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Department of English



# Literary Studies

*Devised for Year Two Students*

*Author(s)*

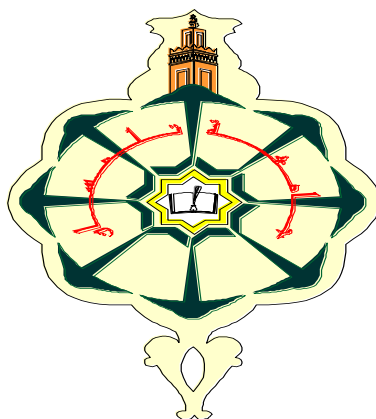
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## *Preface*

This pedagogical handout is specifically tailored for second year LMD students; it was worked out in conformity with the official syllabus of literary studies at this level.

The objective of this work is essentially to introduce the students to the major tendencies of both literatures: British and American. Within this vein of thought, it is divided into two major parts. The former is devoted to British literature wherein three sub units were devised. Unit one deals with the Eighteenth century English novel and the circumstances of its emergence. Unit two surveys the rise of Romanticism in Britain and its leading principles, themes and writers. Unit Three concerns Victorian literature with a particular focus on the novel. The students are given the opportunity to gauge their understanding and appreciation of the chosen sample texts by means of practical analytical tasks and some creative writing activities as well.

The bulk of the latter part of the handout is devoted to American literature. It is equally structured into three units. The first unit examines the beginning of American literature and focuses on the colonial period. The second traces back the rise of the American revolutionary literature and its major specificities. The third unit provides the students with the context and the major aspects of American Romanticism and Transcendentalism. In addition to this, the Gothic influence in America is also highlighted.

The units in turn are structured into a series of lectures. Each lecture is methodically devised to enable the students to trace back the roots and developmental paths of the studied literary tendencies. In so doing, the author paid special attention to the scaffolding aspect of lectures, ranging from setting context to text study. As such, the content is not theoretical per se; it rather seeks to actively involve the students in practice through chosen excerpts and corresponding questions and analytical literary essays. The booklet envelops a selective bibliography which was intentionally and mindfully opted for to ease the burden of using the multitude of references in British and American literature(s). Such bibliography will hopefully urge and encourage the students to nudge themselves into extensive readings regarding the history and productions of both camps. The work culminates with two appendices. The first is devoted to sample analyses of texts, and the second carries some selected analytical questions.

*Part one:*  
*British Literature*

# ***Unit one: The Eighteenth Century English Novels***

## **Objectives :**

***\*Tracing back the rise of the English Novel and its leading figures.***

***\*Spotting the philosophical and the textual aspects of the 18<sup>th</sup> century English novel.***

## ***Lecture one: The Rise of the English Novel***

### **1. Introduction:**

The eighteenth century in Britain is commonly referred to as the age of reason, or the age of Enlightenment. Based on the metaphor of bringing out light to the medieval dark ages, the Enlightenment marked the shift of allegiances away from the absolute religious and political authority towards more sceptical yet optimistic attitudes regarding human nature, politics and faith. The Enlightenment was basically a German philosophy known as: “Aufklärung”, that is, a philosophy based on rational thinking. The literature of this age strongly depicted sophistication and originality and most of it was prose. Two significant and noticeable new forms of writings appeared and flourished. These are “the periodical” and “the novel”.

On the social scene, the age witnessed the emergence and rise of a new social class (the middle class) that became influential politically, economically and intellectually. The prominence of the middle class tremendously impacted the artistic tastes and led to the extension of the reading public (Watt, 1957). Therefore, this extension in the reading public in turn affected the development of the literature addressed to them. Historically speaking, the literature that was produced before the eighteenth century did little to target an extensive reading public; yet the writers of the eighteenth century integrated their literary productions with issues that are closely related with ordinary social life.

This is the reason why they caught the attention and interest of an extended readership. Because of the wider interest of the average people in keeping pace with what was happening in the country, they wanted something that deals directly with their own living affairs, and this task was fulfilled by papers (newspapers) whose objective was to inform and educate people. The popularity of papers exhorted pioneering journalists like Daniel Defoe, Richard Steele and Joseph Addison to compete for gaining the public ear. The very outset of the age did not witness the production of fictitious writings, which instead came from abroad. The translated version of Cervantes’ *Don Quixote (1605)* proved very popular among the English people. The second decade of the century witnessed the rise of a new literary genre - the novel- as means of portraying the life and concerns of the middle class. Provided by a huge readership that contained women; the novel took as its primary



mission inculcating morality in people and introducing them to good behavioural patterns during an age that was characterised by striking capitalistic evils.

## **2. Literature of the Age: An overview**

In an attempt to trace back the rise of the English novel, the main literary genres of the age are to be briefly surveyed.

### **2.1. Drama:**

During 18<sup>th</sup> century, drama did not reach higher levels of sophistication and popularity in comparison with the novel. In fact, it was not until the end of the century that eminent playwrights appeared, such as Congreve Goldsmith and Richard Brinsely Sheridan. It is also worth noting that such a decrease in drama is mainly attributed to the “licensing act” of 1737. This act significantly diminished the freedom of expression among dramatists and drove many of them out of theatre. The beginning of the age, however, witnessed the production of outstanding plays by John Gray. His famous musical play *The Beggar’s Opera*(1728) was loaded with a satirical attitude towards political malpractices and inappropriate social values. It was not until the 1770s that comedy in particular made a noticeable revival with the plays of Richard Brinsely Sheridan. His comedy plays *The Rivals* (1775),*The Critic* (1779) and the masterpiece *The School Scandal*(1777) were very successful after the ones produced by Congreve Goldsmith especially with his famous play *She Stops to Conquer* (1773).

### **2.2. Poetry:**

Compared to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the 18th century was not one of the outstanding periods of English verse, which was generally associated with a reasoned statement and an imitation of classical models, whose lucidity and elegance were much admired, as evidenced by the numerous translations published at the time. It should not be forgotten, however, that the 18th century was England's golden age of poetic satire, mainly dominated by Alexander Pope (1688-1744).In essence; the widespread use of satire was to improve manners and reinforce morality. Pope’s poetry was satirical and didactic in its very nature reflecting the spirit of the age. His “*Essay on Criticism*” is a perfect example of Pope’s strong advocacy that poetry must to draw its inspiration from reason and common sense. The latter half of the century marked the rise of the spirit of

melancholy and sensibility which gradually replaced the taste for puns and wit. Nevertheless, satire is found in the poetry of melancholy of Collins, Thomson, and Goldsmith. Thomas Gray's "The Elegy written in a country Church yard" (1751) is all too often regarded as the most important poem in the 18th century. This poem in addition to those of Collins and Cowper depicted and appealed for a return to simple values. The growth of the sense of sensibility nurtured the fascination with nature and natural surroundings. Such an Orientation is overtly expressed in W. Cowper's line from his famous poem "The Task" (1785): "God made the country and man made the town."

### **2.3. Prose:**

As previously stated, the 18<sup>th</sup> century was a great age of the English prose whose contribution to the English literature was undoubtedly the novel.

#### **2.3.1. Non –fiction Prose:**

The non-fiction prose of the age of reason was basically founded on a tradition that was established in the works of outstanding prose writers, such as Francis Bacon's *The advancement of learning* (1605), Robert Burton's *The anatomy of Melancholy* (1621), Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan* (1651) in addition to John Donne's series of sermons and religious works. These writings were influential references and inspiring sources for later scientists, philosophers, ethnologists and essayists, not only in terms of their ideas but, most significantly, for their language. They clearly marked a break with Latin that remained the international language of scholarly fields until the beginning of the eighteenth century.

For the sake of highlighting the specificities of the prose writings of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, it is important to recall the fact that the prose of 17th century was predominantly characterized by those features associated with the Metaphysical and "Baroqué" style of writing, learned wit, astounding imagery and rhetorical formality. However, from the Restoration onwards, a remarkable shift was noticed towards plainer, simpler and concise modes of expression. Such a widespread of prose writing was the result of the dominant role played by the "Royal Society" in forging the English prose. Founded in London in 1662, the Royal Society prompted scientific research and opened new perspectives for intellectual discussions. It was also responsible for the standardization and circulation of English prose non-fiction.

In introducing his dictionary of English language, Dr Johnson wrote “The English classical Augustan prose style could best be achieved by common sense and tacit argument rather than by dictatorial ruling alien to the English temperament. (Cited in Kempton, 1992, p.86). Johnson believed that language was constantly developing and that any rigidly rule-based standardization of English would in time no longer be a faithful reflection of non-static realities. It is, in fact, this style of clearly argued prose, with balanced structure within which form and meaning are allied, were the hallmarks of the 18th century prose be it fiction or non.

Prose non-fiction became the ideal vehicle suitable for the enlightenment ideology and social commentary as well. The bulk of non-fiction works of the age could be classified under two principal categories:

**a) Philosophical productions:** These included the works that depicted rational tendencies shared by eminent scientists and scholars of the age, such as John Locke and Isaac Newton.

**b) Personalized genres:** This category of non-fictional prosaic genres included letters, diaries, (auto) biographies and essays. Such types of writings did not only evolve alongside the novel; they rather contributed to its flourishing as an emerging genre. In this very specific context, it is important to point to the indisputable impact of journalism and letter writing on Defoe and Richardson respectively.

### **2.3.2. Journalism:**

The massive growth of the middle class in the English society resulted in an increased demand for the printed word. This demand, therefore, promoted writing to reach the status of a well-established profession. As a result, writers became full-time producers of fictional (poems, plays, novels) as well as non-fictional works (pamphlets, papers).

The contribution of journalism to the flourishing of writing basically lies in the fact that most of the skilled writers of the age were journalists. To be illustrative enough, one has to refer to Daniel Defoe who served for business magazines before initiating his career as a novelist. It is worth noting that the journalism of the eighteenth century used to spread the opinion, tendencies and fashions of the Capital London to the stretching corners of the English nation. The ever increasing popularity of journalistic writings (newspapers,

magazines) served an efficient responsive tool to satisfy the readership's eager for local and foreign news. Other famous names of English journalism during this age include Richard Steele and Joseph Addison.

### **2.3.2.1. Daniel Defoe: A Journalist before being a Novelist**

Daniel Defoe is often considered as pioneering figure of English journalism. He was the son of a London butcher. Early in his life, he was a traveller and served in the army too, before he turned to writing. Defoe's contribution to English journalism was significantly important. His earliest chief work was an *essay upon projects* (1697), through which he appealed for providing women with good education. In his *Shortest way with the Dissenters*(1702), Defoe ironically asked suppression for dissents, and for which he was imprisoned. He founded his journal *The Review* in 1704. It was a periodical that marked a turning point in the development of English journalism. *The Review* assembled a long line of well informing magazines that used to tackle political issues. The journal also published multiple articles on other subjects, such as trade and even marriage. Defoe had characteristically the liveliness of a skilled and talented journalist. His journalistic writings served an efficient reporting instrument that provided readers with vivid pictures of life in England at that time.

One of the characteristic feature of Defoe's journalism is the non-use of stylistic tricks and instead a flavour of colloquial speech. His talent as a reporter led him from writing newspapers and pamphlets to writing fictitious history like *The Journal of the plague year*(1665). This experience in fiction writing allowed him to further his career as a novelist. Such connection and transition in his writing is overtly seen in his narrative report of ghost story: *A True Relation of the Apparition of one Mrs. Veal* (1706), in which Defoe demonstrated his outstanding capacity in penetrating into the being of the person he portrayed. This writing feature transformed him to a realist who explored people, particularly the ordinary ones.

#### **2.3.4. Prose Fiction:**

The most significant achievement of prose fiction during the eighteenth century lies basically in the rise of the English novel.

