Yorick's curtain, and asking how he felt himself, Yorick looking up in his face took hold of his hand,—and after thanking him for the many tokens of his friendship to him, for which, he said, if it was their fate to meet hereafter,—he would thank him again and again,—he told him, he was within a few hours of giving his enemies the slip for ever.

The midwife was a widow-"a thin, upright, motherly, notable, good old body of a midwife, who with the help of a little plain good sense, and some years full employment in her business"- who was somewhat deft in his work. She got the help of the Parson and his wife to get established in her service as there was none to provide this help within seven miles.

The narrator further adds that "She had been left it seems a widow in great distress, with three or four small children, in her forty-seventh year".

Elizabeth Mollineux, Tristram's mother is rather a silent character. Not much is known except for her curiosity about arranging the clock at the time of Tristram's conception and her courageous determination to take help from the local midwife in times of labour. Despite all the silence she emerges to be a lady of strength of character and determination. Despite her husband's urging,she gets to retain her birth plan, that is, her preference to have the local midwife during labour prevails. It is very important for a mother to feel safe during birth. Anything that goes wrong may result in death of lives. Hence Mrs. Shandy makes a critical decision in spite of a large amount of events going against her. At the end she meets with success where a healthy child, Tristram is born. She accomplishes her responsibilities as a mother successfully though it may not have any impact on the pedantic reflections of Tristram.

3.13.7 The Novel in Subsequent Reception

"tis a smart satirical piece on the vices of the age" wrote an unidentified correspondent to *Lloyd's Evening Post* (June 4-6, 1960) and went on to add, "the Author has made use of a very proper expedient to put vice to blush, and to restore to Belle -monde, that innocence and virtue which can be their only ornaments. Perhaps, in some particular passages, he may seem to savour too much of the Libertine and Infidel; but let me recommend such nice and delicate Critics to the perusal of the sixth satyr of Juvenal, which, if they be able to read and understand it , they will find was wrote with the same virtuous view, as the most abused *Tristram Shandy* is , and will be applauded as long as literature exists."

The publication of the novel undoubtedly had a forceful impact in its time as the assessment above shows. It impressed the reading populace. It also pushed them to a zone of discomfort. The validation required a learnedness on part of the reader- a knowledge and appreciation of the classical literature. Samuel Richardson's pejorative remark does not appear out of point in this regard "It is, indeed, a little book, and little its merit, though great has been the writer's reward."This remark simultaneous shows the great critical acceptance the novel enjoyed in its time while demonstrating major disapproval for its form and content itself. Samuel Taylor Coleridge's memorable assessment of Sterne's wit and humour helps the appreciation of the literary merits of the workfindits due place. William Hazlitt remarks on its "English conversational style" differentiating it from Samuel Richardson's style.

Dr Johnson's dismissive eighteenth century remark "Nothing odd will do long" was however, deftly retaliated when the entire oeuvre of modernist literature found in *Tristram Shandy* a forefather. Italo Calvino called it the "undoubted progenitor of all avant-garde novels of our century." From James Joyce, Virginia Woolf to Milan Kundera and Salman Rushdie the echoes of Sterne's novelistic exploits undeniably grace the narratorial choices and authorial perspectives. James Joyce in *Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man* (1916), *Ulysses* (1922), and *Finnegan's Wake* (1939) and is repeatedly restructuring time as a personal construction. Ulysses' epic voyage is woven in Leopold Bloom's single day whereas Stephen's persona is both observed in its fragmentariness as well as in its continuous progression. Virginia Woolf too, like other Stream of Consciousness novel- writers intensely engaged in restructuring mental time around the concept of clock-time. A reading of Woolf's novels like *Mrs Dalloway* (1925), *Orlando* (1928), *The Waves* (1931), *To the Lighthouse* (1927) will clearly testify to this. Sterne writing a hundred years before the Modernist writers presaged these aspects boldly in his novel. Kundera, observes how the story of

Yorick is Sterne's salute to Rabelais revealing Kundera's indebtedness to Sterne and his story telling. Rushdie too imbibes the essential tenets of Sterne and incorporates several elements in his major novels like *Midnight's Children* (1981), *Shame* (1983), *The Moor's Last Sigh* (1995). Milan Kundera's *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* (1984), or Italo Calvino's *Mr. Palomar* (1983), *Invisible Cities* (1972) with its whimsical and imaginative escapades clearly abide by the usage of literary devices popularised by Sterne by way of achieving their individualised comic vision.

3.13.8 Summing Up

Tristram Shandy was an experiment too early and too radical for its time. Undoubtedly it was unexpectedly well- accepted in that time. It is fit to consider the novel as a model for what is later known as a modern avant-garde novel. As the story begins ostensibly to talk about the conception of the protagonist the reader is pleasantly diverted into digressions one after another. The reader faces interruptions followed by stories within stories and a magical play of narrative devices shifts the focus. The story sets out to recount the fortunes of the narrator and by means of doing so expatiates upon the nature of his family, environment, and heredity. Intensely conscious of the influence of Lockean psychology on his writing, Laurence Sterne wonders how much, if anything, he can know for certain even about himself. The novel extensively probes with the limitations of language and weaves an intricate drama out of the narrator's assumption of the reader's probable responses. In *Tristram Shandy* Laurence Sterne breaks all the rules risking reader expectations. Chronological order is disrupted as the story goes back and forth, even in flashback, and anecdotes are often left unfinished as in real life. The reader is surprised by whole pages are filled with asterisks or dashes or entirely blank. In his attempt to express the inexpressible Sterne is recognized as a leading forerunner of psychological fiction.

3.13.9 Comprehension Exercises

Long Answer Type Questions:

1. What is a psychological novel? Would you call *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy* a psychological novel? Justify your answer with suitable illustrations from the text.
2. Analyse the elements in *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy* that accounts for it as a precursor to psychological novel.

3. How would you assay an appraisal the narrative technique of *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy*?
4. How far has Sterne been successful to introduce the quality of "new" in the existent modes?

Medium Length Answers Type Questions:

1. How does Sterne's individualism influence the narrative technique in *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy*?
2. Illustrate with the help of examples from the novel how Sterne uses digression to produce humour and pathos in his novel.
3. Analyse Sterne's sense of temporality in *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy*, as he breaks away from the mode of linear story -telling.
8. How would you justify from the novel Sterne's art of "catching the ridiculous in everything that comes before him" as Edmund Burke's observes?

Short Answer Type Questions:

1. Write Short Notes on – The Midwife, Para-textual devices in Sterne's novel and their significance, Hobby -horse, Uncle Toby
2. Briefly describe Impact of Cervantes on Sterne's novel.
3. Write a short note on "Digression in *Tristram Shandy*".

3.13.10 Suggested Reading

Cash, Arthur H. *Laurence Sterne: The Early and Middle Years*. Methuen, 1975.

.... *Laurence Sterne: The Later Years*. Methuen, 1986.

Ross, Ian Campbell. *Laurence Sterne: A Life*. Oxford UP, 2001.

NOTES

Module-4

Non-Fictional Prose Literature of the 18th Century

Unit - 14 □ Periodical Essays and Miscellaneous Prose

Structure

4.14.1 Objectives

This unit will familiarise you with the eighteenth century prose literature. It will focus on the emergence of the periodical essays and the historical background. The discussion will also specify the philosophical influence on the non-fictional prose literature.A broad critical perspective with reference to a brief study of all the prose writers has also been attempted.You must however supplement the discussion with a reading of other books suggested at the end of the Unit.

4.14.2 Introduction

The Anglo-Saxons replaced Latin prose with English which observed all the rules of ordinary speech in its construction. The famous Anglo-Saxon king, Alfred the Great, translated most of the famous Latin Chronicles in English. However, the second famous prose writer of the Anglo-Saxon period was, no doubt, Aelfric. He was actually a priest. Among his famous writings were *Lives of the Saints, Homilies*, and *Grammar*. The Puritan period was rich in prose as well. Among the great prose writers of the Puritan Age include Francis Bacon, Milton, Robert Burton, Jeremy Tayler, Sir Thomas Brown and Clarendon. During this period, we find English prose

developing into a magniloquent and rich instrument capable of expressing all types of ideas, such as scientific, philosophical, poetic, religious and personal. In the field of prose, the Restoration Period held its head higher than poetry and drama. A unique prose style evolved for the first time. This style could be used for plain narrative, practical business, and argumentative exposition of intricate topics. Dryden was the dominant leader and practitioner of that new prose style. Other famous prose writers of the period were John Bunyan, John Tillotson, William Temple, Thomas Sprat, and Viscount Halifax.

Besides Dryden, John Bunyan was the greatest prose writer of the age. His most famous work is *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Compared to all the earlier periods one of the outstanding achievements of eighteenth century was the rehabilitation of prose as a valid, expressive medium for literary composition. For many years mainstream literary criticism, which tended to privilege the poetry and drama of the Golden Age, interpreted the widespread use of prose in the eighteenth century as a failing. The prose of this age exhibits the classical qualities—for instance, vigor, clarity, and direct statement. Present day literary scholarship has reversed that judgment, considering the use of prose in essays, novels, memoirs, polemical writings, satires, and works of scholarship as a major accomplishment.

In Module 3 you have observed a vivid description of the prose literature of the 18th century accentuating on the justification of the nomenclature of the period as 'Age of Prose and Reason' In this Unit we shall try to give you a broad idea about the emergence of periodical essays and miscellaneous prose in the 18th century.

The eighteenth century was essentially an age of prose and reason. It was so dominant the form that even the poetry of this period had the qualities of prose. Since the poetry and prose of this age were characterised by brevity, neatness, condensation and elegance, this age has been considered as the **Age of Prose**. Matthew Arnold goes to the extent of saying that Dryden and Pope are not the classics of our poetry but they are classics of our prose. The whole of the 18th century prose can be divided into two categories: Prose of the Age of Alexander Pope (1700-1744), and Prose of the Age of Transition (1745-1798). Once again however, you must remember that these time-oriented classifications are done purely for purposes of easy understanding. So it is perfectly possible to find overlappings between the two ages.

The prose of the Age of Pope deals with the history of the growth of the periodical literature at the beginning of 18th century. Daniel Defoe, Richard Steele, Addison, Goldsmith and Jonathan Swift are the four great writers of the periodical essays in the 18th century.During the 18th century, particularly in the period of Transition, prose was immensely enriched by the contributions of a host of writers. Dr. Samuel Johnson was the most important among them. His prose works may be divided into two

classes, those in which he is primarily a moralist and those in which he is primarily a critic. His *Rambler* and *The Lives of the Poets* belong to the latter category. He also produced a large quantity of miscellaneous prose works. Oliver Goldsmith is also another important prose writer of this age. His famous prose works are "The Citizens of the World", "The Public Leader", ''The Bee'', 'etc' with 'and others'. Apart from these great prose writers, there was James Boswell. His *Life of Samuel Johnson* is one of the classics of 18th century prose.

In the eighteenth century the periodical essays form a special branch of the English prose. It is a new kind of development in the evolution of the genre, and both by their contents and style, the Periodical Essays provide a document of that time, the way of life and thinking of that time. Thus, they have three – fold interests: historical, social and literary. It was considered to be the major reflection of the age as it had its origin in this period, and also had its decline with this period. In the words of A.R. Humphrey, "If any literary form is the particular creation and the particular mirror of the Augustan Age in England, it is the periodical essay". This type of essay was virtually invented by Richard Steele in April 1709. He has been called 'the inventor of a manner of writing no less entertaining than any which has been established by the most celebrated ancients. The periodical essays were not only informative and entertaining but it also provided enlightenment.

James Boswell, a prose writer of the eighteenth century, in his enthusiastic appreciation of the genre said: 'A periodical paper of instruction and entertainment is truly of British origin...from the long esteem and public favour with which a periodical paper has been attended, we must be convinced that this mode of writing has intrinsic excellence, and that mankind are fully sensible of its value'. Indeed, from the days of Queen Anne to the time of French Revolution, periodical essays on the lines laid down by Steele and Addison flooded the country and met the eye in every book – seller's shop and coffee-house. With the appearance of periodical essays, it can be argued that some of the more important and successful genres of earlier centuries began to lose their importance in the eighteenth century as culture advanced toward modernity. Among forms which ceased to meet the needs of writers, or for that matter their audiences, were the epic and certain categories of poetry and drama, which were replaced by new prose genres, more up-to-date and in tune with the demands of society. Thus, the essay, the novel, and bourgeois drama responded to new social circumstances and the ever-increasing need of the public to see itself and its social world reflected in culture. This required authors to convert contemporary reality into literature, taking models from the world around them rather than looking to writings and literary conventions from the past, and abandoning the traditional imitation of the universal to concentrate on the particular. Being challenged to produce

an effect upon the reader or spectator, authors felt obliged to write in prose, setting aside the artifice of poetic meter. So, the eighteenth century was a great period for English prose, though not for English poetry. Matthew Arnold called it an **"age of prose and reason,"** implying thereby that no good poetry was written in this century, and that, prose dominated the literary realm. This unit will provide you a comprehensive discussion about the periodical essays and the prose writings that gained popularity among the literary genres that ruled the period.

Activity for the learner with help from your Counsellor

Make a chart on periodical essays highlighting the contributions of Addison and Steele. Make a list of the miscellaneous prose writers of the period and their major contributions along with dates.

4.14.3 The Periodical Essay and Its Popularity

A periodical essay is an essay, published in a magazine or journal in particular, an essay that appears as part of series. The 18th century is considered the great age of the periodical essay in English. The periodical essay and the novel are the two important gifts of "our excellent and indispensable eighteenth century" to English literature. These essays were an elegant piece of writing to appeal middle class of England in 18th Century. These periodical articles for journals aimed changes in social conduct and reformation in larger context. Precisely, Periodical essays were first social documents of modern writing.Sir Richard Steele was the founder of "The Tatler" and it appeared three times a week. He also launched "The Spectator" in collaboration with Addison and it appeared daily.

George Sherburn in *A Literary History of England*, edited by Albert C. Baugh, provides a comprehensive definition of the periodical essay as a genre. He says that

> The periodical essay has been aptly described as dealing with morals and manners, but it might in fact deal with anything that pleased its author. It covered usually not more than the two sides (in two columns) of a folio half-sheet: normally it was shorter than that. It might be published independent of other material, as was *The Spectator*, except for advertising; or it might be the leading article in a newspaper.

The Periodical essay found a spectacular response in the eighteenth century on account of various reasons. Fundamentally this new genre was in perfect harmony with the spirit of the age. The Age emphasized rationalism, intellect, logic and wit. It was

opposed to excessive emotionalism, sentimentalism, enthusiasm and even imagination.It combined the tastes of various classes of readers as a result it appealed to all – though particularly to the resurgent middle classes. The impact of the spirit of the age could be perceived in the brevity of periodical essay, its common-sense approach, and its tendency to dilute morality and philosophy for popular consumption. In the eighteenth century, there was a phenomenal rise in literacy which expanded widely the circle of readers. The essays taught the masses the lesson of elegance and refinement. It was observed that the periodical essays were universally accepted in the eighteenth-century England.

4.14.4 History of the Periodical Essay

It was before the emergence of Periodical essays the essayists of the Puritan period were very popular. At that time essays were quite different as they focused on cold reason, searching analysis and weighty thoughts. The essays were detached and impersonal. Compared to the essays of the puritan period, the periodical essays dealt with matters that were contemporary but not immediate-with manners and morals, with tendencies of the time rather than actual events. The periodical writers advocated common-sense practicality, restraint and moderation.After the Periodical essays is a genre that flourished only in a fifty – year period between 1709-1759. The rise of the genre begins with John Dunton's *Athenian Gazette*, on 17th March 1691; its maturity arrives part way through Addison and Steele's *Tatler* (1709-1711); and its decline is advanced with the last number of Goldsmith's short – lived *Bee* on 24th November 1759. In between the genre reaches its full flowering in Joseph Addison and Richard Steele's daily *Spectator* (1711-1712) and its most transcendent and durable in Samuel Johnson's *Rambler* (1750-1752).

The periodical essay is proper to a certain phase of periodical publication, which got its start in England during the Civil war but was not fully established until 1702, when the first true daily, the *Daily Courant*, began. It was published initially by Elizabeth Mallet on March 11,1702. In the early years, government control of the press had a powerful effect on periodical publication; which flourished most when there were disruptions in the government itself. A *Census of British Newspapers and Periodicals* (1620-1800) contains chronological list of periodicals in print in Britain. A correlation of this list with political events and relevant legal changes would show that periodical publication always rises at times of national crisis and always falls when licensing laws are enforced. The numbers rise and fall a good deal before 1688, when they rise, never again to fall off very considerably. Joseph Addison and Richard

Steele are generally regarded as the most significant figures in the development of the eighteenth-century periodical. Together they produced three publications: *TheTatler* (1709-1711), *The Spectator* (1711-1712) and *The Guardian* (1713). In addition, Addison published *The Free-Holder* (1715-16), and Steele, who had been the editor of the *London Gazette* (the former *Oxford Gazette*) from 1707 to 1710, produced a number of other periodicals, including the *Englishman* (1713-14), *Town Talk* (1715-16), and the *Plebian* (1719). The three periodicals Addison and Steele produced together were great successes; none ceased publication because of poor sales or other financial reasons, but by the choice of their editors. Addison has never been generally seen as the more eloquent writer, while Steele has been regarded as the better editor and organiser. Periodicals in the 18th century included social and moral commentary, and literary and dramatic criticism, as well as short literary works.