##### **2.3.4.1. The Rise of the Novel:**

Davis (1983) argues that the novel emerged out of a new kind of narrative, the precursor of modern journalism, which he calls “New/Novels discourse”. A major characteristic feature of this discourse is that it foreshortens and collapses the distance between language and reality; and consequently between the audience and the matter or the subject of the narrative. In contrast with the medieval narrative which presented the story for the sake of its moral and which had to be allegorically interpreted. In the News/Novels discourse the medium is the message, words efface themselves as signifiers; moreover, they strive to coincide with the events they signify. Thus, the human interests of which are, therefore, taken for granted, like the content of news-papers.

Novelists perceived that by imitating the form of this kind documentary writing, they could exert an exciting new power over their readers, giving to fictitious characters and events an unprecedented illusion of reality. Actually, this story of the novel seems to apply more readily to Defoe and Richardson than to their outstanding contemporary Henry Fielding who, indeed, mocked the technique of pseudo-factual writing in *Joseph Andrews* (1742: ch xv) “he accordingly eat either a rabbit or a fowl, I never could with any tolerable certainty discover which”.

Fielding himself was a journalist and integrated the fact of real events (the Jacobite Rising of 1745), as it is enfold and incorporated into his fictional history of Tom Jones, and made adjustments to his original design to accommodate them. Even Richardson’s emotional temperament and Sentimentalism were constrained by the sense of fact. He was exploring more minutely than anyone had done the sentimentalists –Richardson and Sterne- were affected by the prevailing realism.

The most important works of prose fiction in English literature before the *Pilgrim’s Progress* (1648), written by John Bunyan (1628-1658), was written than a century before

the rise of the Elizabethan drama. This was Malory's *Morted'Arthur*, a great work of prose though it is by no stretch of imagination a novel. If we take it as a novel, we might also accept *the Faèrie Queene* to be a novel too. The Elizabethans were interested in quite different things than that have fascinated the novelists.

The novel is considered as the last literary form to come into being. However, its rise is historically connected to other genres particularly the epic and drama. The beginning of the English novel was during the outset of the eighteenth century in the form of fictional imitations of diaries, (auto) biographies of criminals that were popular forms of prose literature during that period. (Milligan, 1984)

The modern origin of the novel might well be attributed to the great Spanish writer Miguel de Cervantes who is famous for his fictitious prose narrative *Don Quixote*(1605). This narrative challenged the previously established norms of imaginative fiction as it appealed to the practical consequences of human action. By centering the plot of the narrative on practical human experiences, Cervantes partly mapped out the territory of the modern novel. As it will be explained in the following section, the very nature of the novel requires a certain degree of realism. It ought to depict with fidelity the common world of ordinary people. Therefore, the novel in its modern form is a long narrative that is organized around a predominant theme, with characters and a connected plot whose incidents are driven from ordinary life. The English novel flourished during the 18<sup>th</sup> century with the novels of Daniel Defoe, Henry Fielding, Laurence Sterne and Tobias Smollett. This flourishing of the novel was thanks to the favourable conditions particularly, the invention of the printing press and the wide spread of education among the rising middle class.



## *Lecture two: Philosophical and Literary Aspects of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century Novel*

### **1. Major Philosophies Reflected in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century Novel:**

The process of examining the seeds and development of the 18<sup>th</sup> century English novel entails a deep understanding of the predominant philosophical forces that contributed and characterised the prose fictional writings of the age. These, include: Realism, Individualism, Capitalism and Religion (morality).

#### **1.1. Realism:**

Realism in literature is considered as an approach that primarily seeks to portray life as it actually is without subjectivity and/or romantic idealization (Cuddon, 1992). Therefore, the association of such an approach with fiction is based on the idea that the novel is not merely a sort of an escaping fantasy, but rather a genuine document whose objective is to record the human social life, paying attention to its details and subtleties. This is the reason why the realistic approach has been fundamentally interested in reporting man's practical experiences. Realism in short terms is concerned with the representation and the portrayal of familiar things as they actually exist. It is closely linked with the common, the everyday, the pragmatic. And as such it distances itself from the supernatural and/or the transcendental.

##### **1. 1.1. Realism and the Making of the Novel:**

Since its very beginning the novel as a branch of fiction has been significantly bound to "facts". Earliest novelists therefore introduced their works of fiction as real and genuine documents that are closely linked to the world of facts. Commenting on the adherence of the pioneer novelists such as Daniel Defoe, Samuel Richardson and even Henry Fielding to this approach, Lodge (1997, p. 25) accordingly writes that "the telling of their stories is full of facts of the kind that constitute reality for an empirically minded culture". More to this point Watt (1963) argues that the novel in its essence rose in response to the huge transformations that had taken place since "the Renaissance" that prominently replaced the previous unified world picture of the medieval ages by another distinct vision that presented man as an individual having particular experiences at particular times and places.

## **1.2. Capitalism:**

The eighteenth century was par excellence an age of capitalism. The seeds of this trend are traced back to the inventive and scientific spirit of the age. In fact, the Enlightenment had an enormous impact and advance in both political and religious freedom. This freedom in turn was matched with trade and economic activities, paving the way for liberal industrial changes and opportunities in favour of the emerging middle classes. The growing industrial middle class, as a result, achieved a noticeable political and economic power that was later reflected in the literature of the age by eminent writers such as Daniel Defoe and many others. To explain this point further, one has to recall the fact that the early novels were principally written for a readership that was composed by this large mixed class. The novel in its very beginning was largely concerned with the social issues of such a new reading public that was thirsty to read about the democratic aspirations of the age, not least in the field of industry and commerce.

## **1.3. Individualism:**

The philosophy of individualism was another force that governed the shaping of the English novel. The seeds of this philosophy are traced back to the early seventeenth century when the English society started to distance itself from the religious dominance of the Roman Catholic Church. This religious divorce was reflected in other fields of life, bringing giving rise to a new economic and political ideology that was fundamentally founded on enhancing and sustaining the sense of autonomy among English people, particularly among the growing middle class. It is also worth noting that the rise of individualism is tightly linked with the rise of capitalism that allowed industrial classes to dictate their logic and interest politically, financially and even in literature. The novel as an emerging genre reflected the philosophy of individualism. In fact, as opposed to the previous literature that was highly centred on achieving conformity with the general, predominant traditional tendencies and practices, the novel challenged this orientation by focusing rather on the truth of the individual experience. Its major drive and preoccupation was originality. Moreover, in reflecting individualism in the literary sphere, early eighteenth century novelists were cautious enough to give their characters, including minor ones, ordinary names and surnames. Naming characters contributes to giving them a true identity with its idiosyncratic aspects.

#### **1.4. Religion and Morality Teaching:**

A close examination of the early novels of the age would easily display the fact that religion and morality were among the core interests of pioneering novelists such like Defoe and Richardson who assumed the duty of not only informing and entertaining their readers, but also inculcating in them good morals and good manners. In this context, Watt (1957) explores the novel as a mirror of class conflict. Taking Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* (1748) as a focus, Watt claims that Richardson "wrote at a time when a variety of economic and social changes, some of them temporary and local, but most of them characteristic of modern English and even American civilisation, were coming to make marriage much more important for women than before, and at the same time more difficult to achieve" (p.137). Indeed, Pamela the major character in the novel- was involved in a continuous and severe struggle for the sake of achieving a respectful social status through her marriage with her Boss Mr B. Richardson's novels in particular were tremendously concerned with revealing vices in society, educating people and stimulating moral judgments at large. Therefore, the early fiction of the eighteenth century was much more didactic than aesthetic.

#### **2. Major Textual Aspects:**

Artistically speaking, the eighteenth century novel was not sophisticated in terms of form and structure. Understandably, this is because it was in its early phase of development. This state of affairs is openly declared by one of the pioneering novelists –Henry Fielding- when asserting that:

My reader then is not to be surprised, if in the course of this work he shall find some chapters very short and other's altogether as long is one that contain only the time of a single day and others that comprise years..... for all which I shall not look on myself as accountable to any court of critical jurisdiction whatever, for as I

am in reality the founder of a new province of writing. (Cited in Lodge, 1977, p. 98)

Fielding's words demonstrate the fact that his fiction and that of many early novelists (such as Defoe and Richardson) was not in extreme looseness of structure. These novelists strived to achieve a semblance of a unified plot. Their fiction was typically characterised by fullness of incident, variety of characters and amplitude of background. As such, it did not intend to attain artistic and aesthetic purposes. The basic aspects of the novel during this immature phase are briefly highlighted in what follows.

## **2.1. Plot:**

The plot refers to the meaningful arrangement of the significant action in the story. The plot as such denotes the summary of the significant action in a given work of literature. The plot is an artistically arranged sequence of events that serves the skeleton for the story as a whole. This latter has to be completed by characters, setting, dialogue, theme, tone and style. An attractive plot usually carries some elements, such as: conflict, development, suspense and resolution (DeMaria, 2014). The plot is a summary of all the action in a literary work. It cannot be a list of random happenings; it must rather have a shape, that is, the action begins rises to reach a crisis and finally be resolved. Stated differently, the plot is a summary of coherent and significant action. Unlike dramatists who often borrow plot from history and biography, most of the eighteenth century writers worked out plots that are different and therefore original. They set out plots that are either wholly invented or based on contemporary incidents. The figure below illustrates the most recurrent structure of plot in fiction. It involves:

\*Exposition: it is the beginning point of action /conflict in the story.

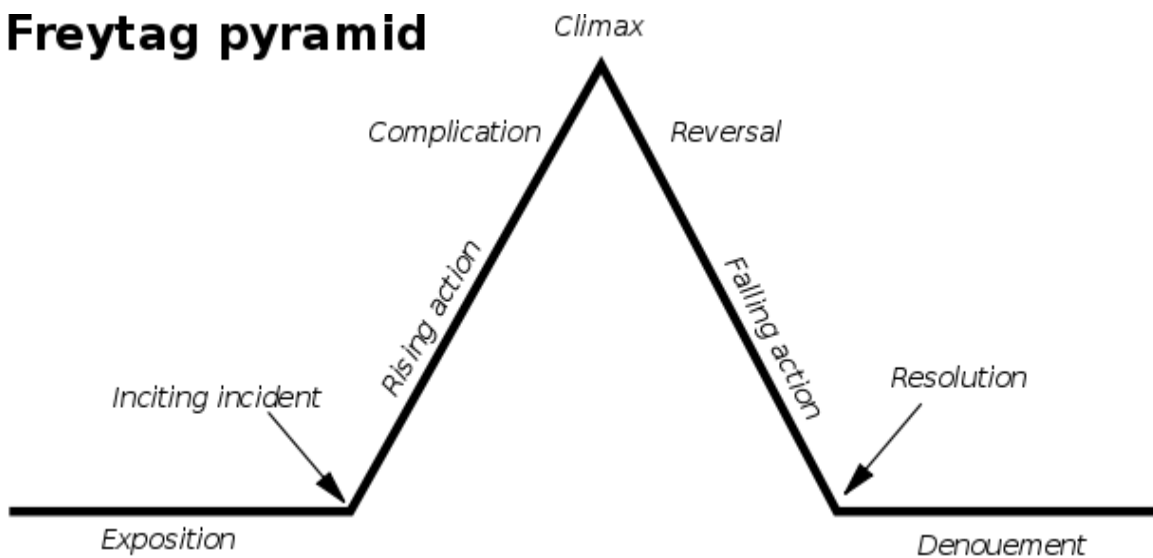
\*Rising action : it marks the development of action that stimulates the intensity of conflict.

\*Climax : it is the peak or the highest point of the conflict.

\*Resolution : At this stage, the conflict is resolved.

\*Denouement : it is the ending of the conflict and the removal of all its mystery.

## **Freytag pyramid**



**Figure1.** Plot structure in the novel.

### **2.2. Characters:**

A character is usually an imaginary person created by the author to serve a given role in a literary piece. Therefore, some characters are said to be a pure creation of the author's imagination, others however, might be drawn from his/her own experience. In both cases, a character is artistically created for a particular purpose assigned by the author within the overall flow of the story. The literary character functions basically as a study and reflection of human behaviour, whether he/she depicts a single foible or justifies an in-depth investigation of the human psychology (Cuddon, 1992). In a work of fiction, the task of a character may simply reside in advancing the flow of action and plot development, to serve the thematic and/or symbolic aspect of the novel as well as to voice a particular message or belief. Equally, the character might be used by the author as a narrator whose role is to tell the story. One important characteristic feature of characters is that they have varying depths of development throughout the flow of the story. The significance of their roles defines their corresponding status, being either major (round) or minor (flat) characters.

### **2.2.1. Flat /Minor Characters:**

Some characters appear superficial and less sophisticated. Such characters are primarily created by authors to serve a single idea. They are static characters whose roles in the story are minor. They are all too often easily recognised and remembered by the reader; they remain in his mind as unalterable since they do not change by the circumstances, having a particular predictable behaviour. They have little depth and are often stereotypes. They best suit comic purposes.

### **2.2.2. Round/Major Characters:**

These are characters that are more fully created. They are said to be major because their roles in the story are significant and influential. Depicting a broader view of personality, major characters are as complex and convincing as real people. Therefore, events and circumstances are likely to change and influence their behaviours. A round character's ability for change and in-depth development allows him/her to be more dynamic in comparison with a flat character. Such deeper qualities in a round character make him/her more life-like and meaningful. Having the ability to produce a surprising and convincing appearance in the course of action, the round character is best employed in fulfilling tragic dimensions in literature. The eighteenth century novelists opted for imagined people (characters) connected to each other with a close real-life plots.

### **2.3. Characterisation:**

Characterization designates the different techniques that authors implement to represent and reveal their characters in the literary text. In fiction writing, there are basically two techniques or approaches of characterization (telling and showing).

- **Telling:** authorial omniscience is the landmark of this technique. In other words, the writer (sometimes via a narrator) assumes the task of telling readers everything about characters. In so doing, he describes, summarizes and analyses their thoughts, words and actions.

- **Showing:** within this technique, the author / narrator retreats and leaves characters reveal themselves. On this basis, this approach excludes the authorial comments on characters' words and action. The reader meets characters directly and gets insight into their interaction with one another.



## 2.4 Setting:

Every literary work has to take place somewhere at a particular point in time, even if the setting is only minimally implied as it is the case in poetry. The setting therefore refers to both time and place where action takes place. In the novel, setting is of paramount importance as it contributes to the realism of the work. It is often introduced in the very outset of the story. Novelists tend to employ life-like settings for their characters to act in. Nothing can happen anywhere; the locale of events always determines the nature of the action. That is why time and place have been the primary focus in fiction. A particular setting implies a deal of history, traditions and etiquette which, in their turn, shape the mental constitution and behaviour of people. Accordingly, a given character may fit into his setting as a native or stand out in stark contrast to it (DeMaria, 2014).

## 2.5. Point of view (Narrative Perspective):

It is the angle or the perspective from which a given story is narrated. Sometimes the narrator is a participating character in the story. This type of narrator is referred to as **the first person narrator**. When a story is narrated in the first person (usually using the pronouns: I, we) by a character who is participating in the action, more authenticity and immediacy is given to the work. If the narrator is a central character, the reader would feel a direct touch with the character, being closer to his/her thoughts and feelings. Whereas if the narrator is a minor character, his/her role is all too often to tell readers about the central figures in the story.

Now if the narrator of the story is not a participating character and therefore he/she is external to the story, this type of point of view is referred to as **a third person narrator**. It is divided into **two major sub-categories**:

- a) **Third person narrator omniscient (all-knowing)**: Omniscience refers to the point of view in a story told by a narrator who knows almost everything about the characters in the story. The omniscient narrator is thus the writer's designated story –teller and may tell us anything the writer considers worth telling. He/she seems to know everything about characters including their thoughts and feelings.

**b) Third person narrator limited:** Limited omniscience refers to the point of view in stories told by a narrator who has some knowledge but not total knowledge of what is happening in the story. This type of narrator has limited knowledge of the events and characters, or he/she only knows the minds of some characters, not all characters. (McGee, 2001).

## **2.6. Theme:**

The theme of a given literary work represents the writer's central message or the central dramatic impact stemming from the work (DeMaria, 2014). Therefore, it is the unifying element that ties together the other components of the text. Theme designates the central ideas around which the text is constructed. In order to identify the theme of a story, the reader must go through the whole plot. Yet, a word of caution is to be made in this respect; a story is not simply an illustration of theme; a story has rather a variety of details that modify any abstract statement (a representation of reality, if not reality, or at least an aspect of it). Sometimes it is not easy to identify the theme especially in complex novels. Yet, as far as the eighteenth century English novel is concerned the, major themes can be easily detected; they are, by and large, concerned with moral concepts and purposes. As mentioned earlier, the novel during this age became a primary vehicle of communication of the middle class, portraying its life, and most significantly, discussing its morality.

## Lecture three: *Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe (1719)*

### 1. Introduction:

As stated earlier the eighteenth century was a golden age for prose. It was an age of the most various and fertile literary experiment. Nowhere is this experiment clearer than in prose fiction. During this age publishing became a highly profitable business thanks to the spread of education among members of the new wealthy middle class. The spread of literacy alongside the circulating libraries across the country increased readership, and this in turn motivated and encouraged professional writer to appear and take lead. In short terms, the printing press, the availability of a wide readership prompted writers, of whom many were basically journalists, essayists and pamphleteers to produce fictitious works that catered for the daily concerns of the average people.

### 2. Major 18<sup>th</sup> Century Novelists:

Daniel Defoe (1661-1731) turned late in his life to fiction writing, after years of journalistic and satirical writing. His concern with realism underlies his works of fiction. Through his simplicity of style and depiction of likely events, Defoe's objective was to create true –to-life pictures, giving illusion to reality. He first wrote his masterpiece *Robinson Crusoe* or in its fullest title *The Strange and Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe (1719)*. This autobiographical novel renders the strange adventures of an average man in his search for making money during an age of capitalism. Thus, the plot is not centred on the kind of adventures that belong to a king, a knight or an extraordinary hero; they are rather centred on practical human experiences. Defoe wrote other widely read novels among which are, *Captain Singleton (1720)*, *Moll Flanders (1722)* and *Roxana (1724)*.

This tradition of the autobiographical narrative was broken by Samuel Richardson (1689-1761) who wrote *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded (1740)* and *Clarissa, or The History of a Young Girl (1748)*. In these two novels, Richardson introduced the epistolary form, that is, the novel in the form of letters exchanged among characters. Richardson was talented enough in presenting a dramatic flow of incidents through the medium of letters to provide an in depth psychological analysis of his major characters. This orientation towards exploring the psychology, motivation and emotions of characters had its impact on the development of the modern sentimental fiction.

His early novels Particularly *Pamela and Clarissa* are a concrete success and deeply reflected his tendency towards teaching and inculcating morality in a society that was dominated with capitalistic ends. Richardson's hope in his novels was to cultivate the principles of virtue and religion in the minds of the youth of both sexes not only females. In *Clarissa* in particular such elements are raised to tragic intensity. Richardson wrote his last novel entitled *The History of Sir Charles Grandison (1753)* in the protagonist served the personification of exemplary Christian virtue in a male character. Nonetheless, the didactic and moralizing facets of Richardson's art were also predominant in this novel.

Henry Fielding (1707-1754) is another prominent figure in the history of the English novel. He started his literary career in the theatre where he worked in several critical and satiric modes. His writing style was mainly driven by the use of irony and satire. Therefore, he was the forerunner of the comic form of the English novel. He invested in literary talent and sophistication to produce and portray characters of all social classes. He produced his famous novel *Shamela (1741)* partly as a response to Samuel Richardson's *Pamela*.

He skilfully ridiculed Samuel Richardson's reduction of virtue to female virginity in *Pamela*. Fielding's success in writing prompted him to produce other novels such as *Joseph Andrews (1742)* and *Tom Jones (1749)*. The difference between Fielding's novels and those of Richardson lies basically in their attitude towards morality. While Fielding sought to reform manners, Richardson strived to reform them. Fielding's last novel was entitled *Amelia (1751)* in which the tone changed towards a more cloying sentimentality.

Laurence Sterne (1713-1768) is another successful novelist of the age. In fact, the wealth of experiment in the prose fiction of the period is nowhere more evident than in the work of Sterne. He wrote *Tristram Shandy (1759)* which is a comic novel on morals that was fused with sentimentality. It is a type of fiction within which, Sterne created a unique medium for investigating some of the principal interests of the era : Locke's psychology of the association of ideas, the nature of sentimentalism and the conventions of prose fiction. Other novels by Sterne include his famous *Sentimental Journey through France and Italy (1768)* .

Tobias Smollett (1721-1771) -a moralist and satirist- is also an outstanding novelist of the age who implemented comedy to express his satiric and critical stance towards what disgusted him in society. He is best known for his masterpieces: *The Adventures of Roderick Random (1748)* and *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker (1771)*. In Smollett's novels, displaced people are often represented in just such a chaotic world wherein cruelty, tyranny and

immorality are for the most part triumphant and happy endings are usually a merely factitious literary contrivance, i.e. a form of sentimentality which is the obverse of his cynicism.

### **3.About Daniel Defoe (1660-1731):**

Daniel Defoe was born in London in 1660. He was initially a merchant whose business was a failure. He afterward re-directed his interest towards political pamphleteering; an activity that caused him imprisonment for slander. In spite of this, Defoe resumed writing political writings besides working as a journalist until the early 1700s. Several of his works throughout this period were devoted to supporting King William III. Among his most popular and influential writings include *The True-Born Englishman (1701)*, which is a satirical poem that opposed racial prejudice in England following the assaults against King William who was considered by some a foreigner, and the *Review*, a periodical that Defoe published from 1704 to 1713. Political opponents of Defoe's had him imprisoned again for his writing in 1713. Late in life, Defoe took a new literary orientation as he turned to fiction writing. He published *Robinson Crusoe (1719)*, a fictional novel that was based on several short essays he had composed over years. The success of his first novel encouraged him to write other novels often with rogues and criminals as major characters. These include: *Moll Flanders (1722)*, *Colonel Jack (1722)*, *Captain Singleton (1720)* and his last major fiction piece-*Roxana (1724)*. Defoe died in 1731.

### **4. Synopsis of the Novel *Robinson Crusoe (1719)*:**

This novel tells the story of a young energetic man who wanted to become a sailor and travel world. This dream was opposed by his parents who wanted him to stay home and become a man of law. He insistently defied his parents' will and went to the sea on his own. He started trading and was successful to make money in Brazil, where he bought a plantation of sugar. He later turned to slave trade where he procured slaves taken from Africa. On his journey from Brazil to Africa, his ship got wrecked to find himself wrestling to survive. He reached the shore being isolated in a desert island on which he is going to spend almost twenty-seven years. Being alone on the Island, he started to count on himself. He built a shelter, planted corn; and raised animals. He even taught himself bread-making. His solitude on the island strengthened his faith in God to whom he was

completely submitted. After some years, Crusoe found footprint; he even saw cannibals savagely eating prisoners. These cannibals used to come on canoes from a mainland, not too far away. Crusoe envisaged saving the prisoners the next time the savages come, and in fact, they came back to the island. Using his guns, he assaulted them and was able to save prisoners among who was a young balck man. Crusoe named him “Friday”. This latter showed his deep gratitude to Crusoe and became his intimate friend and his devoted servant. Being together, Crusoe taught Friday English and converted him to Christianity. Years later, Crusoe and Friday managed to help the crew of a ship and as a reward, they were taken back to England for free. Despite his long absence, Crusoe found that his plantations were doing well, bringing huge wealth to him. He decided to settle in the English countryside where he got married and had three children. After the death of his wife, he again went to the sea holding promises of new adventurous trips.