One of the most important outgrowths of the 18th century periodical, however, was the topical or periodical essay. Although the novelist Daniel Defoe made some contributions to its evolution with his *Review of the Affair of France* (1707-13), Addison and Steele are credited with bringing the periodical essay to maturity. Addison and Steele were not scholarly, but casual, concise, and adaptable to a number of subjects, including daily life, ethics, religion, science, economics, social and political issues. Another innovation brought about by the periodical was the publication of letters to the editor, which permitted an unprecedented degree of interaction between author and audience. Initially, correspondence to periodicals was presented in a limited, question-and-answer form of exchange. As used by Steele, letters to the editor brought new points of view into the periodical and created a sense of intimacy with the reader.

Addison and Steele and other editors of the 18th century saw their publications as performing an important social function and viewed themselves as moral instructors and arbiters of taste. In part these moralising and didactic purposes were accomplished through the creation of an editorial voice or persona, such as Isaac Bickerstaff in *TheTatler*, Nestor Ironside in *The Guardian*, and, most importantly, Mr. Spectator in *The Spectator*. They taught lessons to encourage certain behaviours in their readers, especially self-discipline. Morals were a primary concern, especially for men in business. Women, too, formed a part of the readership of periodicals, and they were instructed in what was expected of them, what kind of ideals they should aspire to, and what limits should be or their concerns and interests.

The objective of Richard Steele's essays was 'to expose the false arts of life, to pull off the disguises of cunning, vanity and affectation, and to recommend a general

simplicity in our dress, our discourses and our behaviour'. In a famous essay "The Art of Story -Telling", Richard Steel comments:

> Story – telling is therefore not an art, but what we call a 'knack'; it doth not so much subsist upon wit as upon humour; and I will add, that it is not perfect without proper gesticulations of the body, which naturally attend such merry emotions of the mind.

To make the pretty vices ridiculous, and thereby laugh the town out of some follies, was his desired aim. Not all readers however agreed completely. Defoe, for example, doubted if the world he knew could be so easily corrected. It is observed by Taine, that *The Tatler* at least succeeded in 'making morality fashionable'.*The Tatler* continued for about a year, after which, in collaboration with his friend Joseph Addison, Steele launched the most famous and successful journal of the century, *TheSpectator* (1711). This new periodical showed some vital differences in plan and principle from Steele's earlier one. It appeared everyday except Sundays, and ran without a break up to 555 numbers. Then it was discontinued for a short time to be resumed again in 1714, and extended to 8 numbers more. Meanwhile Steele brought out yet another journal, *The Guardian* in 1713. It was not a great success, and was stopped after 175 numbers. Here too Addison contributed 51 essays. The immense fertility of invention displayed by the essays of *The Spectator*, the variety of the subjects, and the singular felicity of treatment will ever place them amongst the masterpieces of fiction and criticism. Of the 271 numbers of *The Tatler*, 188 are Steele's; but in *The Spectator*, Addison is more substantial and more brilliant than his collaborator. The 274 essays Addison contributed to *The Spectator* amply illustrate the richness and inventiveness of his genius. Indeed, for him nothing was too high, nothing too low, to furnish matters for amusing yet profitable reflection: from the patched cherry-coloured of ribbon of ladies to the loftiest principles of moralists and philosophers.

Comparatively speaking, Addison's work is more critical, more literary and didactic than Steele's. He invented characters like Sir Roger, Sir Andrew Freeport, and Captain Sentry, are finished studies with nature, and quite interesting too. Each of them symbolizes a particular class of people. In one of the essays, "Mischiefs of party spirit", Joseph Addison says:

> A furious party – spirit, when it rages in its full violence, exerts itself in civil war and bloodshed; and when it is under its greatest restraints, naturally breaks out in falsehood, detraction, calumny, and a partial administration of justice. In a word, it fills a nation with spleen and rancour, and extinguishes all the seeds of good-nature, compassion, and humanity.

He is excessively fastidious in his choice of words. His language with its varied cadence and subtle irony has never been surpassed in its own particular sphere in England. Addison and Steele together established the essay which was cheerful, light and graceful, though it also invited thinking and provided information.It differed fundamentally in nature from Bacon's essays, though the personal element is always apparent in their works.They set a model which was further modified and improved by Charles Lamb and William Hazlitt, essayists of the Romantic Period, in their familiar essays in the nineteenth century.

There were many followers/imitators of Addison and Steele. These successors, were to be found not just in England, but in countries throughout Europe and in the United States as well. Some imitators, such as the *Female Spectator* (1744), were targeted specifically at women readers. The *Female Spectator*, published by *Eliza Haywood* between 1744 and 1746, is generally considered to be the first periodical written by women for women. In the *Female Spectator*, the moral instruction and advice of the essays was further developed with exemplary or cautionary anecdotes showing the women's point of view of different situations, and the consequences of certain behaviours.Such anecdotes included stories of a young woman who disguised herself as a boy to follow her lover in the army; another, raised in ignorance, who eloped with the first man to court her; and a woman unsatisfied with marriage whose love affair yielded an illegitimate child. Over the run of the journal such stories numbered sixty, some detailed enough to be likened to miniature novels.

Addison and Steele's periodicals achieved a broader influence when they were translated and reprinted in collected editions for use throughout the century. When the collaboration of Steele and Addison came to an end, there was a steady decline in the standard of essays. Dr Samuel Johnson used the periodical form for some of his finest criticisms, such as essays on biography, the dramatic unities, and 'low' words in poetry. He was not so successful in his attempt as *The Idler* was not a successful journal. *The Rambler* and *The Idler* were periodical in form but were not much popular among the literary crowd. Dr Johnson's didactic and over-serious manner might have been responsible to an extent for this.

In the sixth decade of the eighteenth century the only essayist to leave an impression was Oliver Goldsmith. Besides the excellent stray essays contributed to *The Bee*, Goldsmith wrote a unique epistolary series of essays called *The Citizen of the World*.The epistolary exchanges, short fiction, and serialized stories included in the periodicals had an important influence on the development of the novel. The epistolary novels were a form of fiction writing which imparted some scope to the

writers to present various viewpoints of characters. There is a ubiquitous presence of fictional letters and diaries in neo-Victorian fiction.

Activity for the learner with help from your Counsellor

Make a chart on the historical background of the Periodical essay. Highlight the social function of the Periodical essays and the essential differences in the literary approach of Addison and Steele.

4.14.5 Philosophical Influences on Prose Writers

It was the very confidence with which contemporary philosophers extolled the self –regulating beauties of Nature and Reason that made the age also a great age of satire; Swift could never forgive men for not behaving according to what seemed to him and to so many of his age the strong clear light of reason. Shaftesbury's *Letter* concerning *Enthusiasm* (1708) reveals a related aspect of the Augustan mood; and here he and Swift were in complete accord.

George Berkeley (1685-1753) and Bishop of Cloyne, pushed Locke's views to their logical extreme and maintained in his "Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge" (1710) that sensations cannot be taken as evidence of an objectively existing material reality which "caused" them; the external world exists only in so far as it is perceived by individuals, and the only cause of individual perceptions can be the divine mind. This was a logical development of Locke's view of matter with its primary and secondary qualities, for Locke's classification of primary qualities was not in itself (as Locke seemed to believe) an explanation of matter or a proof of its existence. Berkeley's view that sensations are their own reality and do not represent anything external is argued with grace and clarity; but it had no real influence on eighteenth century thought (except on Hume, who made his own use of it).

The Scottish Philosopher David Hume (1711-76) carried the analysis of causation much further; our idea of cause, he urged, is based on nothing more than previous experience of one phenomenon being followed by another; all we really know is a succession of events (either in the sensible world or in our minds.) Hume brought to light the skeptical implications in the whole mainstream of European philosophy since Descartes, and his work is a watershed in European thought. If for Hume most things that people believe cannot be demonstrated by reason, this does not mean that

we must rest in complete confusion and uncertainty. Pure reason (and therefore absolute certainty), he argued in his *Treatise on Human Virtue* (1739), is applicable only to an investigation of the relations between ideas, as in pure logic and pure mathematics, and if we want to understand why men believe what they do we must investigate the development of custom and habit, for it is custom and habit rather than reason which account for people's beliefs. Such an investigation, Hume believed, could lead to a sound and fruitful science of human and general nature, grounded on psychological fact.

Hume developed his views on man, on ethics, on epistemology, and kindred subjects in two volumes of essays (1741-42), *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding* (1748), and *An Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals* (1751). He finds that what is morally good is simply what is esteemed, and proceeds cheerfully to show why it is that certain qualities have been generally esteemed-they possess some kind of usefulness or agreeableness either personal or social. Such a view assumes the uniformity of human nature and the acceptance of one's own society as a fair model of human society in general- and here Hume was very much a man of his age. There is an optimism underlying Human skepticism, for he believed that sympathy was an innate human characteristic and that it accounted in large measure for the origin of morality. Indeed, a hedonistic and utilitarian view of morals can account for the facts of the moral life only if it assumes some degree of benevolence innate in man. The whole basis of his philosophical operations was, however, radically counter to the mainstream of eighteenth-century thought; Hume's content with skepticism about the province of reason, his ability to move from a radically skeptical argument to a cheerful acceptance of the manners and amusements of the society of his time, his occasional apparently amused skepticism about the implications of his own skepticism, were attitudes not expected of a philosopher.

4.14.6 Miscellaneous Prose of the Eighteenth Century

As you have gathered by now, the 18th century was an age of great prose. Matthew Arnold calls it a century of prose and suggests that even the poetry of the period was prosaic or versified prose. Eighteenth century period is supposed to be very fertile period in the development of prose work. The writer slowly turned into reasonable things. The prose was thought to be a good medium in order to express more elaborate ideas and arguments. The earlier development in journalism also gave rise to prose work to some extent.The period has only one great poet Alexander Pope while it produced prose writers of very high quality like Addison, Steele, Swift, Defoe and Johnson. Besides the main prose writers of the period, the subsection

deals with some other prose writers who focussed on reason and intellect as their subject.

- **Daniel Defoe (1660-1731):** Defoe was perhaps the most copious writer of the eighteenth century. He is best known for his *Robinson Crusoe* and some other works of fiction like *Moll Flanders* and *Roxana*. His non-fictive prose consists of a large number of pamphlets (generally published anonymously) and a staggering bulk of miscellaneous writings mostly topical in nature. He started a tri-weekly periodical *The Review* in 1704, which continued up to 1713. In it he dealt with political, religious, and commercial matters. There is not much of the universal in his non-fictive prose to keep it alive, but one just wonders at the sheer number of his works which total above five hundred.
- **John Arbuthnot (1667-1735):** Arbuthnot was a man estimable for his learning, amiable for his life, and venerable for his piety-was a close associate of Swift and Pope and was by profession a physician. His *History of John Bull* (1712), an, allegorical satire, in the words of Legouis in *A Short History of English Literature*, "remains one of the most famous political satires England has produced". Therein is described the legal battle between John Bull (England) and Nic Frog (Holland) on one side, and Lewis Baboon (France) and Lord Strutt (Spain) on the other. Arburthnot upholds evidently the Tory point of view favouring the termination of hostilities then raging between the countries mentioned above.
- **Jonathan Swift (1667-1745):** Swift was the greatest prose satirist of England. He dominated the first half of the eighteenth century as Dr. Johnson did the second; and as an intellectual he was far superior to Johnson. Some of his satires are obscene, misanthropic, and cynical, but none can question his moral integrity and the unflinching earnestness with which he removes the externals of things to bring out the corruption which lies at their heart. Swift's satire is all-embracing.The greatness of Swift's satire is in his triumph of technique. His arsenal as a satirist is chock-full of weapons, of all descriptions. Wit, raillery, sarcasm, irony, allegory, and so many more weapons are used to perfection by him in his crusade against folly, injustice, and unreason. Whichever weapon may he be employing for attack; his satire is usually darker and more telling than that of most writers. He may sometimes touch lightly, but very often he pierces deep to the very heart of life. In any case, his satire is very disturbing as it presents things in a fairly unconventional perspective eminently

calculated to shatter the complacency of the reader. When Swift points out the acquired follies, he is quite constructive, but when he satirises the very nature of man, he is nothing but destructive.

Swift wrote a very large number of satires of which the most importantare*The Battle of the Books, A Tale of a Tub*, and *Gulliver's Travels*. The first is a frivolous display of wit and cleverness, and was meant to lampoon in mock-heroic terms the opponents of his patron Sir William Temple--particularly Richard Bentley and William Wotton, both of whom had disputed the view of Temple granting supremacy to the ancients over the moderns. *A Tale of a Tub* was meant to be a satire "on the numerous and gross corruptions in religion and learning."-It represented the Church of England as the best, of all Churches in "doctrine and discipline," and also lashed the shallow writers and critics of the age. *Gulliver's Travels* is the most famous of Swift's works. In it he savagely indicted "that animal called man." Credit must be given to Swift for the clarity, precision, and what Herbert Davis calls the "conciseness" of his prose style. Swift despises all unnecessary ornament. His imagery, however, is prolific and concrete. At any rate he gives us the impression of an easy mastery of the language. In the second half of the eighteenth century,we find the development of prose in the hands of Dr. Johnson, Goldsmith, Gibbon and Burke.

- **Samuel Johnson (1709-84) :** Dr Johnson (as he is better known) was a first-rate writer of prose. His early works appeared in *The Gentleman's Magazine* during 1738 and 1744. For the said periodical he wrote imaginary parliamentary debates embellished in his own vigorous style. In 1747 he began working on his Dictionary which was his great contribution to scholarship. While working on the Dictionary he also wrote periodical essays for *The Rambler*. In these essays we find the mannerisms which are evident of his trenchant force and vigour. He wrote *Rasselas* (1759) which was meant to be a philosophical novel but it was actually a number of *Rambler* essays strung together. During 1758-60 he contributed papers for *The Idler*, *The Universal Chronicle* and *Weekly Gazette.* These essays were lighter and shorter than those of*Rambler*. In 1765 he published his truly great work—— his edition of Shakespeare for which he wrote a fine preface, a landmark in Shakespeare criticism and scholarship. His travel book titled *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* (1775) shows the faculty of narrative. His last work and a substantial work was *The Lives of the Poets* (1777-81), planned as a series of introduction to the works and lives of fifty two poets.

The prose of **Oliver Goldsmith (1728-74)** is of astonishing range and volume. His *The Citizen of the World* (1759) is a series of imaginary letters from a china man whose comments on the English society are both simple and shrewd. He wrote many essays in the manner of Addison and also produced a great mass of hack work most of which is worthless as historical and scientific fact but is enlightened with the grace of his style. Some of these works are *An Inquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe* (1759), *The History of England* (1771) and *A History of Earth and Animated Nature.*

Edward Gibbon (1737-94) was an eager reader of history from his early years. His private historical studies led him to become a Roman Catholic when he was sixteen which resulted in his expulsion from Oxford. His father sent him toLausanne, Switzerland in the hope that the Protestant atmosphere there would divert him from his new faith. There, at Lausanne, Gibbon got acquainted with the French language and learning. His first book *A History of Switzerland*(1770) was never finished. In 1776 he published the first volume of *The Decline and fall of theRoman Empire*. Five other volumes of the same book were published at two years interval. This book has been regarded as one of the greatest historical works.

Edmund Burke (1729-97) shares with Gibbon the place of the great prose stylist of the age. The works of Burke can be divided into two groups: his purely philosophical writings and his political pamphlets and speeches. His philosophical writings were composed in the earlier part of his career. *A Vindication of Natural Society* (1756) is a parody of the style and ideas of Bolingbroke. *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1756) is his most philosophical book. His political works are his most substantial claim to fame. In variety, breadth of view and illuminating power of vision they are unsurpassed in the language. They fall into two categories: speeches and pamphlets. It is in his speeches that Burke's artistry and power is at its best. The greatest of them are his speeches on American Taxation, on Conciliation with the Colonies and on the Impeachment of Warren Hastings. Of his best-known pamphlets, the first to be produced was *Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents* (1770), which shows all his peculiar qualities and methods. Between 1790 and 1797 he published a number of pamphlets, of which *Reflection on the Revolution in France, A Letter to a Noble Lord* and *Letters on a Regicide Peace* are the most noteworthy.

The prose of this period has many men and many manners. The simplest prose of this period is found mainly in the works of the novelists. The excellent middle style of Addison survived in the works of Goldsmith and in the later works of Johnson. The ornate class of prose was represented by the Rambler essays of Johnson and the writings of Gibbon and Burke. A fresh and highly interesting style was the poetic prose of Macpherson's *Ossian*. This style was not ornate as it was drawn from the simplest elements. It possessed a solemnity of expression, and so decided a rhythm and cadence, that the effect is almost lyrical.