**5. Text Study:** Read the text below, and then write a literary essay in which you:

- Identify the passage
- Describe characters
- Identify the setting
- Identify the predominant point of view
- Extract the theme
- Pick out two figures of speech and explain them
- Comment on language and style

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... I set him to work beating some corn out, and sifting it in the manner I used to do, as I observed before; and he soon understood how to do it as well as I, especially after he had seen what the meaning of it was, and that it was to make bread of; for after that I let him see me make my bread, and bake it too; and in a little time Friday was able to do all the work for me as well as I could do it myself. I began now to consider, that having two mouths to feed instead of one, I must provide more ground for my harvest...; so I marked out a larger piece of land, and began the fence in the same manner as before, in which Friday worked not only very willingly and very hard, but did it very cheerfully: and I told him what it was for; that it was for corn to make more bread, because he was now with me, and that I might have enough for him and myself too. He appeared very sensible of that part, and let me know that he thought I had much more labour upon me on his account than I had for



myself; and that he would work the harder for me if I would tell him what to do. This was the pleasantest year of all the life I led in this place. Friday began to talk pretty well, and understand the names of almost everything I had occasion to call for, and of every place I had to send him to ....., I had a singular satisfaction in the fellow himself: his simple, unfeigned honesty appeared to me more and more every day, and I began really to love the creature; and on his side I believe he loved me more than it was possible for him ever to love anything before.

I had a mind once to try if he had any inclination for his own country again; and having taught him English so well that he could answer me almost any question, I asked him whether the nation that he belonged to never conquered in battle? At which he smiled, and said - 'Yes, yes, we always fight the better;' that is, he meant always get the better in fight; and so we began the following discourse:

MASTER. - You always fight the better; how came you to be taken prisoner, then, Friday?

FRIDAY. - My nation beat much for all that.

MASTER. - How beat? If your nation beat them, how came you to be taken?

FRIDAY. - They more many than my nation, in the place where me was; they take one, two, three, and me: my nation over-beat them in the yonder place, where me no was; there my nation take one, two, great thousand.

MASTER. - But why did not your side recover you from the hands of your enemies, then?

FRIDAY. - They run, one, two, three, and me, and make go in the canoe; my nation have no canoe that time.

MASTER. - Well, Friday, and what does your nation do with the men they take? Do they carry them away and eat them, as these did?

FRIDAY. - Yes, my nation eat mans too; eat all up.

MASTER. - Where do they carry them?

FRIDAY. - Go to other place, where they think.

MASTER. - Do they come hither?

FRIDAY. - Yes, yes, they come hither; come other else place. MASTER. - Have you been here with them? FRIDAY. - Yes, I have been here (points to the NW. side of the island, which, it seems, was their side).

By this I understood that my man Friday had formerly been among the savages who used to come on shore on the farther part of the island, on the same man-eating occasions he was now brought for; and some time after, when I took the courage to carry him to that side, being the same I formerly mentioned, he presently knew the place, and told me he was there once, when they ate up twenty men, two women, and one child; he could not tell twenty in English, but he numbered them by laying so many stones in a row, and pointing to me to tell them over.

(From Chapter 15)

## **Unit two: British Romanticism**

### **Objectives:**

- \* Highlighting the social and the literary backgrounds within which Romanticism rose in Britain.**
- \* Spotting the major Romantic principles and themes.**
- \* Touching on the Gothic trend within British Romanticism.**

## **Lecture one: The Romantic Movement : Origins and Inspirations**

### **1. Introduction:**

Romanticism as a literary movement found its path in almost every country in Europe, The United States and Latin America. It was a movement that dominated the period from around 1750 to about 1870. It was predominantly characterised by its emphasis on imagination, the subjectivity of approach, the freedom of thought and expression besides the idealization and glorification of nature. Symons (1969) accordingly considers Romanticism as movement that has significantly contributed to “a re-awakening of the imagination, a re-awakening of a sense of beauty and strangeness in natural things, and in all impulses of the mind and senses”. (p.17).

The term “Romantic” originated first in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century to mean “romance-like”, that is, resembling the fanciful character of medieval romances. Therefore, the term romance was originally employed to refer to the medieval verse and tales that were basically concerned with chivalry and that were written in the romance languages (French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese) derived from Latin. Such tales were highly imaginative in nature and involved heroic adventures within which the honouring of knightly qualities and the privilege of women were predominant. By the 18<sup>th</sup> century the fanciful stories that took place in picturesque and/or wild settings tended to be labelled as “romantic”.

### **2. Origin and sources of inspiration:**

The end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in France and Germany was marked by a noticeable change in the literary taste that turned away from the Classical and Neo-classical conventions. The early inspiration for the romantic approach came from the works of imminent figures. These are: the French philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau, the German writer Johan Wolfgang Von Goethe and the English philosopher and writer William Godwin.

### **3.The Romantic spirit:**

The French philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) was among the pioneers in establishing the cult of the individual and championing the freedom of the human spirit, announcing the famous dogma “I felt before I thought”. Rousseau was in many ways the mystagogue of the European Romanticism. His strong belief in the indisputable natural goodness of man; his denunciation of the contaminating evils and abuses of the modern society; his call for liberal attunement of education for children, his horror of tyranny and advocacy of government by mandate; his endless adoration of nature and his significant reliance on compassion as being an authentic touchstone of human emotions and sentiments formed an instant chord in the hearts of the English Romantic poets.

Deeper and formal principles grew out of the works of the German writer Von Goethe and his compatriots Johann Gottfried Von Harder and Justus Moser .They collaborated on producing a number of essays entitled *Von deutscher Art and Kunst* (1773) ,In English Meaning “ Of German Style and Art”. In this work, the above mentioned authors praised the Romantic spirit as manifested in the German folk songs, Gothic architecture and the plays of Shakespeare. Goethe sought to emulate and imitate Shakespeare’s free and untrammelled style in his *Gotz Von Berlichingen* (1773).This was a basically a historical drama of a sixteenth century robber knight. The play, which supports revolt against absolute political authority, sparkled the “Sturm und Drang” ( Storm and Stress) movement , a nurturing source of German Romanticism. In addition to this, Goethe’s novel *Die Leiden des Jungen Werthers* (1774) Translated ( 1779) as :*The Sorrow of Young Werther* was one of the most influential documents of Romanticism. It praises sentiment to the extent of justifying committing suicide over unrequited love. As such the novel sets a mood that was much imitated by the Romantics in their works and, in some instances, in their personal lives. This was indeed a fashionable tendency to melancholy world weariness that reached self destruction.

The ascendant English philosopher and writer of the Romantic Movement was William Godwin (1756-1836). In his *The Enquiry Concerning the Principles of political Justice* (1793), Godwin showed his opposition to all forms of government and repression in favour of anarchic social doctrines, such as the abolition of the institution of marriage, the advocacy of benevolence and community spirit and the rejection of selfishness and capitalistic principles.

Godwin as a philosopher, novelist and biographer was indeed the kind of an optimistic idealist whose influence on the English Romantic poets was so significant. Being a radical and anarchic thinker by the standards of the Enlightenment and later admired by William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Godwin turned to be an atheist and instead believed that humans were primarily rational having the immense ability to seeking and attaining continuing perfection and improvement without the need of laws and established institutions.

## Lecture two: The Rise and Flourishing of Romanticism in Britain

### 1. Introduction:

To gain a full understanding of Romanticism in Britain in particular and in Europe as a whole, it is of capital importance to examine the thinking tradition against which Romanticism reacted and revolted. This leads us to go back to the beginning of what is referred to as the “Renaissance”. The re-birth of classical learning, which in England dated from the arrival of the Tudors on the throne in 1485, involved a rediscovery of the art, literature, philosophy and values of Classical Greece and Rome. This rediscovery was indeed a source for the admiration of the clarity of Classical rationality. Therefore, the intellect and logical thinking became increasingly the predominant doctrines of the age. This tendency towards clarity of thought reached its peak in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century with a movement known as “Neo-classicism”. To locate this impact on literature one has to refer to the intelligent wit of some imminent writers such as, Jonathan Swift (1667-1745), Alexander Pope (1688-1744) and John Dryden (1631-1700).

Romanticism was basically a reaction against the neo-classicism of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century rational spirit and its excessive and pure intellect. Therefore, its emergence in Britain was considered as a revolt against the abuses of the Industrial Revolution and the norms of the age of reason (The Enlightenment). Romanticism thus generated an unprecedented emphasis on individuality, subjectivity, the natural, the imaginative, the supernatural, the emotional and the visionary. It came to replace the neoclassic focus on reason and logic by an emphasis on the power of feelings, emotions and imagination. In this respect, the Romantics strongly claimed that man’s happiness lies basically in maintaining organic link with nature. The romantics were against the belief that science could explain everything that concerns humans. To most of them, science is a soulless discipline that impedes human imagination and deprives people from the freedom of expressing themselves. The romantics rejected the capitalistic abuses of modern and urban life. They instead looked towards the countryside and rustic life as a source for creative inspiration. Nature was, according to them, man’s true setting where he can find the most profound experiences. It was a source of both healing the soul and revealing artistic creation.



Melancholy was a popular word among romantic poets, and altered states of consciousness were most often sought after for the sake of enhancing creative potentials.

Romanticism in Britain is said to have begun from the date of the publication of “Lyrical Ballads” (1798) by William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. The Romantic Movement was accompanied by a change from monarchy to democracy in politics, from materialism to idealism in philosophy; from conservatism to radicalism in culture, and from orthodoxy to emancipation in religion. Britain witnessed two phases in the life of Romanticism:

- **Time concerning society:** During the romantic period England witnessed a remarkable huge shift in its economy. It turned to be a truly industrial country (the rise of the industrial revolution; and the burst of the businessmen class). Therefore, some romantics fiercely revolted against the abuses endured by the working masses, not least children who were involved in disastrous working conditions. An example of this romantic writings is William Blake’s famous poem “Chimney Sweeper”.

The Romantics concentrated vividly on what was happening outside England, particularly in France (The French Revolution). Their concern was centred against political absolutism and religious traditionalism. Their rejection of the established rigid laws nurtured their strong will to have the freedom of writing in order to get rid of the authoritarianism of the businessmen class.

- **Time of isolation:** It is a common belief that Romanticism is deeply associated with nature. This is true in the sense that the romantic poets have no active effect on society; most of them sought refuge to nature because they were rejected and discarded by society. Therefore, they dealt with rustic life, as in the case of William Wordsworth’s ‘The Prelude’.

The English Romantic revivalism was undergone by eminent writers such as: William Blake, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, William Wordsworth (**the first generation**), Percy Bysshe Shelley, Lord Byron and John Keats. (**the second generation**).

Romanticism is self-centred, it is centred on the individual with the relationship to nature as opposed to previous poetry for instance that of John Milton that was related

to the whole nation. The Romantic poet imagines the nature of the self through feelings in subjective lyricism.

## **2. Major Romantic Themes:**

As the Romantic Movement spread from France and Germany to England and then to the rest of Europe across the western hemisphere, certain themes and characteristics became the primary concern of almost all 19<sup>th</sup> century romantic writers. These themes and characteristics include the following:

### **2.1.Libertarianism:**

Many of the libertarian and abolitionist movements of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and early 19<sup>th</sup> century were engendered by the Romantic philosophy; a philosophy that fundamentally sought to get freedom from the established conventions and tyranny and claimed instead for the rights and dignity of the individual. Therefore, the authoritarian regimes that had encouraged and supported Neo-classicism in the arts were inevitably subjected to popular revolutions within the Romantic age. Political and social causes became predominant themes in Romantic poetry and even in prose throughout the Western World, not least in England. Lord Byron and Percy Byshe Shelley wrote resoundingly in protest against social and political wrongs and malpractices and in defence of freedom and liberty. This general Romantic dissatisfaction with the established organization of society was all too often transformed into a severe criticism of urban society. Earlier, Jean Jacques Rousseau had forcefully claimed that people were born free, and that civilization put them in chains. This feeling of oppression was recurrently expressed in the poetry of William Wordsworth, particularly in his poem 'The Prelude' (1850) that speaks of the close and crowded cities where the human hear is sick.