4.14.7 Summing Up

- Much of eighteenth-century prose is taken up by topical journalistic issues-as indeed is the prose of any other age. However, in the eighteenth century we come across, for the first-time in the history of English literature, a really huge mass of pamphlets, journals, booklets, and magazines.
- The whole activity of life of the eighteenth century is embodied in the works of literary critics, economists, "letter-writers," essayists, politicians, public speakers, divines, philosophers, historians, scientists, biographers, and public projectors.
- In this period, a thing of particular importance is the introduction of two new prose genres in this century.
- The novel and the periodical paper are the two gifts of the century to English literature, and some of the best prose of the age is to be found in its novels and periodical essays.
- According to a critic, the importance of the century can be summed up in this critical comment: "The eighteenth century by itself had created the novel and practically created the literary history; it had put the essay into general circulation; it had hit off various forms and abundant supply of lighter verse; it had added largely to philosophy and literature.Above all it had shaped the form of English prose-of-all-work, the one thing that remained to be done at its opening. When an age has done so much, it seems somewhat illiberal to reproach it with not doing more."
- Matthew Arnold called the eighteenth century "our excellent and indispensable eighteenth century."

4.14.8 Comprehension Exercises

Long Answer Type Questions:

1. Give an account of the development of the Periodical Essays in the eighteenth century.
2. Discuss the development of the miscellaneous prose in the eighteenth century.

Medium Length Answers Type Questions:

1. Discuss in short about the *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*.
2. What do you mean by Periodical Essays and what is the purpose of the eighteenth-century periodical essays?

Short Answer Type Questions:

1. Richard Steele founded four periodicals in the span of ten years. Name these, mentioning the respective years.
2. Which political parties did Swift, Addison and Steele support?
3. Name the periodicals run by Dr. Johnson.
4. Who were the leading members of 'The Spectator Club'?

4.14.9 Suggested Reading

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Unit - 15 □ The Predominance of Prose and Reason

Structure

4.15.1 Objectives

The purpose of this unit is to give you an idea of the major trends prevalent in English literature in the 18th century. The main focus of the unit is to sensitise you about the basic features of the Age of Prose and Reason. The thrust here is on the socio – cultural background, philosophical influence and the major literary compositions of the period. After reading this unit you will be able to have a clear perception of the 18th century, and the shift in style and attitude from the 17th century.

4.15.2 Introduction

In this unit we will give you a broad introduction to the formative influences that led to the development of prose literature of the 18th century. In Module 2 you have read about the prose literature of the latter half of the 17th century, where the major thrust was on John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*, and the neoclassical impact on English prose. There was no dearth of prose in English Literature even in the heydays of poetry and poetic drama in the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods. The notable prose writers: like Lyly, Gascoigne, Nashe, Hakluyt, Sidney, Bacon, Lodge, Hall and

Purchas, to name a few, contributed to the growth of English prose in many ways. Even John Donne wrote memorable sermons, and then Milton composed some excellent prose treatises. Before the emergence of John Dryden, there were Thomas Browne, Izzac Walton and Hobbes writing interesting essays and books in their distinctive prosestyles. Yet the eighteenth century has been specially designated as 'our adorable and indispensable Age of prose' by Matthew Arnold. The century is also known as the Age of reason, and the two elements simultaneously bring out the essence of the period. The intellectual climate of the Age was prepared in the seventeenth century through events like the Restoration of monarchy in 1660, the founding of the Royal Society in 1662; the modernisation of life due to the need of rebuilding the greater part of the city after the Great Fire in London in 1666; the new modes of thought of fashions brought to England from France by Charles II and his courtiers; many of these ideas were to dominate the thought of the eighteenth century. The three books that had more directly influenced in making the Age predominantly strong in prose and reason were: *Leviathan* by Thomas Hobbes, *Principia* by Newton, and John Locke's *Essay concerning Human Understanding*. In the words of Legouis and Cazamian, this period is considered as "the classical age" (Legouis, 710) in English Literature, and as such held and practised some basic principles concerning life and literature. This unit will give you a detailed description of the period with a thrust on the general characteristics of the period and the aptness in describing the era as the Age of prose and reason.

Activity for the learner with help from your Counsellor

Make a point –wise chart of the salient features of the Age of prose and reason. Highlight the philosophical influence and the major contributors of the period. This will be helpful in understanding the tenets of the periodand henceforth in understanding thetexts of the18th century.

4.15.3 Socio-Cultural Background

It is observed that the conflicts and enthusiasms of the mid-seventeenth century receded into the past and English society and culture settled down into a period of relative stability.The political revolution in France and industrial revolution at home in England helped to produce another era of more rapid change and more violent conflict of ideas. Hence it becomes possible to distinguish the view of life and letters

which those who held it liked to consider the period "Augustan". We have observed how London became more and more the centre of the literary and intellectual life of the country and writers came to look upon "polite' London society as their chief, if not their sole audience. We have also observed the conversion of aristocracy into gentility, and wealth gradually taking the shape of the main motivating power in society. The writers in the Eighteenth century formed a different class - they were more civilized, more calculating, more complacent, more rational and more respectable. People with meagre income could not accommodate themselves in urban society. Economists and ethics are thus finally separated.

The new Economists- their field being "political arithmatic"- prove to their own satisfaction that the individual desire to make money can produce in the long run nothing but good, and poverty can only be the result of idleness. Society refuses to take responsibility for those of its members who fall by the wayside. In London, the coffee house replaces the Court as the meeting place of men of culture. The journalist now makes an appearance on the cultural scene. Gossip and tittle-tattle make their way into print. Poetry now comes to relate to this social fabric, and its familiarity too is therefore within a limited privileged class. It must be remembered that in the eighteenth century there was a correlation between social class and education, between elegance and learning that did not always exist in subsequent periods.The poets continued to use fairly standardised body of references to the Latin and Greek classics as well as to events in the contemporary world of learning.It was a 'civilized' activity so to say, and such civilization demanded a certain kind of perspective in learning at things, a certain polish and elegance and consciousness of good society, wit, restraint, good taste, and the subordination of personal idiosyncrasy to a social norm.

The atmosphere of the reign of Queen Anne (1702-14) was congenial to the genius of such a poet as Pope; it encouraged poets to write for a civilized urban groups whose education they could take for granted, whose attitudes they understood, and whose standards of wit and elegance coincided with their own. The delicate satire and oblique wisdom developed by Pope in *The Rape of the Lock* show what perfect poetic achievements were possible in – were in fact encouraged by – a social atmosphere of this kind. Another aspect of eighteenth-century civilization is caught perfectly by John Pomfret's poem, "The Choice" (1700), an immensely popular verse essay describing the gentleman's ideal way of life, a leisured, civilized "golden mean". If we say that gentility was replacing aristocracy as an ideal of the governing classes in early eighteenth –century England we must be clear about what was actually involved, because it affects the whole texture of the culture of the age.

Throughout the century the merchants and tradesmen of the towns came to play a more and more important part in the life of the country – indeed, the steady rise in influence and numbers of the urban middle classes had been a feature of English history since the fifteenth century. The Glorious Revolution of 1688, when James II was replaced by William of Orange and his wife Mary in a movement largely engineered by the middle – class, Protestant heart of England, represented a victory of the town over the Court. But if the town had defeated the Court and had rejected the court's standards in manners and morals, it had now to find its own standards, to root itself in a social and ethical code. It needed educating in the trivialities of life, which hitherto had been the property of the Court. The new society had its philosophers and theologians. The education and the entertainment of the middle classes became a legitimate objective of literature.

Although from the time of the Restoration London had been more and more the centre of English cultural life, England was still essentially an agricultural country, and while the peasantry played little part in the literary life of the time, the squirearchy was continuously present in the imagination of those who wrote and thought about England.The essayists of the period represented the Restoration by the courtly fashion of sneering at the uncouthness and simplicities of visiting squires.Addison and Steele introduced into their *Spectator* essays other characters representing different social classes, and their attempt was to educate and unite English society.

4.15.4 Age of Reason and Prose

In this period there is a drift away from the poetry of passion, the ideals of wit and common sense were more zealously pursued, and the lyrical note was almost unheard. Pope and his followers give much importance to reason in their modes of thinking and expression. Reason may be manifested as good sense, rationalism, intellect, wit or just dry logicism. It is totally against all excessive emotionalisms, sentimentalism, extravagance, eccentricity, lack of realism, escapism, and even imagination. According to Cazamian, "One may say that the age of pope lives more fully, more spontaneously, at the pitch of that dominant intellectuality, which during the preceding age was chiefly an irresistible impulse, a kind of contagious intoxication." (Legouis,712) The reign of reason and common sense continued into the middle of the century when new ideas and voices appeared, and the precursors of the English romantics of the nineteenth century appeared on the scene. All the important writers of the age – Jonathan Swift, Alexander Pope, and Dr. Johnson –glorified reason and intellect both in their literary and critical treatises and vehemently opposed fancy and

imagination in their literary compositions. This glorification of reason manifests itself in the form of the stress laid on the imitation of the ancients, that is the Greek and Roman writers of antiquity. It was believed that a man should cultivate unrefined and natural taste by subjecting it to the influence of classical writers. Much emphasis was laid on controlling wild imagination and personal way of expression with the help of the study of the classics. According to Cazamian,the first half of the eighteenth century is also called the classical age of English Literature for two specific reasons:

(a) The poets and critics of the age believed that the works of the writers of classical antiquity presented the best models and the ultimate standards of literary taste.

(b) Like the Latin writers they had little faith in the promptings and guidance of individual genius and much in laws and rules imposed by the authority of the past.

In the famous lines from Pope's *Essay on Criticism*, he states "First follow Nature, and your judgement frame/ By her just standard which is still the same/ Unerring Nature, still divinely bright."

Here Pope emphasises 'Nature' but his advice to follow nature, does not indicate the appreciation and worshipping of nature as was to become the trend in Romantic poetry of the very late 18th and then the 19th centuries. In the eighteenth-century nature indicated a rational and intelligible moral order in the universe, according to which various experiences of mankind could be confidently and properly valued. Man's subjective feelings and emotions were thus rejected and sacrificed to the laws of nature. This emphasis on nature often took the form of the emphasis on the "rules" formulated by the ancients. The entire period adhered to the rules laid down by the ancients. The period was, in fact, an age of formalism in all spheres –literature, architecture, gardening, and even social etiquette. The adoration of reason naturally implied a keen distrust of enthusiasm and imagination which could lead a man to ludicrous extremes. Thus, the literature of the period is devoid of the enthusiasm, elemental passion, mysterious suggestiveness, and heady imagination which we find pervasively in Romantic literature.

The eighteenth century was doubtlessly an age of great prose but not of great poetry. When Mathew Arnold calls it an age of prose, he suggests that even the poetry of the period was of the nature of prose, or versified prose. It is he who observed that Dryden and Pope are not of our poetry but prose. Among the greatest prose writers of the age are Addison, Steele and Swift. They took English prose from the antiquity of Burton, Browne and others to the balance, clarity, and simplicity of the modern times. They made prose functional, using it not for impressing but enlightening the reader.

4.15.5 Philosophical Influences

The philosophical discourses of Thomas Hobbes and John Locke influenced the writings of the period. It was the writings of Hobbes that established the ascendancy of reason. He gave reason a new prestige. Rational thinking, he emphasised, was characteristic of the modern mind, and superstition and credulity belonged to past ages. In former times, as Hobbes himself pointed out, 'a God or Divel' had been used to explain 'the nature of powers invisible'. It was a fact that in the early eighteenth century, men were no longer living in an intellectual twilight, but in the broad light of the day. To Hobbes, the right man was the adult, the man who was living in the clear light of the reason, who had stepped free from all superstitions, and who could think steadily about controlling his imagination and prejudice alike. He conceded to the need of imagination for a poet, but that should be used for forming beautiful and appropriate similes and metaphors. He preferred to perceive something definite, precise, and reasonable in poetry. This is why the eighteenth century, denounced the metaphysical poets.

It was Dr. Johnson who complained that they constantly sought for the unexpected and the surprising, and paid for too little attention to that 'uniformity of sentiment' which enabled a writer to understand and express the thoughts and feelings of all normal men. It was evident that the over- insistence on commonsense and facts was congenial for prose and inimical to genuine poetry where emotion and imagination are so essential. There were other obvious reasons for the rapid development of prose in the eighteenth century. John Locke's *Essay concerning Human Understanding* (1690) made men fully aware of their own mental processes, and his great disciple, Addison, preached his message, with slight modifications, through his *Tatler* and *The Spectator* to hundreds of sensible Londoners. Then in the course of the following week, it spread from them outwards and downwards to many thousands more.

4.15.6 Major Works

English Augustan literature laid stress on traditionalism.Emphasis was laid on development of an elegant and cultivated style. Balance and precision of statement became an essential virtue, and that precluded indulgence in uncontrolled fancy. External nature was almost excluded from the Augustan English literature. Its main subject was man, and specially man in relation to society. Manners of individuals were judged by the norms or codes of behaviour, and departures from it came in for

ridicule and sarcastic criticism. That is why the main type of literature in Augustan age is satiric literature.

Most of the important works of the Augustan age, like Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel* and *Mac Flecknoe*, Pope's *Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot*, *The Rape of the Lock* and *Dunciad*, Dr. Johnson's *Vanity of Human Wishes*, and Swift's *A Tale of a Tub* and *Gulliver's Travels*, are satirical. In the eighteenth century the rising middle classes developed their interest in reading a wide range of daily and weekly newspapers and journals. *The Tatler* was founded by Richard Steele and it was followed by *The Spectator* founded by Joseph Addison. These were journals of coffee-house gossip and ideas in London. *The Gentleman's Journal*, which continued to be published from 1692 to 1694, was the first magazine of this kind; almost the similarly named *Gentleman's Magazine* was one of the longest one, continued to be published for a longer period from 1731 until 1914.

The Grub Street Journal (1730-37) was a satirical literary magazine and *The Monthly Review* became, in the later part of the century, the most significant and influential to the literary magazines. In the eighteenth century, the Scottish Enlightenment focused attention on Glasgow and Edinburgh as centres of intellectual activity, The Enlightenment encompasses literature, philosophy, science, education, and even geology. The founding of *Encyclopedia Britannica* (1768-1771) was a stupendous achievement of the period. Another influential work published during this period was David Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature*, published in 1739. Adam Smith's book *The Wealth of Nations* (1776) was probably the most important work of the century, revolutionizing concepts of trade and prophesying the growing importance of America as 'one of the foremost nations of the world'.

Diaries and letters were, for the new literate middle class, forms of expression which enjoyed increasingly wider currency. The *Diary* of Samuel Pepys is probably the best-known example of its kind in all literature. The writing of history as a contribution to literature can be traced back to the twelfth century and Geoffrey of Monmouth's. *Historia Regum Britanniae*. The greatest product of the eighteenth century under historical contribution was *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, a massive six-volume work published between1776-1788, precisely between the American Revolution and the French Revolution.

The Augustan age was not so preoccupied with explorations –both in the bounds of human potential and of the bounds of geography so novel and fiction developed as a dominant form and genre in terms of readership. The expanding readership was largely female and upper or upper middle class. The new ethos indicated that all kinds of social behaviour be monitored, regulated and controlled. So, in many novels,

a new morality is propounded, covering male/female relationships, figures of authority and social awareness of needs, desires, and fantasies.

- In this context, the first female figure in English Literature stands out as a vivid exception to the newly formulated rule. Aphra Behn's exotic *Oronoko* uses a tale of a noble African, who is carried off to slavery in the English colony of Surinam, to illustrate the violence of the slave trade and the corruption of the primitive peoples by treacherous and hypothetical Christian colonisers. It a novel affirming anti-colonial stance.
- The novels of Daniel Defoe are fundamental to eighteenth-century ways of thinking. They range from the quasi-factual *A Journal of the Plague Year*, an almost journalistic (but fictional) account of London between 1664 and 1665 (when the author was a very young child), to *Robinson Crusoe*, one of the most enduring fables of Western culture. However, artistic representations of low life continued to be popular for other reasons too.
- John Gay's theatrical work *The Beggar's Opera* is a good example of the entertainment value of cut-purses, thieves, and their womenfolk. Its hero. Macheath, is one of the lasting figures of 'popular' culture to emerge from this period.
- One writer who dared to criticize and mock authority figures, with ever – increasing venom, was Jonathan Swift. His *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) has long been considered a comic fable for children. It is a severe attack on the political parties of the time, and on the politeness of religious controversies between different denominations within Christianity. These differences are symbolized in the tiny lilioputians and the enormous Brobdignagians, or in the differences between the Big -endians or Little-endians.
- Other great contributions of the period are: Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* & *Clarissa*. *Pamela* was published in 1740 and it was a huge success. It not only created fashion for the epistolary novel, but underscored role distinctions which were to become predominant in the society for some two centuries: the dominant male as provider and master; the female as victim, preserving her virtue until submitting to 'affection' and the inevitability of the man's dominance. *Clarissa* was published in (1747-48), Richardson's next epistolary novel and it marks a major step forward. Clarissa's suitor Lovelace plays with her emotions in devious ways, consigning her to a brothel and attempting rape. Richardson's concern in both the novels is with male and female roles

and identities, and the interplay of his characters' psychology is handled with considerable subtlety and complexity.

- Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones*. Both these writers introduced two new forms of novels, while *Pamela* follows epistolary technique, the picaresque form of writing was followed in *Tom Jones*. In *Tom Jones*, Tom is the model of the young foundling enjoying his freedom (to travel, to have relationship with women, to enjoy sensual experience) until his true origins are discovered. When he matures, he assumes his social responsibilities and marries the women he has "always" loved, who has, of course, like a medieval crusader's beloved, been waiting faithfully for him.
- Oliver Goldsmith, successful as poet and comic dramatist, published his novel *The Vicar of Wakefield* in 1776.
- *Don Quixote*, the epic novel of Spanish literature by Cervantes, was a major influence on English writing after the Restorations. It was published in Spain in 1605. It was a major influence on English writing after the Restoration.
- Samuel Butler's satire *Hudibras* (1663) is in the form of a mock romance, derived from Cervantes, with the hero Sir Hudibras and his servant, the squire Ralpho, paralleling Don Quixote and Sancho Panza.

4.15.7 Summing Up

- The Augustan Age, which formulated so clearly its notions of propriety in both life and letters, was always seeking for ways of getting by its rules without actually breaking them.
- The neoclassic theory of kinds postulated the heroic as the highest form of poetry and implied certain views about the appropriate diction for heroic poetry as for other kinds; but the age was really more interested in poetry that was both intimate and satirical – the very reverse of heroic.
- There was complete avoidance of imagination and indifference to Nature and this was more prosaic than poetic. Yet, perhaps it would not be doing the eighteenth-century literature full justice to call it merely an age of prose and reason.
- In the words of Burke, one cannot with a single term draw up an indictment against a whole century.

- James Clifford points out that the insistence on the rules and classical standards, in opposition to romantic idealism, was most strong in the late seventeenth century.
- During the reigns of Queen Anne and the first two Georges, on the other hand, there emerged what might better be called "Age of Common Sense".
- Rigid concentration and older authority was fading by the time of Addison and Pope.
- The latter half of the century saw the emergence of Transitional Poets, whose poetry began to betray more and more subjective feelings and imaginative introspection, paving the way to Romantic poetry.

4.15.8 Comprehension Exercises

Long Answer Type Questions:

1. What is the Augustan age in the history of English literature? What are its salient features?
2. Why is the eighteenth century called 'the Age of prose and reason'?

Medium Length Answers Type Questions:

1. What part did coffee-house play in the eighteenth-century literature?
2. Discuss in brief the significance of Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*.

Short Answer Type Questions:

1. What was the purpose of the eighteenth-century periodical essays?
2. Who were the targets of Pope's satire in *Dunciad* and *Epistle to Arbuthnot*?

4.15.9 Suggested Reading

Baugh, Albert C. (Ed.). *A Literary History of England*. Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967.

Daiches, David. *A Critical History of English Literature*. Vol. 2 (Indian Edn.) Supernova, 2017.

Ford, Boris. "Dryden to Johnson", Vol. IV of *The Pelican Guide to English Literature*, Penguin, 1960.

Unit - 16 □ Joseph Addison: Sir Roger at Church

Structure

4.16.1 Objectives (Mod 4 Units 16 & 17 Combined)

Let us state at the outset that this and the next Unit are companion pieces, for essayists like Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, about whom you have already known in Module 4 Unit 14 are generally studied together. So you will find that the content structuring for these two Units has certain elements distributed between them, and with help from your counsellor you are to take them up accordingly. The basic Objective of these two Units is to help you trace with specific textual examples, the development that the 'Essay' as a form witnessed in passing from the immediate impact of the Renaissance (as you've seen with Bacon) to the 18th century when prose and reason came to dominate. You will also be able to formulate an idea of the print and publication industry of the time, and also the readership question. Finally, with these two essays on your syllabus, social formations, self-fashioning and the cult of personality will also be developed.

4.16.2 Introduction (Mod 4 Units 16 & 17 Combined)

It follows from the sub-section above that Units 16 and 17 intend to give you a clear idea on how the development of English Prose was not a random or erratic event but a gradual and harmonious process of development. Your counselor might as well recall for you the beginnings in the didactic prose of Bacon, the mathematical

plainness of the Restoration pamphleteers and diarists, and move on to the Neo-Classical emphasis on decorum and moral purpose of Eighteenth century prose of the Periodical Essayists and the nascent novel – until it attained its modern form and fullness. At the micro level, this unit will introduce the learner to the features of Augustan or Eighteenth Century English prose and the two stalwarts – Joseph Addison and Richard Steele – who were the pioneers in popularising the very topical genre called the 'Periodical Essay', published in the popular Journals/newspapers of the time. You will also see for yourselves how these paved the way for the rise of the novel in that century. An understanding of the background of the Periodical Essay would therefore be relevant in this context.

4.16.3 The Background of the 18th Century Periodical Essay

Why do you think the term 'Periodical' came to be affixed to the essay form in the 18th century?

As you go into this sub-section, try and find the answer to this very basic question that should definitely strike your minds at the outset.

The periodical essay, conceptualised 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). The flourishing prose tradition of the seventeenth century polished by the elegance of Sir William Temple, the ideas of plainness propounded by John Locke and John Tillotson, the Archbishop of Canterbury, led to the discarding of the cumbrous sentence-structure of the Elizabethan and Jacobean ages and ushered in, what came to be called, the "middle style" of prose which enabled a greater degree of informality and was exploited by the periodicals/ newspapers of the time.

The periodical essay was also the direct product of the art of pamphleteering much in vogue in the Restoration age and continued in the works of Daniel Defoe and Jonathan Swift in the eighteenth century. Journalism too had its pioneer in Defoe's periodicals, *The Review*, *Applebee's Journal*. The growing interest of the eighteenth century in contemporary affairs is readily traced in the developments in journalism. In addition to the newspapers, the early eighteenth century had 'journals of books', which summarised and extracted the more scholarly continental as well as English books. *The Gentleman's Magazine*, by Edward Cave, had offered the cultured reader a monthly selection of poems, songs, stories, news and the like. *The Philosophical Transactions of The Royal Society* continued as the chief scientific

periodical. The compactness of the city of London, the club-like effect of the Coffee Houses, further aided the expansion of the Periodical Prose form. The periodical essay catered to a topical need like comedy of manners and it substituted the entire tradition of theatre going which was a part of the Elizabethan and Jacobean ages. In an age of socio-political turmoil, there was no longer time for idle pleasure. It was a time trying to adapt to new and changed conditions, where the church no longer dominated and the need for a stable society became the preoccupation of the intellectuals. Thus journalism appeared as the most realistic and original medium for the rising middle classes to solve problems and to shape their opinions. The periodical essay with its fictional characters and anecdotes, entertained a large readership that included the merchants, intelligentsia, courtiers and acted as a fit interregnum between the decline of theatre-going and the emergence of the novel. The periodical essayists echoed, to some extent, the complacency of the times, the sense of security and calm, but also tried to correct the faults that were products of this complacency. Of their readers , they demanded sane , level-headed actions , backed by the dictates of reason and common sense. Eighteenth-century writers, and particularly the periodical essayists, showed the same concern for order, reason, and good sense in their writing. Reacting against the passion and complexity of the seventeenth-century metaphysical school, they strove for clearness, for correctness and for a balanced style that would underline their rational persuasions and come to be described by Samuel Johnson as "the middle style" (On Addison) of English Prose which had its direct successors in Lamb. Their principal aim was to be understood, and the lucidity and symmetry which their prose attained as a result. One important contribution that the periodical writers made to English literature is the colloquial manner they adopted in order to appeal to a wider public; they required that a piece of prose or poetry be interesting , agreeable , and above all comprehensible.

For an author, the periodical form could be especially appealing as a means of presenting his ideas tentatively rather than completely. This informality, already present in the Renaissance essays, is extended when the writer has the additional advantage of publishing periodically. Periodicals in the eighteenth century included social and moral commentary, and literary and dramatic criticism, as well as short literary works. They also saw the advent of serialised stories, which Charles Dickens, among others, would later perfect. One of the most important outgrowths of the eighteenth-century periodical, however, was the topical, or periodical, essay which was the lead article in an issue. Practically all eighteenth century authors were occasional

contributors. The shaping influences of this form of prose/essay were journalistic rather than that of the 'essai' following the traditions of Montaigne, Bacon or Cowley. The periodical essay usually had a dual aim: to **amuse** and to **improve;** qualities that you would closely associate with the classical dicta of **'edification'** and **'gratification'** as the foundational principles of literature. It was through deft management of the latter purpose, while not neglecting the former, that Addison and Steele achieved their greatest successes. There were many periodicals - Ned Ward's *London Spy* (1698-1700), Willis's *Occasional Paper*, *The Weekly Comedy* and *The Humours of a Coffee House* (1707-1708). – before Addison and Steele's periodical careers began. One must then conclude that the superiority of *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*, the essay periodicals of Steel and Addison, is in part due to the happy combination of the 'dule' and 'utile'. Appealing to an educated and largely middle class audience, the periodical essay as developed by Addison and Steele was not scholarly, but casual in tone, concise, and adaptable to a number of subjects, including daily life, ethics, religion, science, economics, and social and political issues. Another innovation brought about by the periodical was the publication of letters to the editor, which permitted an unprecedented degree of interaction between author and audience.

In literary reputation Addison far surpasses Steele, but in his prose he is never at his best except when working beside Steele. *The Tatler* was begun by Steele in April 1709, and appeared on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays – on days that the post left London for the country. In the dedication to the first collected volume Steele wrote: "The general purpose of this paper, is to expose the false arts of life, to pull off the disguises of cunning, vanity and affectation and to recommend a simplicity in our dress, our discourse, and our behavior". The 'dulce et utile' (amusement and instruction) combination resulted in some of the best known and best loved prose-writings of the eighteenth century. Mr. Issac Bickerstaff, the pseudonym under which all the Tatlers were written was gradually characterised as an elderly, tolerant observer and commentator, an astrologer by profession.

The Spectator is by far the best of all periodical Papers. It also was a folio half sheet, but unlike *The Tatler*, appeared daily – a strain on the versatility and industry of its authors. It ran from March 1711 to December 1712, and although a collaborative project, in it Addison did his best writing. The persona of 'Mr. Spectator' was invented and characterised in the first issue. He was an observer, not a censor of morals, and therein lay his usefulness and his charm. The club of which he is a member is introduced to us by Steele in the second number of the paper.

Check your progress

After reading this sub-section, you should be able to gather a fair idea of the why the Periodical Essay is so called and what its subject matter is. The trends of continuity and disruption from the Restoration era, the impact of the emerging popular culture and public life of the times, the continuation of the classical idea of the dual purpose of literature...and the rise of a mature prose style ... all these should be noted. Your counselor is expected to guide you in analysing these aspects with additional inputs.

4.16.4 Joseph Addison - A Brief Biography

Joseph Addison (1672 -1719) an English essayist, poet, and dramatist, who, with Richard Steele, was a leading contributor to and guiding spirit of the periodicals ***The Tatler*** and ***The Spectator***. His writing skill led to his holding important posts in government while the Whigs were in power. Addison was the eldest son of the Reverend Lancelot Addison, later Archdeacon of Coventry and Dean of Lichfield. After schooling in Amesbury and Salisbury and at Lichfield Grammar School, he was enrolled at the age of 14 in the Charterhouse in London. Here began his lifelong friendship with Richard Steele, who later became his literary collaborator. Both went on to the University of Oxford, where Addison matriculated at Queen's College in May 1687. Addison went on to have a lucrative career in the government. The Whig success in the election of May 1705, which saw the return of Somers and Halifax to the Privy Council, brought Addison increased financial security in an appointment as undersecretary to the secretary of state, a busy and lucrative post. Addison's retention in a new, more powerful Whig administration in the autumn of 1706 reflected his further rise in government service. At this time he began to see much of Steele, helping him write the play *The Tender Husband* (1705). In practical ways Addison also assisted Steele with substantial loans and the appointment as editor of the official London Gazette. In 1708 Addison was elected to Parliament for Lost within Cornwall, and later in the same year he was made secretary to the earl of Wharton, the new lord lieutenant of Ireland. Addison's post was in effect that of secretary of state for Irish affairs. It was during Addison's term in Ireland that his friend Steele began publishing *The Tatler*, which appeared three times a week under the pseudonym of Isaac Bickerstaff. Though at first issued as a newspaper presenting accounts of London's political, social, and cultural news, this periodical soon began investigating

English manners and society, establishing principles of ideal behaviour and genteel conduct, and proposing standards of good taste for the general public.

By the end of 1710 Steele had enough material for a collected edition of *The Tatler*. Thereupon, he and Addison decided to make a fresh start with a new periodical *The Spectator*, which appeared six days a week, from March 1, 1711, to December 6, 1712, offered a wide range of material to its readers, from discussion of the latest fashions to serious disquisitions on criticism and morality, including Addison's weekly papers on John Milton's *Paradise Lost* and the series on the "pleasures of the imagination." From the start, Addison was the leading spirit in *The Spectator*'s publication, contributing 274 numbers in all. In bringing learning "out of closets and libraries, schools and colleges, to dwell in clubs and assemblies, at tea-tables, and in coffee-houses," *The Spectator* was eminently successful. One feature of *The Spectator* that deserves particular mention is its **critical essays**, in which Addison sought to elevate public taste. He devoted a considerable portion of his essays to literary criticism, which was to prove influential in the subsequent development of the English novel. His own gift for drawing realistic human characters found brilliant literary expression in the members of the Spectator Club, in which such figures as Roger de Coverley, the subject of one of the prose pieces that forms part of this unit, prominently feature.

4.16.5 'Sir Roger at Church' – Text

Published in *The Spectator*, No, 112, Monday, July 9, 1711

Ἀθανάτους μὲν πρῶτα θεοὺς, νόμῳ ὡς διάκειται, Τίμα.[1]

——Pythagoras

I am always very well pleased with a country Sunday, and think, if keeping holy the seventh day were only a human institution, it would be the best method that could have been thought of for the polishing and civilizing of mankind. It is certain the country people would soon degenerate into a kind of savages and barbarians were there not such frequent returns of a stated time, in which the whole village meet together with their best faces, and in their cleanliest habits, to converse with one another upon indifferent subjects, hear their duties explained to them, and join together in adoration of the Supreme Being. Sunday clears away the rust of the whole week, not only as it refreshes in their minds the notions of religion, but as it puts both the sexes upon appearing in their most agreeable forms, and exerting all such qualities

as are apt to give them a figure in the eye of the village. A country fellow distinguishes himself as much in the churchyard as a citizen does upon the 'Change[2], the whole parish politics being generally discussed in that place either after sermon or before the bell rings. My friend Sir Roger, being a good churchman, has beautified the inside of his church with several texts of his own choosing; he has likewise given a handsome pulpit[3] cloth, and railed in the communion[4] table at his own expense. He has often told me that, at his coming to his estate, he found his parishioners very irregular; and that, in order to make them kneel and join in the responses, he gave every one of them a hassock[5] and a Common Prayer[6] book, and at the same time employed an itinerant singing master, who goes about the country for that purpose, to instruct them rightly in the tunes of the Psalms; upon which they now very much value themselves, and indeed outdo most of the country churches that I have ever heard. As Sir Roger is landlord to the whole congregation, he keeps them in very good order, and will suffer nobody to sleep in it besides himself; for if by chance he has been surprised into a short nap at sermon, upon recovering out of it he stands up and looks about him, and if he sees anybody else nodding, either wakes them himself, or sends his servant to them. Several other of the old knight's particularities break out upon these occasions; sometimes he will be lengthening out a verse in the Singing-Psalms[7] half a minute after the rest of the congregation have done with it; sometimes, when he is pleased with the matter of his devotion, he pronounces "Amen" three or four times to the same prayer; and sometimes stands up when everybody else is upon their knees, to count the congregation, or see if any of his tenants are missing. I was yesterday very much surprised to hear my old friend, in the midst of the service, calling out to one John Matthews to mind what he was about, and not disturb the congregation. This John Matthews, it seems, is remarkable for being an idle fellow, and at that time was kicking his heels for his diversion. This authority of the knight, though exerted in that odd manner which accompanies him in all circumstances of life, has a very good effect upon the parish, who are not polite enough to see anything ridiculous in his behavior; besides that the general good sense and worthiness of his character make his friends observe these little singularities as foils that rather set off than blemish his good qualities. As soon as the sermon is finished, nobody presumes to stir till Sir Roger is gone out of the church. The knight walks down from his seat in the chancel[8] between a double row of his tenants, that stand bowing to him on each side, and every now and then inquires how such an one's wife, or mother, or son, or father do, whom he does not see at church—which is understood as a secret reprimand to the person that is absent. The chaplain[9] has often told me that upon a catechising[10] day, when Sir Roger has been pleased with a boy that answers well, he has ordered a

Bible to be given him next day for his encouragement, and sometimes accompanies it with a flitch of bacon to his mother. Sir Roger has likewise added five pounds a year to the clerk's place; and, that he may encourage the young fellows to make themselves perfect in the church service, has promised, upon the death of the present incumbent, who is very old, to bestow it according to merit. The fair understanding between Sir Roger and his chaplain, and their mutual concurrence in doing good, is the more remarkable because the very next village is famous for the differences and contentions that rise between the parson and the squire, who live in a perpetual state of war. The parson is always preaching at the squire, and the squire, to be revenged on the parson, never comes to church. The squire has made all his tenants atheists and tithe-stealers[11]; while the parson instructs them every Sunday in the dignity of his order, and insinuates to them almost in every sermon that he is a better man than his patron. In short, matters are come to such an extremity that the squire has not said his prayers either in public or private this half year; and that the parson threatens him, if he does not mend his manners, to pray for him in the face of the whole congregation. Feuds of this nature, though too frequent in the country, are very fatal to the ordinary people, who are so used to be dazzled with riches that they pay as much deference to the understanding of a man of an estate as of a man of learning; and are very hardly brought to regard any truth, how important so ever it may be, that is preached to them, when they know there are several men of five hundred a year[12] who do not believe it.