### **2.2.Nature:**

The love of, and the fascination with, natural surroundings was a basic interest to the Romantic writers who immensely rejected the artificial aspects and manifestations of

modern civilization. The loneliness in natural and wild settings for the Romantics was comparable to heaven. The joy stemming from unspoiled scenery as well as the feeling of rest and tranquillity evolving from the innocent life in natural outskirts are conceivably recognizable as literary themes in the poem “The Seasons” (1726-1730) composed by the Scottish poet James Thomson. This work was commonly regarded as being a truly influential inspiration for later English Romantic poets. It was a leading formative piece of the nature tradition depicted in English Literature, most remarkably by William Wordsworth. Most often coupled with this feeling of passion for rustic life is a generalized Romantic Melancholy, a sentiment that change is more than imminent, that a way of life is being deeply endangered by excessive urbanization and industrialization. The melancholic strain developed later as a separate theme as in John Keats’ ‘Ode on Melancholy’ (1810).

The glorification and the idealization of nature as a primary source of inspiration for the Romantics is well represented in the thoughts of Coleridge and Wordsworth who accordingly claimed that God in nature was the “great universal teacher manifesting himself as the spirit and the wisdom of the universe”. (King, 2003, p.9)

### **2.3.The Lure of the Exotic:**

Another predominant and frequent trait among the Romantics was the fascination with the old and the primitive. Therefore, they widened their imaginative horizons both spatially and chronologically. They made a return to the Middle Ages for both themes and settings, and opted for locales that were Gothic, Oriental, alien or vanished. An illustration of this typical fascination is the Oriental setting and image of Xanadu evoked by Samuel Taylor Coleridge in his masterpiece “Kubla Khan” (1797) as well as in John Keats’ world of medieval romance in his ‘The Eve of St Agnes’ (1820).

A seminal work that was a source of inspiration for the Romantics was the compilation of old English and Scottish ballads written by Bishop Thomas Percy entitled ‘Reliques of Ancient English Poetry’ (1765). Indeed, this work exerted a significant influence on both the form and content of the later English Romantic poets. Moreover, the nostalgia for the Gothic past coupled with the tendency to the melancholic generated a fondness for ruins, graveyards and the supernatural as major romantic themes. In English literature, William Wordsworth’s ‘ *Lines Written a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey*’ ( From *the Lyrical*

*Ballads*) and Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) are representative examples. In short, this tendency combined the concerns of: the love of the picturesque, the preoccupation with the heroic past and the delight in mystery and superstition.

#### **2.4. The supernatural:**

The trend towards the supernatural and the irrational was a core component of English Romantic literature. This trend was reinforced, on the one hand, by the disillusion with eighteenth century rationalism and, on the other hand, by the revival and rediscovery of a heritage of older literature (Folktales and ballads). It was a tendency that was attracted by the bizarre and the nightmarish. The fascination with the supernatural elements is quite clearly manifested in a good number of English romantic works, such as in John Keats' "*Isabella*" (1820) and in Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "*The Rime of Ancient Mariner*" (1798). Yet, such supernatural elements are most predominantly present in the Gothic fiction written from the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century onwards.

#### **2.5. Idealism:**

Idealism was also a significant aspect of Romantic literature. In this respect, the English Romantic poet William Blake provided an adequate summary of idealism and its significance within the Romantic age. He accordingly stated that "Everything that lives is holy" (Cited in King, 2003, p.10).

Blake's assertion represents his enormous hope for the perfect, caring government or in short for paradise on Earth. This idealistic attitude had similarly had its impact on Samuel Taylor Coleridge who was motivated to join the poet Robert Southey (1774-1843) in advocating a plan for setting up the perfect commune in New England.

Political idealism, particularly in its hope for the French Revolution representing a new era for mankind, was a source of inspiration nearly to all early Romantics. Such anti-establishment tendencies were later embraced by Lord Byron who dared to advance liberal ideas in the House of Lords.

## **2.6. Individualism:**

The Romantic poetry contributed to a significant shift in emphasis in English literature. While the poetry of the neo-classical period was largely focused on collective morality and other public-related concerns, the Romantic poetry was instead focused on personal experiences. For a better understanding of this influential change and its implications, one might refer to William Wordsworth particularly in his biographical epic poem *The Prelude* (1850). The poem is a perfect example of this new individualistic dimension in English literature. It is a long poem that was focused on Wordsworth own experiences and the growth of his own mind. The Romantics often created characters / personae through which they see themselves as being isolated figures ,rejoicing in solitude, but not forcibly lonely (King, 2003).

## Lecture three: William Wordsworth

### 1. Introduction : About William Wordsworth (1770-1850)

The famous English Romantic poet William Wordsworth was born in 1770 in Cocker mouth, Cumbria, England. He spent his childhood in the Lake District. His constant encounter with natural surroundings and his contact with humble peasants in his region was a significant source of inspiration for him as an eminent Romantic poet. He started his early studies at Cambridge University where he demonstrated a great interest in the ideals of J. Jacques Rousseau. After taking his degree, he moved to France and stayed there for one year (1791-1792). He warmly supported the French Revolution and its democratic stance. When he returned back to England, he settled in the South of England where he met the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge. They became close friends and together they published *Lyrical Ballads* (1798). This collection is considered a true landmark in the history of English Romantic poetry. In his preface to the Second Edition of *Lyrical Ballads* (1800), Wordsworth proposed a new conception of poetry. He stated that he selected incidents and situations from common life; this conception was to a greater extent the reflection of his democratic ideals and sympathies. He added that the language of poetry must not be artificial and contrived; it ought to be rather a common and an ordinary language that is actually used by men. Wordsworth rejected the conventions of poetic diction of neo-classicism. He instead believed in simplicity and truth. According to him, the language of humble people was less affected and more genuine. He therefore considered the poet as being “A man speaking to men” (Cited in Castex&Jumeaux, 1992, p.33). His distinguished reputation as a Romantic poet lies in his advocacy of the return to nature and the rejection of artifice. Wordsworth was Poet Laureate in 1843. Besides *Lyrical Ballads*, his works include: *The Evening Walk* (1793) *Descriptive Sketches* (1793), *The Excursion* (1814), *Peter Bell* ( 1819), *The prelude* (1850).

### 2. *The Prelude*

Wordsworth's long introspective poem the *Prelude* (1850) appeared after his death. It tells the story of his life with a particular focus on the significant and remarkable moments he went through. Besides his belief that the natural world should be the central source of inspiration for poetic creativity, Wordsworth thought that there are some remarkable and specific moments in people's lives during which they go beyond or

transcend everyday reality and therefore experience themselves and the world around them in a more vivid manner. Such moments or as Wordsworth refers to them as “Spots of Time” are deeply engraved in people’s memories and are recalled later in time to strengthen them in critical and hard times. This conception adequately applies and tightly corresponds to Wordsworth whose infancy in the “Lake District” was extremely filled with memorable moments in natural surroundings. Many of those moments are recorded in *The Prelude*. In the excerpt below from *The Prelude* Wordsworth provides a description of his own experience of skating on a frozen lake at nightfall.

And in the frosty season, when the sun  
Was set, and visible for many a mile  
The cottage windows blazed through twilight gloom,  
I heeded not their summons: happy time  
It was indeed for all of us—for me  
It was a time of rapture! Clear and loud  
The village clock tolled six,—I wheeled about,  
Proud and exulting like an untired horse  
That cares not for his home. All shod with steel,  
We hissed along the polished ice in games  
Confederate, imitative of the chase  
And woodland pleasures,—the resounding horn,  
The pack loud chiming, and the hunted hare.  
So through the darkness and the cold we flew,  
And not a voice was idle; with the din  
Smitten, the precipices rang aloud;  
The leafless trees and every icy crag  
Tinkled like iron; while far distant hills  
Into the tumult sent an alien sound  
Of melancholy not unnoticed, while the stars  
Eastward were sparkling clear, and in the west  
The orange sky of evening died away.

Not seldom from the uproar I retired  
Into a silent bay, or sportively  
Glanced sideways, leaving the tumultuous throng,  
To cut across the reflex of a star  
That fled, and, flying still before me, gleamed  
Upon the glassy plain; and oftentimes,  
When we had given our bodies to the wind,  
And all the shadowy banks on either side  
Came sweeping through the darkness, spinning still  
The rapid line of motion, then at once  
Have I, reclining back upon my heels,  
Stopped short; yet still the solitary cliffs

Wheeled by me—even as if the earth had rolled  
With visible motion her diurnal round!  
Behind me did they stretch in solemn train,  
Feebler and feebler, and I stood and watched  
Till all was tranquil as a dreamless sleep.

Ye Presences of Nature in the sky  
And on the earth! Ye Visions of the hills!  
And Souls of lonely places! can I think  
A vulgar hope was yours when ye employed  
Such ministry, when ye, through many a year  
Haunting me thus among my boyish sports,  
On caves and trees, upon the woods and hills,  
Impressed, upon all forms, the characters  
Of danger or desire; and thus did make  
The surface of the universal earth,  
With triumph and delight, with hope and fear,  
Work like a sea?

**Read the poem above closely and then discuss the following points:**

1. The poem above is written in a blank verse. What does that mean?
2. How does the poet use language and imagery to convey the following :
  - a) The landscape and weather b) movement and sound c) his personal feelings.
- 3) In what way does the second section of the poem contrast with the first one?
- 4) Read again the third section and highlight what is the poet saying about nature and its impact on his personal life.
- 5) Write a short summary of the poem in your own words.

### ***3.The Daffodils***

The poem *Daffodils* (1804) also commonly known as *I wandered lonely as a Cloud* is amongst the most popular Romantic poems written by William Wordsworth. He composed the poem as a response to remarkable scenery of a belt of daffodils in 1802 when he was wandering in the forest with his sister Dorothy.



## *"The Daffodils"*

I wandered lonely as a cloud  
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,  
When all at once I saw a crowd,  
A host, of golden daffodils,  
Beside the lake, beneath the trees  
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine  
And twinkle on the Milky Way,  
They stretched in never-ending line  
Along the margin of a bay:  
Ten thousand saw I at a glance  
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced, but they  
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee: -  
A poet could not but be gay  
In such a jocund company:  
I gazed -and gazed -but little thought  
What wealth the show to me had brought.

For oft, when on my couch I lie  
In vacant or in pensive mood,  
They flash upon that inward eye  
Which is the bliss of solitude;  
And then my heart with pleasure fills  
And dances with the daffodils.

*William Wordsworth. (1804)*

### *Questions of Analysis*

***Read the poem closely and then answer the following questions :***

- a. What did the poet see beside the lake?
- b. How did they look?
- c. Underline the lines that express that the daffodils were moving gently in the breeze.
- c. Identify the genre of the poem.

d. Note down the rhyme of the poem.

e. In your opinion, what attitude does the poet hold towards the following: nature, memory, loneliness?

f. Identify examples of the following literary devices in the poem and explain them in your own words.

(a) Simile    ( b) personification    (c) hyperbole

g. How do these devices contribute to the overall mood of the poem?

h. Write a summary of the poem in your own words.

## **Lecture four : William Blake**

### **1. Introduction : About William Blake (1757-1827)**

William Blake was born into a modest family of Dissenters. He received his early education at home by his mother. Thanks to his great visual imagination, he was apprenticed to an engraver at the age of fourteen. He later became an established printmaker and painter. William Blake, like many other Romantic poet, rejected the neoclassical ideas of his time. He abhorred rationalism and excessive materialism that dominated the age of reason and that stifled man's imagination and instincts. He claimed for a personal philosophy within which creative energy and imagination are ideally conducive to regaining the lost unity with the divine. He perceived the world as being a setting of conflict between opposite forces: good versus evil, nature versus order and revolt versus authority. Reverent of the bible, but being hostile to the Church of England and its rigid principles of organized religion, William Blake was highly influenced by the democratic ambitions and ideals brought by both the American and the French revolutions. He was deeply concerned with the plight and suffering of all those who were victims of the industrial society and its abuses, particularly children. His major works include the following: *Poetical Sketches* (1783), *Songs of Innocence* (1789), *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1790), *Songs of Experience* (1794), *Songs of Los* (1795), *The Four Zoas* (1797-1804).