4.16.6 Notes and Glossary

1. Epigraph: "First worship the immortal gods as custom decrees." The first of the so-called Golden Verses of Pythagoras.
2. A citizen of the City of London, hence commonly a merchant. The " 'Change" is the Exchange in London, where merchants met to transact business.
3. Pulpit: The podium from where the priest in a church conducts the service.
4. Communion: The term "**communion**" is applied to sharing in the Eucharist by partaking of the consecrated bread and wine, an action seen as entering into a particularly close relationship with Christ. Sometimes the term is applied not only to this partaking but to the whole of the rite or to the consecrated elements.
5. Common Prayer Book: The Book of Common Prayer is the short title of a number of related prayer books used in the Anglican Communion, as well as

by the Continuing Anglican, "Anglican realignment" and other Anglican churches.

6. Hassock: a cushion for kneeling on in church, while at prayer.
7. Psalms: The **Book of Psalms** (*Hebrew* "Praises"), commonly referred to simply as **Psalms** or "the Psalms", is the first book of the *Ketuvim* ("Writings"), the third section of the *Hebrew Bible*. The title is derived from the Greek translation, *psalmoi*, meaning "instrumental music" and, by extension, "the words accompanying the music." The book is an *anthology* of individual *psalms*, with 150 in the Jewish and Western Christian tradition and more in the Eastern Christian. They are meant to be sung accompanied by music.
8. Chancel: In church architecture, the **chancel** (or presbytery) is the space around the altar in the sanctuary at the liturgical east end of a traditional Christian church building, possibly including the choir.
9. Chaplain: Traditionally, a **chaplain** is a minister, such as a priest, pastor, rabbi, imam or lay representative of a religious tradition.
10. Catechising: To teach the principles of Christian dogma, discipline, and ethics by means of questions and answers.
11. Tithe-stealers: Farmers who cheat the parson to whom they are bound to pay annual tithes (i.e., a tenth of the produce of their farms)
12. Five hundred a year: a man with an income of 500 pounds a year.

4.16.7 'Sir Roger at Church' – Commentary and Analysis

The Spectator Papers, though catering to a topical need and taste, outlive their contemporaneity though the sheer force of characterisation which Addison so deftly used and managed. One of the most memorable characters created by him is Sir Roger de Coverley, an elderly country squire. At first he was designed to be the survival of a Restoration Rake (fashionable man), but he soon became the Tory country squire, aged and lovable, benevolent tyrant of his parish, occasionally absurd as magistrate and politician. Sir Roger appeared in so many essays that some thought that *The Spectator* was evolving to the form of the novel of manners. Whether we watch Sir Roger on his own estate, note his relations with the parson of his parish, or his paternal interest in the attendance and behavior of his tenants at church, we share a friendly affection in all of it. He never becomes so absurd as to lose our respect.

➢ **Character of Sir Roger**

The picture that emerged of Sir Roger's character from the initial passages of the essay is:

- Sir Roger is one an **eccentric** but **lovable** Country squire.
- Sir Roger de Coverley is a man **of naturally strong intelligence** and **physical vigour**.
- He has, indeed, resigned himself to **an inglorious existence** among his bucolic and admiring tenants.
- He, however, has not fallen a victim to a sense of self-importance like the pompous and empty-headed Sir Harry Quickset.
- He overflows with **loving kindness**, the concept of *noblesse oblige* that stillmarked out the older feudal homes.
- His long career of feudal autocracy has only added a **touch of independence** and eccentricity to his **benevolence**.
- His relationship with his tenants is a **paternalistic one**.

➢ **Humour in Addison**

Humour in Addison's essays is chiefly ironical and satirical. Humour and irony are related very closely in his essays. Moreover, his laughter is intended to mend, correct and rectify follies and absurdities and hence the purpose of *The Spectator* papers, well announced in number 10, was "to enliven morality with wit, and to temper wit with morality". Good-natured humour abounds in "Sir Roger at Church". The follies, oddities of Sir Roger are the chief elements and source of humour. His authoritative power sometimes leads him to appear a funny and idiosyncratic man. Addison shows that Sir Roger is eccentric and in this essay his eccentricities and oddities are seen in the capacity in which he exercises his authority as landlord. He wants that his tenants should behave well in the church. He allows nobody to sleep in the church during sermon but himself often cannot resist dozing off. He creates humour through incongruity between what he says and what he does. Sometimes when everybody is upon their knees, he would stand up and start counting the number of the tenants present. Here Addison says, "As Sir Roger is landlord to the whole congregation, he keeps them in good order and will suffer nobody to sleep in it besides himself". Moreover, he "sometime stands up when everybody else is upon their knees, to count the congregation, or see if

any of his tenants are missing". It creates humour and we laugh at his peculiarities. He is not conscious that he is breaking social form and it becomes an oddity of manner. Then again Addison says about Sir Roger that when he is pleased with a matter, he pronounces the word "amen" several times. Addison says. "...half a minute after the rest of the congregation have done with it; sometimes when he is pleased with a matter of his devotion, he pronounces amen three or four times to the same prayer". A religious fervour that is misplaced—Sir Roger does not realize that this is eccentric behavior. Sometime Sir Roger falls asleep during the congregation and yet, if by chance he sees anybody dozing, he wakes him up or sends his servants to him. Sometime he shouts to somebody and tells the person not to disturb the congregation. A fine example of situational irony – that he is doing exactly the opposite of what he is preaching. These eccentricities make us laugh. The authoritarian Sir Roger leaves the church first after finishing the congregation and no one dares leave the room before him as a mark of respect. He goes out dividing the people into two rows and he follows the lane between these two rows. These oddities of Sir Roger are not criticized but satirized with the mild strokes of humour. Apparently Addison tries to amuse the reader through the above humorous anecdotes and description of situations but actually he also satirizes the shortcommings of Sir Roger, as sleeping in the church during sermons is an offence to the Church. Sir Roger's vices however are so mild as to call for nothing more than good-natured satire, instead of bitter criticism. Surely, Addison is critiquing a way of life through the affable Sir Roger, the tenants for their philistinism – they are too rustic to understand the sermon or its nuances.

- **Satire in Addison**

  While the healthy living and paternalistic communal relations with the tenants, demonstrated by Sir Roger are portrayed with subtle admiration, his dealings with the local church are highly satirized. The most obvious mockery of Sir Roger occurred when Addison detailed Sir Roger's relationship and commitment to high-church authority. The authority Sir Roger wielded in the country church near his estate is meant to depict Tory feudalism as a farce. One of these feudal principles was the privilege which gave large landowners control over their local parish church and the ability to name the clergyman and clerks. While a choice based on merit is an admirable enough notion, Mr. Spectator could not suppress a hint of bemusement over Sir Roger's complete

authority in the church writing that, 'As Sir Roger is Landlord to the whole Congregation, he keeps them in very good Order, and will suffer no body to sleep in it besides himself...'. The squire routinely caused disruptions such as lengthening the verses of psalms, standing while others were kneeling so as to note any absences and interrupting the sermon to tell people not to disturb the congregation with fidgeting or making noise. Mr. Spectator opined that the worthiness of his character made these behavioural oddities seem like foils rather than blemishes on his good qualities. He also noted that none of the other parishioners were polite or educated enough to recognise the ridiculousness of Sir Roger's behaviour inside the church and his sense of authority over the church. These observations of Sir Roger's love of the high-Anglican church in the countryside are essential to the authors' original purpose for creating the character, to mock the seemingly backward rural Tory. You must remember here that Addison was a Whig supporter and in this age literature and politics were intimately linked he was appealing to Whig sympathizers.

4.16.8 Summing Up

While it will be an incomplete summing up right now, yet on the basis of Addison's essay, we can note the following points:

- The development of a prose style that is very different from Bacon's, and yet conveying a robust idea of country life of the time
- A healthy blend of humour and satire that builds a congenial representation of character
- The infusion of personal elements that were to pave the way for essay writing in the Romantic period
- A favourable picture of aristocracy quite different from say what you see in the works of John Dryden or Alexander Pope
- A conversational manner of narration that makes for pleasurable reading
- The perception of religious practices not so much for religion per se, but more of social behaviour and community interactions.

Unit - 17 □ Richard Steele: On Recollections of Childhood

Structure

4.17.1 Richard Steele – A Brief Introduction

Sir Richard Steele, pseudonym Isaac Bickerstaff (1672 – 1729). He was a noted English essayist, dramatist, journalist, and politician, best known as principal author (with Joseph Addison) of the periodicals *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*. Steele's father, an ailing and somewhat ineffectual attorney, died when the son was about five, and the boy was taken under the protection of his uncle Henry Gascoigne, confidential secretary to the Duke of Ormonde, to whose bounty, as Steele later wrote, he owed "a liberal education." He was sent to study in England at Charterhouse in 1684 and to Christ Church, Oxford, in 1689. At Charterhouse he met Joseph Addison, and thus began one of the most famous and fruitful of all literary friendships.

He was commissioned in 1697 and promoted to captain in 1699, but, lacking the money and connections necessary for substantial advancement, he left the army in 1705. Steele's most important appointment in the early part of Queen Anne's reign was that of gazetteer—writer of *The London Gazette*, the official government journal. Although this reinforced his connection with the Whig leaders, it gave little scope for his artistic talents, and, on April 12, 1709, he secured his place in literary history by launching the thrice-weekly essay periodical *The Tatler*. Writing under the name of Isaac Bickerstaff, Steele created the mixture of entertainment and instruction in manners

and morals that was to be perfected in *The Spectator*. "The general purpose of the whole," wrote Steele, "has been to recommend truth, innocence, honour, and virtue, as the chief ornaments of life"; and here, as in the later periodical paper, can be seen his strong ethical bent, his attachment to the simple virtues of friendship, frankness, and benevolence, his seriousness of approach tempered by the colloquial ease and lightness of his style.

Steele's original plan for *The Tatler* was of a journal with several divisions. Diversity was the great need and he divided the paper into contrasting sections that derived from various sources, chiefly Coffee Houses, in which he pretended he had agents. Thus, 'accounts of gallantry were to come from White's Chocolate House, from Will's Coffee House would come the poetry, already made famous by Dryden, Wycherley, Congreve and others. Foreign and domestic news came from James's Coffee House and all other subjects he concludes 'shall be dated form my own apartment'. 'whatever we do or say or think or feel', as the Latin motto of the first *Tatlers* was translated, suggested that interest in human beings and their affairs is an endearing and amiable characteristic of *The Tatler.*

4.17.2 'On Recollections of Childhood' – Text

From the *Tatler*, Number 181, June 6, 1710

There are those among mankind, who can enjoy no relish of their being, except the world is made acquainted with all that relates to them, and think everything lost that passes unobserved: but others find a solid delight in stealing by the crowd[1], and modelling their life after such a manner, as is as much above the approbation[2], as the practice of the vulgar. Life being too short to give instances great enough of true friendship or goodwill, some sages have thought it pious to preserve a certain reverence for the names of their deceased friends; and have withdrawn themselves from the rest of the world at certain seasons to commemorate in their own thoughts such of their acquaintance who have gone before them out of this life. And indeed, when we are advanced in years, there is not a more pleasing entertainment, than to recollect in a gloomy moment the many we have parted with, that have been dear and agreeable to us, and to cast a melancholy thought or two after those with whom, perhaps, we have indulged ourselves in whole nights of mirth and jollity. With such inclinations in my heart, I went to my closet yesterday in the evening, and resolved to be sorrowful; upon which occasion I could not but look with disdain upon myself, that though all the reasons which I had to lament the loss of many of my friends, are now as forcible as at the moment of their departure, yet did not my heart swell with the same sorrow, which I felt at that time; but I could, without tears, reflect

upon many pleasing adventures I had had with some, who have long been blended with common earth. Though it is by the benefit of nature, that length of time thus blots out the violence of afflictions; yet, with tempers too much given to pleasure, it is almost necessary to revive the old places of grief in our memory; and ponder step by step on past life, to lead the mind into that sobriety[3] of thought which poises the heart, and makes it beat with due time, without being quickened with desire, or retarded with despair, from its proper and equal motion. When we wind up a clock, that is out of order, to make it go well for the future, we do not immediately set the hand to the present instant, but we make it strike the round of all its hours, before it can recover the regularity of its time. Such, thought I, shall be my method this evening; and since it is that day of the year which I dedicate to the memory of such in another life as I much delighted in when living, an hour or two shall be sacred to sorrow and their memory, while I run over all the melancholy circumstances of this kind which have occurred to me in my whole life.

1. The first sense of sorrow I ever knew was upon the death of my father, at which time I was not quite five years of age; but was rather amazed at what all the house meant, than possessed with a real understanding why nobody was willing to play with me. I remember I went into the room where his body lay, and my mother sat weeping alone by it. I had my battledore in my hand, and fell a beating the coffin, and calling "Papa"; for, I knew not how, I had some slight idea that he was locked up there. My mother caught me in her arms, and transported beyond all patience of the silent grief she was before in, she almost smothered me in her embraces; and told me in a flood of tears, Papa could not hear me, and would play with me no more, for they were going to put him under ground, whence he could never come to us again. She was a very beautiful woman, of a noble spirit, and there was a dignity in her grief amidst all the wildness of her transport[4]; which, methought, struck me with an instinct of sorrow, that, before I was sensible of what it was to grieve, seized my very soul, and has made pity the weakness of my heart ever since. The mind in infancy is, methinks, like the body in embryo; and receives impressions so forcible, that they are as hard to be removed by reason, as any mark with which a child is born is to be taken away by any future application. Hence it is, that good-nature in me is no merit; but having been so frequently overwhelmed with her tears before I knew the cause of any affliction, or could draw defences from my own judgment, I imbibed commiseration, remorse, and an unmanly gentleness of mind, which has since insnared[5] me into ten thousand calamities; and from whence I can reap no advantage, except it be,

that, in such a humour as I am now in, I can the better indulge myself in the softnesses of humanity, and enjoy that sweet anxiety which arises from the memory of past afflictions.

2. We, that are very old, are better able to remember things which befell us in our distant youth, than the passages of later days. For this reason it is, that the companions of my strong and vigorous years present themselves more immediately to me in this office of sorrow. Untimely or unhappy deaths are what we are most apt to lament; so little are we able to make it indifferent when a thing happens, though we know it must happen. Thus we groan under life, and bewail those who are relieved from it. Every object that returns to our imagination raises different passions, according to the circumstance of their departure. Who can have lived in an army, and in a serious hour reflect upon the many gay and agreeable men[6] that might long have flourished in the arts of peace, and not join with the imprecations[7] of the fatherless and widow on the tyrant to whose ambition they fell sacrifices? But gallant men, who are cut off by the sword, move rather our veneration than our pity; and we gather relief enough from their own contempt of death, to make it no evil, which was approached with so much cheerfulness, and attended with so much honour. But when we turn our thoughts from the great parts of life on such occasions, and instead of lamenting those who stood ready to give death to those from whom they had the fortune to receive it; I say, when we let our thoughts wander from such noble objects, and consider the havoc which is made among the tender and the innocent, pity enters with an unmixed softness, and possesses all our souls at once.

3. Here (were there words to express such sentiments with proper tenderness) I should record the beauty, innocence, and untimely death, of the first object my eyes ever beheld with love. The beauteous virgin[8]! How ignorantly did she charm, how carelessly excel. O death! Thou hast right to the bold, to the ambitious, to the high, and to the haughty; but why this cruelty to the humble, to the meek, to the undiscerning[9], to the thoughtless? Nor age, nor business, nor distress, can erase the dear image from my imagination. In the same week, I saw her dressed for a ball, and in a shroud. How ill did the habit of death become the pretty trifler[10]! I still behold the smiling earth—A large train of disasters were coming on to my memory, when my servant knocked at the closet door, and interrupted me with a letter, attended with a hamper of wine, of the same sort with that which is to be put to sale on Thursday next, at Garraway's coffee-house[11]. Upon the receipt of it, I sent for three of my friends. We are so intimate, that we can be company in whatever state of mind we meet, and can entertain each other without expecting always to rejoice. The

wine we found to be generous and warming, but with such a heat as moved us rather to be cheerful than frolicksome. It revived the spirits, without firing the blood. We commended it until two of the clock this morning; and having to-day met a little before dinner, we found, that though we drank two bottles a man, we had much more reason to recollect than forget what had passed the night before.

4.17.3 Notes and Glossary

1. stealing by the crowd: maintaining a low profile or being private.
2. approbation: approval or praise.
3. sobriety: the state of being sober, and not drunk or intoxicated.
4. transport: overwhelm someone with strong emotions.
5. insnared: trapped.
6. agreeable men: men who are
7. imprecations: curses
8. beauteous virgin: the lovely, single and chaste lady who was the object of Steel's very first affections.
9. undiscerning: lacking judgment, insight, or taste.
10. pretty trifler: a lovely plaything.
11. London, the hub of intellectual activity.
11. Garraway's Coffee House: one of the popular Coffee Houses near the Change in London, the hub of intellectual activity. This direct mention will give you a very fair idea of the culture of coffee houses that was so much a part of high life of the city at this time.

4.17.4 'On Recollections of Childhood'–Commentary and Analysis

Though less popular than Addison as an essayist, Steele has been described as "more human and at his best a greater writer." In the prescribed essay in the module, he reflects on the pleasure of remembering the lives of friends and family members who have died. Especially vividly portrayed is the death of Steele's father when he was a mere child of five. Death was a new and unknown event for him and he could

not fathom the irrevocable nature of it. Struck by the sense of loss and exposed to the constant pain of his mother, Steele realizes and writes in retrospect that such indelible impact of disaster and tragedy in childhood has made him a man with a gentleness and sensitive bent of mind which is easily tuned towards recollections of bereavement. The simplicity and apology with which he describes this 'unmanly' softness of nature actually highlights the humane nature of the writer rather than demeaning his personality. This is a style which Steele follows regularly, one of negation, which actually goes to create a positive view of the essayist in the reader's mind.

Steele continues his discourse on the nature of deaths and the memories it evokes in the minds of survivors. According to him, the deaths and departures of childhood hit humans with greater impact than those which are encountered in later years. It is interesting to note that Steele says that the circumstances of death are the parameters which differentiate the nature of the sorrow it evokes in the mind of the living. For instance the nature of sorrow for mourning the gallant soldiers who gave their lives for the whims of some tyrant – would only result naturally in cursing the tyrant but would be different from the pain of the insider – the widow or the father on losing a loved one. Finally, Steele shares with us the object of his first affection a young lady who was called away by untimely death. Her death once again raises many questions in the writer's mind regarding the lack of reason and logic in death's onslaughts – who takes away not always the proud or the evil but also the tender and the meek. The essay ends on a note of humour as a casket of wine intrudes upon Steele's sombre trail of recollections and the arrival of friends and a long night of revelry leaves the writer's spirits uplifted.

What is noteworthy in the essay, as in the essays of Addison too, is the familiarity of approach which instantly endears and draws the reader close to the essayist to share in his sorrows and participate in his humour with ease. Steele's selected essay blends pathos, philosophical reflections and personal sorrow with humour and light-heartedness, thus fulfilling the role as enumerated in early issues of *The Tatler* of combining 'dulce' with 'utile' or the appetite for the amusement with morality and to create the best-known and best-loved prose writing of the eighteenth century. Augustan age has often been charged with 'a too noticeable lack of emotion', but Richard Steele, with his warm human sympathy and genuine pity for the condition of weak men, seems to deny this accusation. His emotional nature led him to what may have been an excess of sentimentality in his plays, but in the periodical essays, the rapport that he establishes with his audience by expressing his feelings makes his satire more acceptable and thus more effective.

4.17.5 On Style: Addison and Steele Compared

Joseph Addison (1672-1719) and Richard Steele (1672-1729) are the founders of the modern English essay as well as modern English prose. Both Steele and Addison aimed at easy and free flowing expression and that was the style the 18th century needed with the expansion of England's trade and industry. In each preceding age, the masterpieces were poetry but before the middle of the 18th century we find prose far surpassing poetry. As regards the improvement of English prose Steele and Addison occupy an important position. They were the first to combine good style with attractive matter. And thus to convey a prose ideal to a much wider circle than had any one done before and further they diffused a taste for knowledge as none previously had one done before that was communicated in a novel way.

Look at this wonderful passage from one of the essays in *The Spectator* which will bring out the philosophy of Addison and Steele:

It was said of Socrates that he brought philosophy down from heaven to inhabit among men; and I shall be ambitious to have it said of me that I have brought philosophy out of closets and libraries, schools, to dwell in the clubs, at tea-coffee houses.

In *The Spectator*, the method of Addison and Steele is that of the preacher who does no violence to human nature. At bottom, the idea that they seek to inculcate is of the art of living together, the duties of family life, the status and role of women, in society— general subjects, such are the subjects touched upon by a secular, impartial and practical this universal adviser. In the words of Cazamian: "The variety of subject, a supple adaption to the preferences of the public at the same time sufficiently skillful reaction against certain habits, certain defects, a harmony with obscure instinct of middle class minds- such are the major reasons for the success of spectator." Addison is remarkable among satirists because he intended his humor to be 'Remedial', to induce human feelings to forsake the wrong, and to become more kindly. His humor is of a kind that makes one smile rather than laugh aloud. His essays helps to impart a moral tone to British society, he castigated the manners and foibles of society. In fact, he was the most genial teacher of wisdom to the people of his age. The contribution of Steele as an essayist may be considered more than significant to that of Addison in that it was Steele who initiated and conceptualized the joint venture *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*.

Steele stated the purpose of the *Tatler* in these words: "The general purpose of this paper is to expose the false art of life, to puff off the disguise of cunning, vanity, and affection and to recommend a general simplicity in our discourse and behaviour." Most of Steele's essays are didactic in nature. He intended to bring about a reformation of contemporary society manners and life. Steele was able to produce originality in his essays. *The Tatler* was the result of his idea. His creative imagination resulted in the establishment of the Spectator Club. Addison contributed to the development of the characters of Spectator Club. Both essayists were conscious moralists who intended to improve the minds and manners of their readers:

- ✓ their essays are less formal and didactic than those of Francis Bacon, but less personal than those of Charles Lamb and William Hazlitt in the next century.
- ✓ They strove for a balance between the new mostly Puritan philistine middle-class and the often libertine aristocracy.
- ✓ They fostered a new social ideal which stressed moderation, reasonableness, self-control, urbanity, and good taste.

Steele and Addison provide a natural contrast to one another, both in their personalities and in their work. Both men were interested in reforming the manners and morals of the eighteenth century, but Steele wrote more from experience of the faults, foibles and weaknesses he was satirizing in human beings while Addison more from inner experience and on his habit of thought and introspection. His tone is calmer than Steele's, though he is less warm and sympathetic. His prose is more balanced and symmetrical, easier to follow, though perhaps less 'natural'. His essays attempt a conscious perfection of style that Steele may not have had time for. Addison mastered a literary manner finer than Steele's though he may have been lacking in the kindliness and sympathetic humanity of his contemporary. But though Steele did show a powerful sympathy and more 'feeling' than Addison in his writing, and though the original conception of a reformatory series of essays was his, the credit for evolving the most widely-read periodical and the one of the highest quality must go to Addison. It may be said, in conclusion, that Steele was the more original and Addison the more effective. Addison raised Steele's conception of an essay to a degree never yet surpassed. Steele is unequalled in his depiction of and advice to members of the domestic circle; he is most at home with matters having to do with the "personal" aspect of lives of eighteenth century men and women. When the periodicals turned their attention to correcting manners and morals, Addison's cool sense and rational persuasions were perhaps regarded more seriously than Steele's cheerful, though sympathetic pictures.

Dr Samuel Johnson on Addison's 'Middle Style' of prose writing"

His prose is the model of the middle style; on grave subjects not formal, on light occasions not grovelling; pure without scrupulosity, and exact without apparent elaboration; always equable and always easy, without glowing words or pointed sentences. Addison never deviates from his track to snatch a grace lie seeks no ambitious ornaments and tries no hazardous innovations. His page is always luminous, but never blazes in unexpected splendour.... . His sentences have neither studied amplitude nor affected brevity: his periods, though not diligently rounded, are voluble and easy. Whoever wishes to attain an English style, familiar but not coarse, and elegant but not ostentatious, must give his days and nights to the volumes of Addison." (Dr Johnson on Addison from *Essays by Johnson*, ed. J H Fowler)

4.17.6 Summing Up

As stated at the beginning of Module 5 Unit 16, these two Units have attempted to make the learner aware of the following significant issues:

- That there is a continuity between the prose of the earlier ages of English literary history and the eighteenth century and the eventual evolution of modern English prose owes a lot to the development of prose writing in any particular age..
- The English Prose tradition seriously began with Bacon's crisp didactic prose, moved towards simplicity and plainness with Restoration pamphleteers and diarists, merging with the Neo-classical emphasis on elegance and decorum and finally heralding the birth of modern prose.
- The development of prose was a predominant reason for the emergence of the periodical essay and eventual the rise of the novel. Printing had contributed largely to the creation of a market place for journals, newspapers and fiction
- Joseph Addison and Richard Steele were pioneers who established in *The Tatler* and *The Spectator* a form of the literary essay that went out of fashion after the eighteenth century periodical papers ceased to exist.
- The representative essays by Addison and Steele from *The Tatler* and *The spectator* are helpful in revealing the style of the writers and pointing out how they were both precursors of the English novel as well as of modern prose to be discussed in subsequent modules.

The preceding sections of this unit have tried to fulfill most of these objectives, leading the learner to appreciate the nuances of the prose style and the purpose of the essayists in the chosen pieces. As a learner you are expected to develop a curiosity to read more essays by Addison and Steele in order to get a greater knowledge and taste of their style.

4.17.7 Comprehension Exercises (Module 5 Units 16 & 17 Combined)

Long Answer Type Questions:

1. 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?
2. Critically assess the prose styles of Addison and Steele as found in the essays 'Sir Roger in Church' and 'On Recollections of Childhood'.
3. Examine how the Periodical essay helped to capture the contemporary social ethos of the eighteenth century.

Medium Length Answers Type Questions:

1. Delineate the character of Sir Roger de Coverley after Addison in 'Sir Roger in Church'.
2. Show how 'On Recollections of Childhood' reflects on the pleasures of remembering lives of people from the past.
3. Show how Addison blends wit and humour with criticism in his essay 'Sir Roger in Church'?

Short Answer Type Questions:

1. Describe Steel's feelings at his father's death.
2. Describe some of the peculiarities of Sir Roger's in church.
3. Give two examples each of the use of humour from both Addison's and Steele's essays.

4.17.8 Suggested Reading List (Module 5 Units 16 & 17 Combined)

Graham, Walter. *The Beginnings of English Literary Periodicals: A Study of Periodical Literature 1665-1715*. 1926. Reprint, New York: Octagon Books, 1972.

Meyers, Carol, "Advisors of the age of reason: The periodical essays of Steele, Addison, Johnson, and Goldsmith" (1962). Honors Projects. Paper 24. http://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/eng_honproj/24.

Squibbs, Richard. *Urban Enlightenment and the Eighteenth Century Periodical Essay*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

Walker, Hugh. *The English Essay and Essayists*. London & Toronto: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1915.

Unit-18 □ The Prose Writings of Samuel Johnson

Structure

4.18.1 Objectives

Dear learners, this unit will acquaint you with the prose writings of Samuel Johnson. It will help you understand the background of the Age of Johnson or the Transitional Age. It will introduce to you the various prose works of Samuel Johnson who was the literary 'dictator' of his age. This unit will sketch briefly the biographical details of Dr Johnson followed by his contribution to the English prose. You will also learn Dr Johnson's immense contribution to literary criticism followed by his contribution to the English language. Finally, you will be introduced to James Boswell's *Life of Samuel Johnson* which will give you an insight into his multi-dimensional personality.

4.18.2 Introduction

Samuel Johnson is the literary voice of the neoclassical age. His works embosom the values, style, and critical concepts of the period. He was a journalist, essayist,

critic, scholar, lexicographer, biographer, and satirist. He is a remarkable artist and the finest prose writer of the Eighteenth Century. He is chiefly remembered for his *A Dictionary of the English Language: To Which Are Prefixed, a History of the Language, and an English Grammar* (1755), *Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia*, of *The Plays of William Shakespeare* (1765), and his collection of essays *The Lives of the Poets* (1779-1781). Johnson was also known as a brilliant conversationalist, and James Boswell, in his *The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.* (1791), fortunately preserves this fascinating side of Johnson as a critic and verbal artist.

4.18.3 Dr Samuel Johnson: A Bio-Brief

Samuel Johnson (born September 18, 1709, Lichfield, Staffordshire, England—died December 13, 1784, London) was born in Lichfield. His father, Michael Johnson, was a provincial bookseller. In his infancy he had scrofula and his eye sight was impaired. He was not attractive in terms of his appearance.; one of Johnson's aunt's declared that she "would not have picked such a poor creature up in the street." However, Johnson's poor health did not hinder his education. In 1717 he went to Lichfield Grammar School. He studied there for eight years and excelled in Latin. Despite escalating poverty, he entered Pembroke College, Oxford. He was hailed by one of the dons there as "the best prepared pupil to have come up to Oxford." When his father died, he could not continue his study at Oxford and he had to leave without obtaining a degree in 1731. In spite of the hardship, he managed to get a job as an usher at Market Bosworth School. Johnson described this experience as a "complicated misery," and he soon left. Johnson experienced a mental depression at this time, which would follow him for the rest of his life. After going to Birmingham, he worked for a book-seller. He translated into English from French Father Jerome Lobo's *A Voyage to Abyssinia*, in 1735. In the same year, he married a draper's widow, Elizabeth Porter, who was twenty years his senior. Moreover, her family objected to her marrying a younger man. With her fortune of 800 pounds, he set up a school at Edial; near Lichfield. However, the school was not successful and in 1737 he went to London with one of his pupils, the future great actor, David Garrick.

Later, he went to London, where for almost 20 years, he battled to make a living as a professional writer by working as a "hack" journalist. He started submitting essays, reviews, poems, and brief biographies to the renowned *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1738. That same year, he also released *London*, which would go on to become one of his most popular and well-received poems, under an assumed name. In the meantime, his marriage to his wife deteriorated. She passed away in 1752. *An Account of the*

Life of Mr. Richard Savage, a biography that Johnson published in 1744, was his first widely read prose work. By the middle of that same decade, he had also started the first of several substantial literary endeavours, including *A Dictionary of the English Language*, which he finished in 1755. For a project that was supposed to take eighteen months but ended up taking almost ten years, Johnson agreed to edit William Shakespeare's plays in 1756. For this work, Trinity College, Dublin awarded Johnson an honorary LL.D., and ten years later, Oxford bestowed a similar honour. While writing *The Prince of Abyssinia*, (1759; also published *as The History of Rasselas*, 1768) a prose memoir that has been referred to as his religious autobiography, Johnson continued to submit pieces to numerous publications. King George III granted Johnson a pension in 1762 despite the fact that he had lived in poverty for the majority of his life. Johnson shifted his focus from writing books to doing philanthropic work, donating more than two-thirds of his annual pension to the poor and making his home a haven for a range of unhappy and underprivileged people. The *Life of Samuel Johnson* by James Boswell, which helped promote the idea of Johnson as a witty conversationalist and important member of the London literati, was written in 1791 as a result of Johnson's association with Boswell, a Scottish lawyer, and was first published in 1763. Soon after, Johnson established the illustrious Literary Club, a renowned London eating establishment frequented by his friends Boswell, Garrick, Oliver Goldsmith, and Joshua Reynolds. The opening articles Johnson wrote for *The Lives of the English Poets* (1781), now acclaimed as ground-breaking works of literary critique, began in 1777, when he was in his late sixties. Johnson experienced a stroke in the early 1780s and became very unwell. He passed away on December 13, 1784, and was laid to rest in Westminster Abbey's Poet's Corner.

4.18.4 The Age of Samuel Johnson

The age of Johnson, also known as the transitional age, roughly spans from 1751 to 1800. The age of Johnson ushered in a reaction against the constricted neoclassical ideology. Instead of extreme artificiality, the writers of the time wished to introduce a spontaneity in writing. The old classical order was challenged by the embryonic romantic ideology. A revolt against the tyranny of the neoclassical rule was followed by a revival of interest in nature and natural life. An extraordinary expansion of imagination replaced the fidelity to the reason.