### **2. *The Chimney Sweeper* (1789):**

*The Songs of Innocence* (1789) is a collection of poems by William Blake. These poems are mainly written from the child's point of view. It is indeed the point of view of spontaneity and innocence. The collection includes many poems, such as : *The Chimney Sweeper*, *Little Boy Lost*, *Little Boy found* and *The Lamb*. On the other hand, *The Songs of Experience* (1794) is a collections of poems that are considered as a response to those in *The Songs of Innocence* ; these poems therefore clearly suggest a kind of an ironic contrast as they reflect the growth and maturity of the Child.

*The Chimney Sweeper* is a poem that depicts the miserable and appalling conditions in which little children were involved in. In fact, in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, the little boys were employed to climb up chimneys to remove soot from flues. Those children were sold by their parents to sweeping masters and were miserably treated by their masters. Because of the hard working conditions, they suffered from diseases and physical deformity. Being hired as sweepers, they used to work from dawn to dark to earn their living.

*“The Chimney-Sweeper”*

When my mother died I was very young,  
And my father sold me while yet my tongue  
Could scarcely cry 'Weep! weep! weep! weep!'  
So your chimneys I sweep, and in soot I sleep.

There's little Tom Dacre, who cried when his head,  
That curled like a lamb's back, was shaved; so I said,  
'Hush, Tom! never mind it, for, when your head's bare,  
You know that the soot cannot spoil your white hair.'

And so he was quiet, and that very night,  
As Tom was a-sleeping, he had such a sight!--  
That thousands of sweepers, Dick, Joe, Ned, and Jack,  
Were all of them locked up in coffins of black.

And by came an angel, who had a bright key,  
And he opened the coffins, and set them all free;  
Then down a green plain, leaping, laughing, they run  
And wash in a river, and shine in the sun.

Then naked and white, all their bags left behind,  
They rise upon clouds, and sport in the wind;  
And the angel told Tom, if he'd be a good boy,  
He'd have God for his father, and never want joy.

And so Tom awoke, and we rose in the dark,  
And got with our bags and our brushes to work.  
Though the morning was cold, Tom was happy and warm:  
So, if all do their duty, they need not fear harm.

*William Blake* (1789)

### ***3. Summary of the poem:***

The speaker in the poem is a little boy who was sold to chimney sweeping masters after the death of his mother. In the poem, the boy tells the story of one of his fellow sweep named Tom Dacre who cried when his hair was shaved to prevent soot and vermin from infesting it. So, the speaker consoles Tom who, after a long journey of sweeping chimneys, falls asleep. While sleeping Tom had a dream of several chimney sweepers who were locked in black coffins. Suddenly, an Angel came holding a key with which the locks were opened and therefore the little boys were set free. After being freed, the little boys ran through a stretched green field and they went to a river to wash themselves. They turned to be clean and white and they exposed their bodies to the bright sun. The Angel told Tom that if he would be a good boy, he would have this paradise for his own. Tom waked up, and together with the speaker gathered their tools and went to work, holding the hope that their lives would one day improve.

### ***Question of Analysis***

*Read the poem “the Chimney Sweeper” and answer the following questions:*

1. Identify the Rhyme and the meter of the poem.
2. What is Blake’s message in the poem?
3. Do you find the poem ironic? Explain
4. What do the words “Angel” and “bright key”, “naked” in the poem connote?
5. Pick out from the poem two instances of alliteration.
6. Extract from the poem the following figures of speech and explain them :
  - a) Metonymy
  - b) metaphor
  - c) simile
  - d) irony
7. What is the predominant tone of the poem?
- 8) Convert the poem in to prose maintaining the perspective from which it is written. The Beginning is provided below.



## Lecture five: The Gothic Trends within Romanticism

### 1. Introduction:

By the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Gothic novel was already established and gained enough popularity. Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) are set amid wild nature, in gothic castles and convents, and heavily emphasized the mysterious, the supernatural and the terrifying in a sensitive mind.

The Romantic age is said to be tightly associated with poetry, but in spite of this, the novel maintained its popularity. The "Gothic novel" basically applies to a particular type of novels that rose in the latter half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and expanded their popularity until the outset of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The gothic novel was originally influenced by the spirit of sensibility that pervaded the age of Romanticism. Therefore, it shifted to the study of fear and terror.

Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) is said to be the first gothic novel, but gothic fiction did not reach its flourishing peak until the last decade of the 18<sup>th</sup> century particularly with the writings of Ann Radcliffe. By this time, it became more sentimental and within it the emphasis was mainly cantered on the fears of the heroines. As such, it became a type of literature that is full of emotions and mainly written by female writers appealing to female readers. It is also worth mentioning that the end of the century (18<sup>th</sup> century), the influence of German romanticism was strongly felt on the English gothic novel reflecting a tendency of being more macabre and more sexually violent.

To sum up, and as stated so far, the tendency towards supernatural and the irrational is considered as focal element of English Romantic writings. This tendency was a reaction to the 18<sup>th</sup> century's rationalism and it was also reinforced by the noticeable revival of older literature (Folktales & ballads). From such materials came the motif of **Gothicism**. This style of writing flourished during the second half of 18<sup>th</sup> century and early 19<sup>th</sup> century with historical and picturesque settings, an atmosphere of mystery, gloom, terror, supernatural and psychological plot elements, with violent and frightening deaths.

## **2. Characteristics of Gothic fiction:**

The major features of gothic fiction can be summarized in the following focal points :

- Settings usually in old /medieval architecture castles.
- An atmosphere of mystery, suspense, gloom and horror.
- Supernatural and inexplicable events in plots.
- Women in distress (threatened by impulsive and tyrannical male).
- Diction and vocabulary of Gothicism.
- It shows the dark side of human nature.



## Lecture six: Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus* (1818)

### 1. Introduction :

As stated earlier, the encounter with and the depiction of the frightening, the uncanny and the semi-human were omnipresent in the Gothic tradition. Such aspects are found in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818); a novel that is all too often considered as the most famous Gothic novel of the period. The full title of the novel is *Frankenstein or the Modern Prometheus*. It denotes the influence of Mary Shelley by the Greek mythology tale of Prometheus who is reported to be among the wisest of the Titans. He is accredited with bringing knowledge and enlightenment to humanity. He robbed fire from the Gods of Mount Olympus who wished to keep the power of fire in their exclusive possession. Therefore, by standing against their wish, Prometheus was arrested and severely punished. He was tightly chained to a rock to have his liver eaten by an eagle. Every night his liver would grow back to be eaten again and again by the eagle during the day. It was in fact a sort of an eternal punishment.

### 2. About the Author:

Mary Shelley -also known as Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley -was born in 1797 in Somers town in England. She is the daughter of two outstanding thinkers of the age of the Enlightenment. Her father is William Godwin; he was radical a political figure and writer best known for his famous book *An Inquiry Concerning Political Justice* (1793). Her mother Mary Wollstonecraft is also an eminent figure in the history of the feminist movement. She is the writer of the seminal book *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792).

She died only ten days after the birth of Mary who was then raised by her father and her stepmother Mary Jane Clairmont. Made a widow at a young age (24), Mary was obliged to work hard to support herself and her son. She also strived to promote the poetry left by of her husband Percy B. Shelley. Besides her famous novel *Frankenstein* (1818), Mary published other works such *History of Six Weeks' Tour* (1817), *Valperga* (1823), *The Last Man* (1826) and the autobiographical *Lodore* (1835). She died of brain cancer in 1853 in London.

### **3. Historical Context:**

In 1816, the Selleys (Mary and her husband Percy Shelley) met with their friends in a villa rented by the Romantic poet Lord Byron on the shore of Lake Geneva in Switzerland. During their stay there, they evoked multiple topics including the source of life, anthropological theories of that time and the possible effects of electricity in stimulating the human body and life itself. Inspired by a passage written by the American physician and poet Erasmus Darwin (1731-1802), Mary Shelley had a hideous dream about infusing life in dead bodies. Some days after, Byron suggested a ghost story competition in which he, Percy Shelley and Mary as well took part. Mary was the first one to complete her story *Frankenstein* and as a result she won the competition.

### **4. Basic Plot Summary:**

*Frankenstein* recounts the story of an ambitious scientist named Victor Frankenstein who, after a series of experiments in his own laboratory, succeeded to give life to a being of his own creation. But unfortunately, this was not the perfect specimen he imagined that it would be. It was rather a hideous creature (a monster) who was rejected by his creator Victor and by society as well. In his lonely agony, the monster yearned for love and insisted that Victor creates a female mate for him. Though Victor responded to this demand, he eventually abandoned it and destroyed the supposed to be female monster. In response to this, the monster sought revenge through murder and terror. He killed Frankenstein's best friend Henry Clerval, his little brother William and also his wife Elizabeth Lavenza. The monster escaped to the North Pole (a place of desolation). Frankenstein pursued him to kill him, but it was he (Frankenstein) who was mortally wounded by the monster. The story ended with the monster being borne away on an ice raft in the arctic sea, choosing to die away.

### **5. Narrative Structure:**

The novel *Frankenstein* is basically written in an epistolary form (exchanged letters among characters).

- ✓ The first part, ranging from chapter one to chapter ten, includes Captain Walton's narration to his sister Margaret Walton Saville.

- ✓ The second part, from chapter eleven to chapter seventeen, envelops Victor Frankenstein's narration to Captain Walton.
- ✓ The third part, from chapter eighteen to chapter twenty-four, is about the monster's narration to his creator Victor Frankenstein.

**6. Text analysis:** *Read closely the text below and then write a literary analysis in which you :*

1. Identify the passage and its genre.
2. Identify and describe characters
3. Identify the point view and its effect on the narrative structure of the text.
4. Highlight the predominant atmosphere in the text.
5. Explain the theme of the text.
6. Pick out from the text two figures of speech and explain their effects on meaning.

( From Chapter V)

It was on a dreary night of November that I beheld the accomplishment of my toils. With an anxiety that almost amounted to agony, collected the instruments of life around me, that I might infuse a spark of being into the lifeless thing that lay at my feet. It was already one in the morning; the rain pattered dismally against the panes, and (1) my candle was nearly burnt out, when, by the glimmer of the half-extinguished light, I saw the dull yellow eye of the creature open; it breathed hard, and a convulsive motion agitated its limbs.

How can I describe my emotions at this catastrophe, or how delineate the wretch whom with such infinite pains and care I had endeavoured to form? His limbs were in proportion, and I had selected his features as beautiful. Beautiful! -- Great God! His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun white sockets in which they were set, his shrivelled complexion and straight black lips.

The different accidents of life are not so changeable as the feelings of human nature. I had worked hard for nearly two years, for the sole purpose of infusing life into an inanimate body. For this I had deprived myself of rest and health. I had desired it with an ardour that far exceeded moderation; but now that I had finished, the beauty of the dream vanished, and breathless horror and disgust filled my heart. Unable to endure the aspect of the being I had created, I rushed out of the room, and continued a long time traversing my bedchamber, unable to compose my mind to sleep. At length lassitude succeeded to the tumult I had before endured; and I threw myself on the bed in my clothes, endeavouring to seek a few moments

of forgetfulness. But it was in vain: I slept, indeed, but I was disturbed by the wildest dreams. I thought I saw Elizabeth, in the bloom of health, walking in the streets of Ingolstadt. Delighted and surprised, I embraced her; but as I imprinted the first kiss on her lips, they became livid with the hue of death; her features appeared to change, and I thought that I held the corpse of my dead mother in my arms; a shroud enveloped her form, and I saw the grave-worms crawling in the folds of the flannel. I started from my sleep with horror; a cold dew covered my forehead, my teeth chattered, and every limb became convulsed: when, by the dim and yellow light of the moon, as it forced its way through the window shutters, I beheld the wretch—the miserable monster whom I had created. He held up the curtain of the bed; and his eyes, if eyes they may be called, were fixed on me. His jaws opened, and he muttered some inarticulate sounds, while a grin wrinkled his cheeks. He might have spoken, but I did not hear; one hand was stretched out, seemingly to detain me, but I escaped and rushed downstairs.