The age of Johnson introduced a new brand of realism. The likes of Richardson and Fielding recorded very faithfully the human life. This brand of realism was, to some extent, different from that of the likes of Defoe who documented the real world

in a journalistic manner. At heart, these new novelists were imbued with a romantic zeal that enabled them to present a version of reality with a freshness of treatment.

This age witnesses a decline of political writing. Edward Albert opines that poets and satirists were not favourably accepted by Prime Minister Walpole. Therefore, this age did not produce prolific political texts. Writers were depended on their public which caused the rise of the men of letters, like Samuel Johnson and Oliver Goldsmith. They catered to the public demand. Towards the end of the age a revival of political writing was spawned by different revolutionary movements such as the French Revolution.

The literature of the period saw the rise of the historical works. This new wave was started in Scotland. Two Scottish historians, David Hume and William Robertson, made a significant contribution to history. Edward Gibbon was a reputed historian of England whose *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1777) ranked as one of the finest historical works. Tobias Smollett wrote *The History of England*. The romantic writers loved history for its own sake and not to find any authority in it.

4.18.5 Major Prose Works of Samuel Johnson

Johnson's prose works can be divided into two categories. The first category contains the essays of *The Rambler*, *The Idler* and the novel *Rasselas* that project him as a moralist. The second category includes his critical writings such as *Preface to Shakespeare* and *The Lives of the Poets*. In the essays of *the Rambler* and *The Idler* Dr Johnson's moral bent of mind is reflected. These twice-weekly papers contain heavy dose of morality. The essays are marked by a didactic tone.

The Rambler and the *Idler* are composed of periodical essays which number more than three hundred. The essays discuss literature, religion, politics, society. *The Rambler* and *The Idler* were not similar in tone. Where the *Rambler* was serious, ornate, the *Idler* was far more chatty and informal. It is in the *Rambler* that Johnson shows his didactic nature. He states modern romances "exhibit life in its true state." The knowledge that may be learned from books is therefore no longer sufficient for today's writers; they also need "that experience which can never be attained by solitary diligence, but must arise from general converse, and accurate observation of the living world" (*Rambler*, 10). Johnson argues that, given the readership of these contemporary romances, the author's main focus shouldn't be realism but rather moral guidance. These works primarily serve as lectures on conduct and introductions to life for "the young, the ignorant, and the idle" (Rambler, 11).

Another important prose work, *Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia*, is Johnson's major

contribution to fiction. It is a philosophical novel. This book is important for his various discussions on poets, poetry and virtue. Johnson reveals key insights into the nature of poetry through one of his fictional characters named Imlac in *Rasselas*. In chapter X, Imlac undertakes a discussion on poetry which has often been viewed as a summary of neoclassical principles.

Johnson's work as a biographer and scholar began early. In 1740, he wrote biographies of Admiral Robert Blake, Sir Francis Drake, and Jean-Philippe Barretier. These works are marked by unoriginality. In 1744, he published *An Account of the Life of Mr. Richard Savage, Son of the Earl Rivers* (better known as *Life of Richard Savage*), which was later included in *Prefaces, Biographical and Critical, to the Works of the English Poets* (1779-1781, 10 volumes; revised in 1781 as *The Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets*; best known as *The Lives of the Poets*), although it was often published separately.

Many years after *Life of Richard Savage*, Johnson agreed to write a series of prefaces to the works of English poets for a group of booksellers. The result was *The Lives of the Poets* (four volumes in 1779 and an additional six volumes in 1781). These essays are marked by Johnson's critical insight and immense knowledge of literature; many are still standard references. Johnson was also an editor, and produced an important edition of Shakespeare with commentary.

Among Johnson's other significant writings are the political essays *Thoughts on the Late Transactions Respecting Falkland's Islands* (1771) and *Taxation No Tyranny: An Answer to the Resolutions and Address of the American Congress (*1775), and the account of his travels in Scotland with his young Scottish friend, James Boswell, titled *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* (1775). In these works, Johnson displays his hatred of war and political profiteering and his acuteness of observation.

4.18.6 Samuel Johnson as a Literary Critic

The literary dictator of the Eighteenth century, Dr Johnson is the first critic who followed the Aristotelian concept of the universal and combined the author's biography with his works. Though Johnson was a man of classical temperament, his criticism conforms to as well as deviates from some of the classical rules. His criticism reveals a tug-of-war between neoclassical dogmatism and the liberating impulse.

Johnson's edition of *The Plays of William Shakespeare* (1756), published in 1765, is a monumental contribution to canon of the literary criticism. *The Preface* to this work is of much importance. Instead of treating the plays of Shakespeare as formal objects for analysis, he gives special emphasis on their focus in the real world.

The plays, according to Johnson, are full of psychological significance, and Johnson analyses these effects vis-à-vis the audience's experience in the theatre. However, Johnson sometimes finds faults with his plays though he hails Shakespeare as the greatest writer in English.

Johnson heaps praises on Shakespeare for supplying "just representations of general nature," "a faithful mirror of manners and of life," and "the genuine progeny of common humanity, such as the world will always supply, and observation will always find". This gives audience a glimpse into a real world. Johnson writes, "Shakespeare has no heroes; his scenes are occupied only by men, who act and speak as the reader thinks that he should himself have spoken or acted on the same occasion" (1968, 64). The embryonic eighteenth-century philosophical notion of sympathy recurs throughout Johnson's critical works: readers are moved by the apt depictions of tragedy and comedy as they see a reality they are familiar with and can empathise with. According to Johnson, in terms of the mimetic quality of the work, Shakespeare's works stand above any other writer's work. This is accomplished by repudiating the formal features of drama which categorise plays into either comedy or tragedy without mixing both. Shakespeare is not pontifical about rules. That is why he combines laughter and sorrow in an exquisite manner.

It matters not that a play is set in different locales (a requirement of the unity of place) or that it contains a variety of episodes that do not obviously advance the plot (violating the unity of action). Nor is it a deficit in a play to have the duration represented occupy many years rather than a strict reduction to twenty-four hours, or even three hours, to maintain verisimilitude in the play (the unity of time). Johnson reacts to the convention that the action of the play should imitate the actual time of life. He is of the view that mind can easily grasp that the action of the play stretches over a longer period than the play takes because it understands that "the stage is only a stage, and that the players are only players" (1968, 77). Viewers embrace the theatrical illusion because it is in the very nature of a dramatic presentation; spectators easily accept the extension of time. Moreover, the depicted locale can change from one place to another just as easily: ultimately it is an illusion, and once spectators accept that, they can accept much more. Johnson insists the experience is "a just picture of a real original," that it is believed to be real or just only within its own terms as representation:

> "we rather lament the possibility than suppose the presence of misery....The delight of tragedy proceeds from our consciousness of fiction; if we thought murders and treasons real, they would please no more. Imitations produce pain or pleasure, not because they are mistaken for realities, but because they bring realities to mind" (1968, 78).

However, Johnson also criticises Shakespeare for not following some rules. His 'first defect' is that 'he sacrifices virtue to convenience.' Shakespeare's violation of the principle of poetic justice is also criticised by Johnson. Unlike Dryden, Johnson does not possess the catholicity and flexibility of taste which enables one to appreciate the quality of a literary work without being swayed by personal prejudices.

Johnson's ***Lives of the Poets*** was primarily written and published in the final years of his life, in 1779 and 1781. This biographical study was first published as *Prefaces, Biographical and Critical, to the Works of the English Poets* in ten volumes. Here Johnson commentates on a rich corpus of English poetry from a neoclassical point of view. Prior to the emergence of the romantic age, this work evinces the final thoughts of a man guided by neoclassical morality. A total of 52 poets makes up this valuable work. Johnson wanted to start with Chaucer but he ultimately started with Abraham Cowley. Two famous examples from this volume speak volumes for his methodology. His study of the metaphysical poets in the 'Life of Abraham Cowley' is the first. These poets made use of unfamiliar metaphors or conceits. For modern audiences, John Donne (1572–1631), whose extent of knowledge Johnson praises, is the most talented of this school. Johnson insists that "true wit" in poetry be "at once natural and new, that which, though not obvious, is upon its first production, acknowledged to be just; ... that, which he that never found it, wonders how he missed" (2010, 1:200). They ransack heterogeneous branches of knowledge and sometimes compare the lovers to unallied objects like compasses or hemispheres which, according to Johnson, arrest our attention without insight: "Their thoughts are often new, but seldom natural; they are not obvious, but neither are they just; and the reader, far from wondering that he missed them, wonders more frequently by what perverseness of industry they were ever found" (2010, 1:200). These poets are more interested in "wit, abstracted from its effects upon the hearer"; in other words they do not write poetry that moves, teaches, and pleases—instead, "heterogeneous ideas are [merely] yoked by violence together" (2010, 1:200).

Johnson's criticism of the poetry of John Milton shows his strictness for poetic sincerity. He criticises Milton's *Lycidas* for lack of sincerity. Milton's handling of the pastoral elegy with stock conventions such as Shepherds tending fields and swains discussing philosophical topics is too artificial to convey the sincere grief. Johnson does not find Milton's *Lycidas* convincing. However, a modern reader may find Johnson to be too rigid. His arguments are convincing but sometimes marred by a biased tone. For example, he criticises Milton's *Lycidas* as he does not like the conventions of pastoral poetry.

David Daiches observes that Johnson's method of biographical criticism as found in *Lives of Poets* is quite different from the biocritical method adopted by the nineteenth century biographers. His volume is more biographical than critical. His *Life of Pope* deals mostly in the biographical part of Pope. However, we can say that Johnson laid the foundation for the emergence of biocritical criticism in the nineteenth century.

Life of Richard Savage is Johnson's first full-length biography. It was published anonymously. Here Johnson deals with the life of a Grub Street writer. Savage was his close friend and when he dies in 1743, Johnson started writing this biography at the behest of Edward Cave, the publisher. Johnson is less guided by factual details as he wanted to reveal the truth about a man who brought most of his misfortune on himself. He was well-aware of his friend's several flaws. However, he also wanted to save Savage's reputation. As a moralist, Johnson wished to write a work that would serve as an inspiration as well as a warning to readers. His moral yardstick runs through this work.

In *Life of Richard Savage*, Johnson discusses briefly some of Savage's works, such as *The Wanderer* (1729) and *The Bastard* (1728), two poems concerned mainly with Savage's own life and misfortunes; *An Author to Be Let* (1729), a pamphlet that unwisely satirized nearly everyone in the literary establishment of the day; and two poems, The Volunteer Laureate (1732, the already-mentioned birthday poem addressed to the queen) and London and Bristol Compared (1744), which Johnson quotes in full. According to Johnson, Savage's writings were impressive, genuine and dignified. Johnson objects to Savage's occasional harshness of style but considers his works as remarkable output considering the unfavourable circumstances under which they were written.

4.18.7 Samuel Johnson's Contribution to English Language

Johnson was the first great dictionary-maker in English. ***A Dictionary of the English Language*** (1755) is a truly monumental work which exceeded anything of the kind before his time. It is a comprehensive literary criticism that was published in two massive folio volumes.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the English language consisted of a variety of local and regional dialects without any established grammar, spelling, syntax, or rules of pronunciation. The study of rhetoric was limited to Latin as well, there being no large English dictionary yet, and the few English grammars that did exist were written in Latin rather than English. All across the Great Britain, speech and writing differed according to local usage, and spelling varied significantly from

one occasion to another, even by a single hand. The scope of territory and dialect that could be grasped by a single national language extended to embrace not only English dialects spoken inside England but also Scottish- English dialects when England and Scotland were legally united in one United Kingdom in 1707 by the Act of Union. Some people took pride in the variety of dialects; others, like Samuel Johnson, saw it as a cause of shame and a threat to the survival of English as a language and a community of speakers. Those who held the second view believed that the issue was how to bring all of the Great Britain's various English speakers together so as to achieve Union at the level of language. Their approach was to eradicate all sorts of regional variance inside the newly formed United Kingdom in order to standardise the language in all of its dimensions.

A single Englishman working effectively with assistants and independently of the state, as contrasted to dozens of experts labouring slowly for the French monarchy, only served to highlight the seriousness of the project. It was a sort of challenge to world. Up to the Johnsonian era, other countries tended to view English language and literature as barbaric. Great men in Italy and France believed that learning their native languages was worthwhile. The dictionaries for those languages were available, but not for English. *The Dictionary* created a sense of language pride among the people. With the aid of this dictionary, foreigners who wanted to study English could now do it in a methodical and academic manner. It serves as a memorial to work and learning. Samuel Johnson was clear on the fact that language is a living entity, and life means development and change. Therefore, immutable laws could not govern word usage, meaning, spelling, or arrangement. Language is created by humans, who are finite being incapable of deriving permanence or stability. As accurately as he could, he recorded in *The Dictionary* both the words' current usage and their previous histories. He considered it more crucial to formalise the uncertain and floating laws that a language student would find difficult or impossible to reconcile. It even provides us with an accurate and trustworthy type of grammatical structure, as well as comprehension and knowledge of the terms. The codification of English was a fundamental component in the process of standardisation. Although it is widely known that the history of English exemplifies the unavoidability of language change, the process of standardisation began with the codification of English. The lexicographers in England had published some sophisticated dictionaries in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary of the English Language* was the work that established the standards for lexicons in both England and America. The dictionary has about 114,000 quotations in total. Johnson was the first English lexicographer to employ citations in this manner, and his technique had

a significant impact on the design of subsequent dictionaries. Johnson was known for scribbling all over his books, underlining, highlighting, changing, and correcting the words. However, if Johnson did not like a quotation or if a phrase didn't express the exact sense he required, he didn't hesitate to chop, twist about, or rewrite a few words. Johnson asserts in the Preface that "language is only the instrument of science, and words are but the signs of ideas," much like Sprat and Locke. The distinction, though, is that Johnson provides a variety of interpretations for each word in his dictionary. It is as if the dictionary was started with the dreams of a scientist who was eventually destined to awaken a poet. Johnson warns that the lexicographer runs the risk of "reducing to a method" in the *Preface*. Johnson's expression highlights the conflict between consistency and change that underlies his interpretation of the dictionary and of language. The expression acknowledges the need for a method, but it also conveys the idea that methodizing reduces and results in a loss of something. Johnson compiled his *Dictionary* for eight years using an empirical methodology. He was aware of the various meanings of a particular word and for that he consulted different books to extract words in their various senses. He noted each illustration with a pencil as he read through thousands of volumes. The examples were then copied onto sheets of paper by him and his assistants. He states the critical aim of his Dictionary in the preface of the abridgement, published in 1756: "I lately published a Dictionary like those compiled by the academies of Italy and France, for the use of such as aspire to exactness of criticism, or elegance of style" (2005, 367).

Johnson's *Dictionary* is a seminal work which reminds students of literature that the task of identifying and critiquing occurrences of words, quotations, and allusions is of great importance. The only way to understand the effectiveness of an author's work, and its relation to works by other authors, is to examine the author's practice in context.

4.18.8 *Life of Samuel Johnson* by James Boswell: A Brief Idea

Hailed as one of the finest pieces of biographical writing in the English language, Boswell's ***Life of Samuel Johnson*** was published in 1749. It glorifies Johnson as the doyen of the age. Boswell recorded information about Johnson in journals. Most of the time he recorded events daily but when he missed out on few days, he had to bank on memory to recapture the events of those days. Macaulay called Boswell the "Shakespeare of biographers."

Boswell did not try to write an eulogy about Johnson. He set great store by verisimilitude. He knew that an authentic representation of his friend's life demanded chronicling flaws too. The portrayal of Dr Johnson that we get in Boswell's work is a mixture of virtues and eccentricities. Though many critics objected to Boswell's depiction of some of the uncouth manners of Johnson, his inclusion of personal minutiae established a practice that has been embraced by modern readers and biographers. Along with his innovative use of dramatic dialogue, exposing these details helped Boswell—in his own estimation—render Johnson "more completely than any man who has ever yet lived" (Boswell 1980, 22). Johnson's attitude to religion and politics is revealed not through Boswell's interpretation but through Johnson's own works and actions.

The chief fame of Boswell's work rests on his portrayal of Johnson, but this work is also valuable for throwing a flood of light on the eighteenth-century London and its intellectual and artistic milieu. Johnson had a large circle of friends. The club he founded with the painter Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723–1792) included the writers Edmund Burke (1729–1797), Oliver Goldsmith (1730–1774), and Edward Gibbon (1737–1794); the actor David Garrick (1717–1779); the antiquarian Bishop Thomas Percy (1729–1811); and social philosopher and economist Adam Smith (1723–1790), remembered today for *The Wealth of Nations* (1776). Johnson was also a member of the Blue Stockings Society and was friendly with many female writers of the period, notably Elizabeth Montagu (1718–1800), Hester Thrale (1740–1821), and Frances Burney (1752–1840). These and many other personalities of historical interest appear throughout the biography, their ideas and sentiments recorded alongside Johnson's conversation in ensemble sequences that breathe life into the literary scene of Enlightenment-era London.

In the introduction to the work, Boswell states that the "perfect mode" of writing biography not only involves "relating all the most important events ... in their order" but also "interweaving" what the subject "privately wrote, and said, and thought" (Boswell 1980, 22). Boswell adhered tothis strategy. The work follows a chronological sequence, moving through Johnson's life year by year. Unsurprisingly, the vast majority focuses on the period corresponding to Boswell's friendship with Johnson: 1763 to 1784. The first fifty-three years of Johnson's life—his childhood, education, struggles as a Grub Street writer, and eventual literary triumphs—comprise less than a fifth of the volume.

Boswell includes many previously unpublished bits of Johnsoniana in addition to excerpts from well-known texts: poetic fragments, sketches for never-completed works, and private travel notes. Letters to publishers and acquaintances appear in full, complete

with salutation and signature. Although Boswell relied on letters and writings to serve as testaments to his friend's personality and literary talents, he was convinced that "the extraordinary vigour and vivacity" of Johnson's spoken communications "constituted one of the first features" of his friend's character (Boswell 1980, 19). Thus, in his introduction, he declares that "the peculiar value" of his biography is "the quantity that it contains of Johnson's conversation" and considers himself "justified in preserving rather too many of Johnson's sayings, than too few" (Boswell 1980, 23, 26).

Dr. Johnson appears through the presentation of Boswell as a vivid and unforgettable personality, animated by his conversation—his seemingly endless supply of opinion, wit, and repartee—and by his eccentricities, prejudices, and pains. For Boswell, his friend's manners, dress, and lodgings may have been "sufficiently uncouth," but "all these slovenly particularities were forgotten the moment that he began to talk" (Boswell 1980, 280). He is one of the greatest literary characters in English, along with William Shakespeare (1564–1616), Charles Dickens (1812–1870), and George Eliot (1819–1880).

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Boswell, James. *Life of Johnson*. Edited by R. W. Chapman. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980.

Johnson, Samuel. *The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson*. Vol. 7, Johnson on Shakespeare, edited by Arthur Sherbo. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1968.

Johnson, Samuel. *A Dictionary of the English Language*. New York: AMS, 2005.

4.18.9 Summing Up

In this unit you have learnt

- The life and writings of Samuel Johnson who was the literary voice of his time.
- Main tendencies of the Age of Johnson. The double tendencies of classicism and romanticism characterised this age.
- Major prose works of Dr Johnson.
- Contribution of Dr Johnson as a critic. His criticism revealed a tug-of-war between neoclassical dogmatism and the liberating impulse.

- Dr Johnson's contribution to the development of the English language.
- Importance of James Boswell's *Life of Johnson*.

4.18.10 Comprehension Exercises

Long Answer Type Questions:

1. Comment on the importance of Dr Johnson as a critic.
2. Estimate the importance of the works of Dr Johnson.
3. What was Dr Johnson's contribution to the development of the English language?

Medium Length Answers Type Questions:

1. What were the main tendencies of the age of Dr Johnson?
2. Discuss the significance of the major prose works of Dr Johnson.
3. Comment on the significance of Dr Johnson's *Dictionary*.

Short Answer Type Questions:

1. Estimate the importance of James Boswell's *Life of Dr Johnson* as a biography.
2. Write a short note on Johnson's *Lives of Poets*.
3. Write a short note on Johnson as a Shakespearean critic.

4.18.11 Suggested Reading

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NOTES

Timeline of Major Events and Texts (Common to CC 3 & CC 6)

Year	Major Events	Year	Major Texts
		1634	Milton, *Comus* (performed)
		1637	Milton, *Lycidas*
		1639	Thomas Fuller, The History of the *Holy War*
1640	Long Parliament summoned		
1642	Start of Civil war between Parliamentarians (Roundheads) and Royalists (Cavaliers); Theatres closed by order of Parliament		
1644	Victory of Parliamentary army		
		1644	John Milton, *Areopagitica*
		1642	Sir Thomas Browne *Religio Medici*
1646	Charles surrenders to Scots	**1646**	Richard Crashaw, *Steps to the Temple*
1647	Members of the New Model Army take part in the Putney debates to form a new constitution for England	**1647**	Abraham Cowley, *The Mistress*
1648	Treaty of Westphalia ends Thirty Years' War	**1648**	Robert Herrick, *Hesperides*
1649	Trial and execution of Charles I	**1649**	To Lucasta, Going to the Warres by Richard Lovelace
1650	Charles II flees to Scotland and is proclaimed King	**1650**	Marvell, *An Horation Ode*; Vaughan, *Silex Scintillans*
		1651	Hobbes, *Leviathan*
1653	After his campaigns in England and Scotland, Oliver Cromwell becomes 'Lord Protector'		
		1656	Cowley, Pindarique Odes
1658	Death of Cromwell	**1658 -67**	Milton, *Paradise Lost*
1660	Restoration of Charles II to the throne; opening of theatres	**1660**	Theatres open. Dryden, *Astrae Redux* Samuel Pepys begins his diary. This keeps a record of all the major historical events of England till 1669.

1665	Plague in London. Plague was a recurrent problem of 17th century, a result of the poor civic condition of the city.		
1666	City of London is destroyed by the Great Fire. The fire raged for three days, destroying most of the medieval architectures.		
		1667	Dryden, *Annus Mirabilis* Milton, *Paradise Lost*
		1671	Milton, Paradise Regained and *Samson Agonistes*
		1675	The well-acclaimed play of Wycherley (1641-1715), *The Country Wife*, is enacted. His other important play is *The Plain Dealer* that was presented in the following year.
		1677	Dryden, *All for Love*, the famous adaptation of a Shakespearean tragedy.
		1678	John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress*
1681	Lord Shaftesbury or Lord Ashely, a founder of the Whig party is tried for high treason. He was later acquitted.	**1681**	First part of Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel* is published. The second part is published in the next year.
1685	Death of Charles II and accession of James II. James Scott or the First Duke of Monmouth leads a rebellion to oppose the succession of James II. He was defeated and beheaded.		
		1687	Newton's *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica*
1688	'Glorious Revolution': James II flees and William III and Mary II succeed. This event is also known as the Bloodless Revolution. Roman Catholicism was permanently rejected and the Parliament was established as the ruling power of England.		

		1690	John Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*
1694	Death of Mary		
		1700	The most popular play of William Congreve (1670-1729), *The Way of the World*, is enacted. His earlier plays include: *The Old* (1693), *The Double Dealer* (1693), *Love for Love* (1695).
1702 -1714	Reign of Anne		
		1702	England's first daily newspaper, *The Daily Courant*, established
		1703	Defoe : Hymn to the Pillory
		1704	The periodical *Ladies' Diary* established (up to 1840) Defoe: *The Review*, a periodical (up to 1713)
1705	Newton knighted by Queen Anne for "scientific achievement"		
		1706-1709	*The London Gazette*, ed. Richard Steele, et al.
1707	Union of England and Scotland		
1709	Copyright Act of 1709 passed which revised the previous copyright act and provided only limited property to publishers in place of earlier right of absolute property. It also introduced the new idea of "public property "which was to come into effect once the copyright period expired. Only published works, entered in the Stationer's Register, would be protected by copyright law.	**1709**	Defoe: *History of the Union of Great Britain*
		1709-1711	Richard Steele and Joseph Addison: *The Tatler*
		1711	Pope: Essay on Criticism (poetry) Swift: Argument against the Abolishing of Christianity

		1711-1712	Addison and Steele : *The Spectator* (revived in 1714)
		1712	Pope: *The Rape of the Locke* Woodes Rogers: *A Cruising Voyage around the World*
1713	Theft by servants made capital offence Britain gets contract to supply African slaves to Spanish colonies in America and henceforward becomes a major force in the slave trade	**1713**	Steele: *The Guardian* (periodical)
		1713-1714	Steele: *The Englishman* (periodical)
1714-1727	Reign of George I		
		1714	Mandeville: *Enquiry into the Origin of Moral Value*
1715	Jacobite Rising; rioting made a capital offence	**1715**	Addison: *The Freeholder* (periodical)
		1716	Lady Mary Wortley Montagu: *Town Eclogues* (published)
		1716-1720	Defoe: *Mercurius Politicus* (periodical)
1718	Transportation Act: alternative to capital punishment, it transported convicts to colonies in America. Captain Woodes Rogers defeats large number of pirates in the Bahamas.		
1718-1720	England and allies at war against Spain		
		1719	Defoe: *Robinson Crusoe* and the *Farther Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*
		1719-1720	Eliza Haywood: *Love in Excess* (a novel)
1720	The South Sea Bubble: collapse of the South Sea Company, a joint-stock company that peaked in 1720 only to collapse under burden of debts. The Bubble Act, forbidding creation of joint		

	stock companies without the Royal Charter, was passed before the collapse to prevent competition and ensure investments for the South Sea Company.		
1722	Penal taxes imposed on Roman Catholics	**1722**	Daniel Defoe: *Journal of the Plague Year* Daniel Defoe: *Moll Flanders* Daniel Defoe: *Colonel Jacque* Eliza Haywood: *The British Recluse*
		1723	Eliza Haywood: *Idalia: or the Unfortunate Mistress*
		1724	Daniel Defoe: *General History of the Pirates* Daniel Defoe: *Roxana*
		1724-1726	Daniel Defoe: *Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain*
1725	Execution of Jonathan Wild, Thief-Taker General, a major underworld figure who worked both for and against the law		Daniel Defoe: *A True and Genuine Account of the Life and Actions of the late Jonathan Wild* Daniel Defoe: *A New Voyage Round the World* Eliza Haywood: *Secret Histories, Novels and Poems*, 4 vols. Alexander Pope's edition of Shakespeare
		1725-1727	Daniel Defoe: *Complete English Tradesman*
		1726	Jonathan Swift: *Gulliver's Travels*
1727-1760	Reign of George II		
		1728	Henry Fielding: *Love in Several Masques* (drama)

			John Gay: *The Beggar's Opera* (drama) Elizabeth Singer Row: *Friendship in Death, or Letters from the Dead to the Living*
		1728-1743	Alexander Pope, *The Dunciad* (1728; *The New Dunciad*, 1742; complete,1743) (poetry)
		1729	Eliza Haywood: *The Fair Hebrew* Jonathan Swift: *A Modest Proposal for Preventing the Children of Poor People from Being a Burden to their Parents or the Country*
		1730	Henry Fielding: *Tom Thumb* (drama), *Rape upon Rape* (drama), and *The Author's Farce* (drama) Eliza Haywood: *Love Letters on all Occasions* James Thomson: *The Seasons* (poetry)
		1732	Henry Fielding: *Covent Garden Tragedy* (drama), *Modern Husband* (drama), and *The Mock Doctor* (drama)William Hogarth's engraving series, *The Harlot's Progress London Magazine established* (periodical)
		1733	Alexander Pope: Essay on Man (poetry) Voltaire: *Letters Concerning the English Nation* (English trans.)
		1734	Henry Fielding: *Don Quixote in England* (drama)
		1735	Alexander Pope: Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot (poetry)
		1736	Henry Fielding: *Historical Register for the Year 1736* (drama) Eliza Haywood: *Adventures of Eovaai, Princess of Ijaveo* (reissued in 1741 as The Unfortunate Princess)

1737	Stage Licensing Act, which required permission from the Lord Chamberlain for any new performance. This was in response to Fielding's political satire, *Historical Register for the Year 1736*		
		1738	Elizabeth Singer Rowe, *Devout Exercises*
1739-1748	War between Britain and Spain		
1740	War of the Austrian Succession Food riots	**1740**	Samuel Richardson, *Pamela*
1740-1744	George Anson's circumnavigation of the globe (account published in 1748)		
		1741	Henry Fielding: *Shamela* Eliza Haywood: *Anti-Pamela* John Kelly: *Pamela's Conduct in High-Life* Samuel Richardson: *Pamela*, part II Samuel Richardson, *Familiar Letters*
		1741-1742	David Hume: *Essays Moral* and *Political*
		1742	Henry Fielding: *Joseph Andrews*
		1743	Henry Fielding: *Jonathan Wild*
		1744	Sarah Fielding: *David Simple* Samuel Johnson: *Life of Richard Savage*
		1744-1746	Eliza Haywood: *The Female Spectator* (periodical)
1745-1746	Jacobite Rebellion led by the Young Pretender defeated	**1745-1746**	Henry Fielding, *The True Patriot* (periodical)
		1747	Sarah Fielding: *Familiar Letters between the Characters in "David Simple"* Samuel Johnson: *Plan of a Dictionary of the English Language*

		1747-1766	*Biographica Britannia*
		1747-1748	Henry Fielding: *The Jacobites Journal* (5 Dec. 1747-5 Nov. 1748) (periodical) Samuel Richardson: *Clarissa*
1748	Henry Fielding appointed as Westminster magistrate	**1748**	David Hume: *Philosophical Essays concerning Human Understanding* Tobias Smollett: *Adventures of Roderick Random* Tobias Smollett's trans. of Le Sage's *Gil Blas,* the picaresque masterpiece
		1749	Henry Fielding: *Tom Jones* Sarah Fielding: *The Governess, or Little Female Academy* David Hartley: *Observations on Man*
		1750-1752	Samuel Johnson: *The Rambler* (periodical)
		1750-1757	Journal britannique, edited by *Matthieu Maty* in London, a journal which made English books available to European/French readers.
1751	Robert Clive captures Arcot in India	**1751**	Thomas Gray: An Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard (poetry) David Hume: *An Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals* Tobias Smollett: *The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle*
1752	Gregorian Calendar replaces the older Julian Calendar	**1752**	Henry Fielding: *Amelia* David Hume: *Political Discourses* Charlotte Lennox: *The Female Quixote*

1753	Marriage Act passed: this established the legal marriage in England, requiring parental consent and witnesses. British Museum established	**1753**	Charlotte Lennox: *Shakespeare Illustrated* Tobias Smollett: *Ferdinand Count Fathom* Jane Collier: *An Essay on the Art of Ingeniously Tormenting*, a satirical conduct book on nagging.
		1753-1754	Samuel Richardson: *Sir Charles Grandison*
		1754	Jane Collier and Sarah Fielding: *The Cry: A New Dramatic Fable*
			John Duncombe: *The Feminead, or Female Genius* David Hume: *History of England*, vol. 1
		1755	Henry Fielding (d. 1754): *Voyage to Lisbon* Eliza Haywood: *The Invisible Spy* Samuel Johnson: *A Dictionary of the English Language* Jean-Jacques Rousseau: *DiscourssurInégalité* Tobias Smollett: translation of Cervantes's *Don Quixote*
1756-1763	War between Britain and France		
1757	Victory at battle of Plassey consolidated East India Company's status in India	**1757**	Edmund Burke: *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* Sarah Fielding: *The Lives of Cleopatra and Octavia*
1758	Halley's comet reappears, as predicted by Halley. A milestone in modern astronomy.	**1758**	Charlotte Lennox: *Henrietta*
1759	Annus Mirabilis: Year of wonders with a series of victories against the French	**1759**	Alexander Gerrard, *Essay on Taste* Oliver Goldsmith, *The Present State of Polite Learning in Europe* Samuel Johnson, *The History of Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia*

			Voltaire, *Candide*
		1759-1767	Laurence Sterne, *Tristram Shandy*
1760-1820	Reign of George III		
		1762	Charlotte Lennox: *Sophia*
1763	Britain's colonial possessions had extended substantially in North America, South America and the Caribbean, in Africa and in India by this time	**1763**	Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (d. 1762): *Letters*
		1764	Oliver Goldsmith: *History of England* Jean-Jacques Rousseau: *Émile* Smollett: *The Present State of all Nations* Voltaire: *Dictionnairephilosophique* Horace Walpole : *The Castle of Otranto*
		1766	Oliver Goldsmith: *The Vicar of Wakefield* Thomas Pennant: *British Zoology* Smollett: *Travels through France and Italy*
		1767	Frances Sheridan: The History of *Nourjahad*
1768-1771	Captain James Cook's first voyage to the Pacific	**1768-1771**	First edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*
		1769	Smollett: *The Orientalist*: *A Volume of Tales after the Eastern Taste*
		1769-1790	Sir Joshua Reynolds: *Discourses*
1771	The House of Commons sought to ban the publication of parliamentary debates, but was opposed by Magistrates of the City of London	**1771**	Henry Mackenzie, *The Man of Feeling* John Millar, *Observations concerning the Distinction of Ranks*

			Smollett, *The Expedition of Humphrey Clinker*
1772	Financial crash		
1773	Boston Tea Party, a political protest against the East India Company in America. Harsh action by the British Government against this demonstration was one of the reasons that led to the American Revolution Warren Hastings appointed Governor-General of India	**1773**	Oliver Goldsmith, *She Stoops to Conquer* (drama)

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