## **Unit Three : Victorian Literature**

### **Objectives:**

- \*Introducing the Victorian age and its major literary dimensions.**
- \* Surveying Victorian literary genres with a particular focus on the novel.**
- \*Spotting aspects of Victorian society in a sample novel.**

## **Lecture one: Victorian Literary Scene**

### **1. Introduction:**

The Victorian age basically refers to the period of the reign of Queen Victoria that lasted from 1837 to 1901. During this period of time England was witnessing the peak of development that resulted from the Industrial Revolution. Indeed, by the 1850s England was typically ranked as the first industrial nation in the world given the fact that most of its population were employed in industry. Such an unprecedented technological growth manifested itself in the building of giant rail roads, manufacturing developments and economic wealth at large that in turn boosted the country's imperial power.

Yet, in spite of all these forms of growth and development, the Victorian age was equally an era of social doubt and unrest. Britain was divided into two nations: the rich and the poor. As commonly known, during the Industrial Revolution, a huge number of people from humble origins moved to industrial cities across the country in search of gaining their living, but most of them were involved in miserable working conditions for low wages. The aristocratic classes on the other hand enjoyed a life of ease on vast estates.

In response to this social instability, a law known as "Poor Law" was enacted in 1834 to provide help for such miserable people. Yet, the Corn Laws (1846) -which imposed high duties on the importation of foreign corn-, worsened the living conditions of the working classes who were unable to afford the high prices of bread, thus causing them starvation. This critical situation became known as the "Condition of England" question. Victorian writers, therefore, attempted to depict the real picture of society with a particular emphasis on the suffering of the poor masses. Their writings reflected a genuine commitment to the social environment that characterized the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### **2. The Literary scene: An overview**

As previously stated, the Victorians showed a significant commitment to the condition of England. They made their utmost to reveal to their readers the many abuses and vices that characterized their society. The Victorian age was par excellence an age of intense literary production for novelists, poets and essayists. However, as opposed to the Romantic period

which was predominantly an age of verse (poetry), the Victorian period was a golden age of the novel. The famous and successful novelist Walter Scott revived fiction and introduced the fashion of “the Series novels” that were predominantly historical.

Charles Dickens remarkably altered the theme and the orientation of the novel by drawing more attention to the social issues of the age. Throughout his novels, Dickens was to a larger extent successful in making a genuine portrait of the English society and therefore spotting the many abuses that were behind the fascinating scene of the age of industry and development. He adequately described and harshly assaulted the various kinds of unpleasant people and malpractices.

The Bronte sisters (Charlotte, Emily and Anne) were also successful writers whose writing marked a new orientation of the novel as they introduced the female characters. Emily Bronte’s talent was best seen in her *Wuhering Heights* (1847), one of the greatest English novels. Another famous female novelist is George Eliot (her real name is Mary Ann Evans). Her famous novels include *Adam Bede* (1859) , *The Mill on the Floss* (1860) and *Silas Marner*(1861).

William Makepeace Thackeray (1811-1863) and Anthony Trollope (1815-1882) were also great figures of the Victorian period. Thackeray’s most successful work is *Vanity Fair* (1848), it is a re-creation of England on the eve of Waterloo in which a set of people living without God in the world are exposed to mercenary obsessions in a life of vicarious social survival.

Trollope was also tough enough in criticizing the Victorian society in many of his novels. For him, the novel was “a picture of common life enlivened by humour and sustained by pathos”. (Cited in Coote, 1993, p.485)His satirical attitude towards the abuses of the age is remarkably apparent in his *The Warden* (1855) and *The Way We Live Now* (1875).

### **2.1.Early and Mid-Victorian Literature (1832-1870):**

The period between 1832-1870 witnessed the production of literature that essentially served the mission of exposing the social issues of the age. It fundamentally sought to awaken people’s moral consciousness. Such ambitious objectives were primarily attained through the novel that reached its highest levels of popularity.

### **2.1.1.Poetry:**

Though it did not reach the same level of popularity and sophistication, the Victorian poetry was also deeply concerned with the predominant issues of the age. It was filled with a sense of unrest and anxiety. The most predominant themes of Victorian poetry portrayed the themes of melancholy and suffering, loneliness, social change and man's place in the universe.

Alfred Lord Tennyson in his poetry conveyed the feeling that nature is no longer a source of comfort. This crisis of faith is well portrayed in his *Memoriam (1850)* which he wrote as a tribute to his friend Arthur Henry Hallam who died very young at the age of twenty two. The poem implements a deep individual grief to struggle with the broadest questions of faith and nature.

Robert Browning was another famous poet of the period besides Tennyson and Matthew Arnold and yet he (Browning) was more talented in infusing dramatic monologues in his poetry, giving his characters more space to reveal themselves in all their complexity and ambiguity, reflecting troubled and sometimes frightening minds. His chief literary inspiration was the poetry of Shelley which deeply influenced his early poems. Yet, his admiration of the "subjective poet" soon gave away to a strong desire for greater objectivity that led him to his dramatic monologues.

### **2.1.2. The Novel:**

The Victorian era as mentioned earlier was a golden time for fiction. This popularity was reinforced by the very large readership from all classes. Most of the published novels during the early Victorian era appeared in series in monthly instalments.

The Historical novel was a type of fiction that was first introduced by the famous Sir Walter Scott and remained very popular with the writings of Charles Kingsley and William Thackeray. This latter produced an outstanding piece of historical fiction entitled *The history of Henry Esmond (1852)*.



The Victorian era witnessed the remarkable disappearance of the Gothic novel but still its influence was clearly felt on some Victorian writers. This was the case of Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* (1847) and Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* (1847).

The imaginative and oneiric dimensions of fiction are clearly reflected in the writings of the Bronte sisters and clearly seen in dramatic tales of passion set in elemental nature with cosmic imagery.

Yet, the major bulk of the Victorian fiction lies noticeably in the various types of realism that characterised the age. In this context, Charles Dickens combined in his novels tragedy and comedy, realistic portrayal of the social evils and vices of the period besides romantic fairy tales. The issues evoked by the "Condition of England" led many Victorian novelists to soundly reflect on social problems. Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton* (1848), Dickens' *Hard Times* (1854) and Charlotte Bronte's *Shirley* (1849) are all examples of their attacking attitude towards the different evils of society including the cruel conditions of poor workers, utilitarianism and the unfair division between the rich and the poor.

The novels of William Thackeray were to a larger extent centred on human nature, while portraying the vanity and selfishness of his contemporaries. George Eliot ( Mary Ann Evans) was also successful enough in fusing morality, spirituality and sentimentality in developing her sensitive and smart heroines in their encounter with moral crises. In most of her works, she accentuated the determining role of social environment, religion, education and family background on her characters.

Anthony Trollope serial novels particularly *The Palliser* (1864-80) served an exploration of the various changes and developments witnessed by the Victorian society through the detailed study of the local Victorian communities and their responses to the political, religious and economic influences of the age.

George Meredith was skilled in exploring the psychological aspects of characters particularly in his masterpiece *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel* (1859).

## **2.2.Late Victorian Literature (1870-1901):**

The social unrest of the Victorian era continued during the end of the century that witnessed the Women's Right Movement, the Boer War, the Irish question and the creation of the Labour Party. Such a political instability resulted in an increased sense of doubt, anxiety and scepticism .In literature; this intensified and revolutionary attitude manifested itself in extreme shapes: Dark realism and naturalism on the one hand and aestheticism that privileged the aesthetic value of literature and art for their own sake over their socio-political functions on the other hand. This latter aspect (aestheticism) constituted a reaction against the early generation of Victorians who hold the belief that literature and art at large ought to serve moral and social purposes.

### **2.2.1.Poetry:**

The later period of Victorianism was partly characterised by the use of symbolism. This fact was quite apparent in the poetry of Ernest Dowson, Arthur Symonds and William Butler Yeats. Their poetry was deeply centred on the expression of life and its intense moments of loneliness.

The poetry of G.M.Hopkins was quite innovative in terms of the use of sprung rhythm.It expressively conveyed deep feelings for God, the idealization and glorification of nature and a focus on the suffering and despair within society.

It is also worth mentioning the poetry of Thomas Hardy who produced memorable lyrical poems characterized by their confessional spirit deeply rooted in the landscape of Wessex.

### **2.2.2.The Novel:**

The development of fiction within the later Victorian era might be summarized in what follows:

- The novels of Oscar Wilde and more particularly his *The picture of Dorian Gray* (1891) was an illustration of the Aesthetic Movement, a movement that as mentioned earlier privileged and praised art for art's sake.

- The fiction of Robert Louis Stevenson and Rudyard Kipling was to a larger extent influenced by the British Empire and as such it reflected the spirit of adventure and action. Stevenson However, was more influenced by the Gothic trend, and his *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde (1886)* is a good example of his fascination with the theme of double personality and the issue of evil within man.
- The exploration of realism and naturalism was reflected in the works of some late Victorian novelists. This was the case in George Gissing's *New Grub Street(1891)*.The novel dealt with suffering of the poor masses. Another example would be that of Samuel Butler's *The Way of All Flesh (1903)*, an autobiographical novel in which he strongly attacked the Victorian narrow-mindedness and family worship.
- The novels of Thomas Hardy were basically set in the landscape of rural Wessex and more centred on love. Hardy's characters are tragic characters insignificant in time and space. His *Far from the Madding Crowd(1874)* is meant to be his first main literary success and it was in that he referred to the area of the West of England as Wessex.

### **2.2.3. Drama:**

The predominant dramatic genre during the Victorian era was melodrama (very often adapted from popular French models).The most important figures of this genre were Dion Bouciacaut (1820-1890) and T.W. Robertson (1829-1871).

Oscar Wilde and George Bernard Shaw were brilliant exceptions to the dearth of good prose drama in the Victorian time. Both of them were Dublin-born Irish men.Wilde was an entertainer whose brilliant comedies were basically focused on criticizing conventional morality and often implicitly expressing the significance of generosity and humanity. G. B. Shaw was rather a social reformer; he referred to his drams as dramatic pictures of middle-class society from the perspective of a genuine socialist who considered the basis of that society as being thoroughly rotten both economically and morally. His famous plays include *Arms and the Man (1894)* and *The Devil's Discipline (1897)*.

## ***Lecture two: Charles Dickens's Hard Times (1854)***

### **1. Introduction:**

The predominant approach in the art of novel writing during the latter half of the nineteenth century was no longer the Romantic idealism that prevailed the early times of the century. Instead, the realistic approach was the landmark of Victorian novel; it is an approach that fundamentally seeks to depict and accurately represent life without excessive idealization and subjectivity. This is the reason why it has been commonly concerned with the realities of common people in common places. Stated differently, the realistic approach attempts to portray everyday life particularly among the middle and lower classes, where the character is meant to be the product of social factors. And this is indeed one of the most prevalent characteristic features of Dickens's novels, not least in his masterpiece *Hard Times (1854)*.

### **2. Major Characteristics of Realistic Novels:**

The most significant characteristics of realistic fiction might be summarized in the following elements:

- Particular Attention to details and subtleties of events
- Replicating the very true nature of reality
- The strong belief that the function of the novel resides basically in reporting what happens beyond judgments.
- Realistic fiction heavily rests upon the strength of characters and as such it does not focus on plot or style only.
- Most of the characters produced in the realistic fiction remain historic in literary history. Examples of these are Dickens's characters.

Critical Realist writers of the Victorian age sought to achieve the faithful representation of life with but they carried their duty a step forward to the criticism of the evils in society and the strong defense of the lower masses. The critical realist novel had a significant contribution in awakening the public consciousness to stand against the abuses of society.

### 3. About the Author:

Charles Dickens is considered as the most widely read author of the Victorian age. He was born in Portsmouth in 1812. His father was a clerk in the Navy pay office. When this latter was imprisoned for debt, Dickens was still twelve, and found himself urged to work in a blacking factory. This early working experience within miserable conditions evoked in him a deep interest in the plight of neglected and ill-treated children in an industrial society. He later worked as a journalist specializing in reporting parliamentary debates. This experience immersed him deeper in reporting and portraying the ill-practices in society.

He got married with Catherine Hogarth in 1837, but he left her eleven years later. After, the outstanding success of his *The Pickwick papers*(1837), Dickens devoted his life to writing and editing besides other theatrical activities. He wrote about how life was changing especially for the poor masses. His talent was apparent in making up characters that well represented the inconveniencies of an industrial nation. His novels, with their pathos and humour, were enormously popular, most of which were serialized in weekly and monthly installments. He died in 1870. His famous works include the following:

- ✓ *Sketches by Boz* (1836)
- ✓ *The Pickwick Papers* (1837)
- ✓ *Oliver Twist* (1837)
- ✓ *A Christmas Carol* (1843)
- ✓ *Dombey and Son* (1848)
- ✓ *David Copperfield* (1849)
- ✓ *Bleak House* ( 1853)
- ✓ *Hard Times* (1854)
- ✓ *A Tale of two Cities* (1859)
- ✓ *Great Expectations* (1860)
- ✓ *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (1870)

#### **4. About the Novel:**

The novel *Hard Times* (1854) is set to give voice to the whole panorama of the social masses of the Victorian society. It accurately shows the disastrous and undesirable effects of the Industrial Revolution and their impact on people. In this novel, Dickens adopted a fiercely critical stance towards the predominant utilitarianism in "Coketown"-the place where the events take place- .

His critical attitude in the novel is mainly represented in opposing the hypocrisy of the rich and their indifference towards the suffering of the poor. As such the novel is meant to be par excellence a novel of denunciation as it reveals the curse of industrialization. Dickens's strong voice of denunciation is leveled at the irresponsible excesses of the industrial logic "Laissez-faire" and the blighting force of a utilitarian philosophy. "Coke town" is an image of industrialization is portrayed by Dickens as unnatural place where nature is ousted by industry and manufacturing.

Such an environment is the hideous outcome of a hideous philosophy (utilitarianism) that is best represented in the portrayal of Mr. Gradgrind and his school of facts and facts only. He was very attentive to raise his children in accordance with hard facts, neglecting any sort of imagination. Yet; this philosophy brought in the end its terrible revenges. Dickens's novels, including *Hard Times*, are filled with satire; he is considered as a prominent satirist of the Victorian age. He attacked school system, family, parliament and even the church. The first part of *Hard Times* was published in April 1854 and the last one was published in August of the same year.

#### **5. Synopsis of the Novel:**

The novel *Hard Times* opens in the school of Sir Thomas Gradgrinds, a school that is meant to be par excellence a school of facts and facts only. Gradgrind is a practical man who strongly believed that there must be no room for all sorts of fancy and imagination in children education. This tendency urged him to take a special interest and a careful attention in the little girl in his school -Sissy Jupe- who was a fanciful daughter of a circus performer and whom he viewed as being too emotional. Bitzer was an example of pupils in

this school who demonstrated an outstanding ability to pay attention to facts as he was able to recite all the physical characteristics of a horse.

In the course of the story, Sissy Jupe was abandoned by her father. Sir Gradgrind rushed to bring her to his house and adopted her. His intention was to primarily directed towards stripping of her the deep sense of fancy and imagination . He instead wanted to inculcate in her his philosophy of fact.

Gradgrind's close friend was Josiah Bounderby, a utilitarian man who owned a bank and a factory. He used to run his business with an emotionless philosophy that he thought the best way to gain money and status in society. He later payed court to Louisa ( Gradgrind's daughter) despite the fact that he was much older than her. Yet, Louisa did not love him.

The son of Gradgrind –Tom- went to work in Bonderby's bank. He robbed the bank and charged another innocent man –Stephen. Blackpool. Within these circumstances, a young outsider man called James Harthouse came in to the town for political ends, but he soon got involved with Louisa. His love to her was a start of awakening emotions and feelings in her heart. James was not sincere in his love; he managed to manipulate her. When Louisa started to love him, she fell in a traumatic emotional breakdown, and dared to confront her father (Gradgrind) about the inappropriate way he raised her.

This state of affairs urged Grad grind to vividly see the harmful and the disastrous effects of his utilitarian philosophy on his children. He found himself compelled to make changes in his children lives in spite of the fact that he profoundly felt that it was quite too late to do that, regretting his approach to life and education.

The story ends with portraying the destiny of characters. Sissy got married and built a happy family .She took care of Louisa and strived to teach her what love is really meant to be. Bitzer became successful in rising business. Tom escaped the prosecution of the bank's robbery and sailed to South America where he died. Mr. Bounderby died miserably alone in the street. Mr Gradgrind became a Member of the Parliament(MP) and worked hard to correct his previous mistakes and his approach to life at large.

## 6. Characters in the Novel:

- ✓ **Thomas Gradgrind:** He is a school master and a Member of Parliament. He devoted his life to the philosophy of hard facts. He raised his children in accordance with this philosophy.
- ✓ **Louisa Grandrind:** She is the eldest child in Mr Gradgrind's family. She is represented as being the victim of her father's utilitarian philosophy. She was forced to marry Josiah Bounderby. She dissolved this marriage later in the story.
- ✓ **Tom Gradgrind( the Whelp):** He is the son of Thomas Grandgrind. The influence of his father's philosophy turned him to be selfish, he robbed the bank of Mr. J. Bounderby. He died away.
- ✓ **Jane and Adam Smith Gradgrind:** They are the two other younger children of Mr Gradgrind.
- ✓ **Cecilia ( Sissy Jupe):** She is the little girl in Grandrind's school who had the true sense of fancy and imagination. She was the daughter of a circus performer who abandoned her and therefore Mr Gradrind adopted her. She finally lived happily.
- ✓ **Josiah Bounderby:** He is a banker; he was the friend of Mr Thomas Gradrind. He married Louisa though she was much younger than him.
- ✓ **Mrs Grandrind:** She is the wife of Mr Gradgrind; represented in the novel as being ignorant. She dies in the middle of the story.
- ✓ **Bitzer :** A pupil in Gradgrind's school. He later worked in Bounderby's bank.
- ✓ **Stephen Blackpool:** A poor employee in Bounderby's factories. He was charged with the robbery of Bounderby's bank when he was away from Coketown though he was innocent.
- ✓ **Rachael :** She is an unmarried companion of Stephen Blackpool. She ceaselessly defended him when he was accused of the bank's robbery.
- ✓ **Mrs Sparsit:** She is a widow . She worked in Mr Boundeby's service. Her endless snooping and curiosity drove her to exclusion from her work.
- ✓ **James Harthouse :** a young handsome man who came to Coketown for political reasons .He fell in love with Louisa. He wanted to manipulate her.



## 7. Major Themes of the Novel:

*Hard Times* conveys a number of major themes that will be outlined in what follows :

- **The conflict between fact and fancy** : The conflict between fact and fancy in the novel is represented in children education. The opposition between both elements is clearly shown from the very outset of the story. Gradgrind's school (the school of facts) is the chosen setting for this conflict. The failure of adults in the novel is so clear and it resulted in the abuse of children's sense of fancy and imagination.
- **Industrialism**: It is a predominant theme in the novel. The setting of the novel(Coke town)is fundamentally a place of industry, pollution and dirtiness. Dickens portrays the industrial environment of the age and highlights the miserable living conditions of the lower masses. As such, he, in one way or another, condemns the multiple abuses of industry.
- **Utilitarianism** : the novel is also focused on the predominant philosophy of the Victorian age.It vividly introduces its readers to a society that is primarily concerned with and interested in the value of facts and materialism at the cost of the fanciful and affective sides of the human nature.
- **Fidelity** : This theme is mainly exemplified via the behavior of two characters ( Louisa and Sissy). Louisa did not want to violate her marital vows with James in spite of her apparent displeasure with her husband (Bounderby). On her side, Sissy was so devoted to Gradgrind's family members particularly to Louisa. Sissy's sense of fidelity is similarly shown to her father. Throughout the story, Sissy hopes to that he will make a comeback.
- **Escape** : the theme of escape also has its share in the novel. Stephen Blackpool runs away after the failure of his marriage as well as because of his conviction of committing robbery. Nonetheless, his escape was not that safe. Tom Gradgrind also escaped away after he robbed the bank and to hide his unpleasant and immoral deeds. Another instance of escape is expressed in the behavior of Louisa who strived to escape her father's utilitarian education.

## 8. Text Study:

### Task 1: Read the text below and then in a literary essay:

- ✓ Identify the passage
  - ✓ Identify the setting and describe it.
  - ✓ Identify characters
  - ✓ Extract the point of view
  - ✓ Extract the theme of the text
  - ✓ Extract two figures of speech and explain them.
  - ✓ Comment and language and style
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### From Book 1, Chapter 5: “The Keynote”

Coketown, to which Messrs. Bounderby and Gradgrind now walked, was a triumph of fact; it had no greater taint of fancy in it than Mrs. Gradgrind herself. Let us strike the key-note, Coketown, before pursuing our tune.

It was a town of red brick, or of brick that would have been red if the smoke and ashes had allowed it; but as matters stood, it was a town of unnatural red and black like the painted face of a savage. It was a town of machinery and tall chimneys, out of which interminable serpents of smoke trailed themselves for ever and ever, and never got uncoiled. It had a black canal in it, and a river that ran purple with ill-smelling dye, and vast piles of building full of windows where there was a rattling and a trembling all day long, and where the piston of the steam-engine worked monotonously up and down, like the head of an elephant in a state of melancholy madness. It contained several large streets all very like one another, and many small streets still more like one another, inhabited by people equally like one another, who all went in and out at the same hours, with the same sound upon the same pavements, to do the same work, and to whom every day was the same as yesterday and tomorrow, and every year the counterpart of the last and the next.

These attributes of Coketown were in the main inseparable from the work by which it was sustained; against them were to be set off comforts of life which found their way all over the world, and elegancies of life which made, we will not ask how much of the fine lady, who could scarcely bear to hear the place mentioned. The rest of its features were voluntary, and they were these. You saw nothing in Coketown but what was severely workful. If the members of a religious persuasion built a

chapel there — as the members of eighteen religious persuasions had done — they made it a pious warehouse of red brick, with sometimes (but this is only in highly ornamental examples) a bell in a birdcage on the top of it. The solitary exception was the New Church; a stuccoed edifice with a square steeple over the door, terminating in four short pinnacles like florid wooden legs. All the public inscriptions in the town were painted alike, in severe characters of black and white. The jail might have been the infirmary, the infirmary might have been the jail, the town-hall might have been either, or both, or anything else, for anything that appeared to the contrary in the graces of their construction. Fact, fact, fact, everywhere in the material aspect of the town; fact, fact, fact, everywhere in the immaterial. The M'Choakumchild school was all fact, and the school of design was all fact, and the relations between master and man were all fact, and everything was fact between the lying-in hospital and the cemetery, and what you couldn't state in figures, or show to be purchaseable in the cheapest market and saleable in the dearest, was not, and never should be, world without end, Amen.

A town so sacred to fact, and so triumphant in its assertion, of course got on well? Why no, not quite well. No? Dear me!

No. Coketown did not come out of its own furnaces, in all respects like gold that had stood the fire. First, the perplexing mystery of the place was, Who belonged to the eighteen denominations? Because, whoever did, the labouring people did not. It was very strange to walk through the streets on a Sunday morning, and note how few of them the barbarous jangling of bells that was driving the sick and nervous mad, called away from their own quarter, from their own close rooms, from the corners of their own streets, where they lounged listlessly, gazing at all the church and chapel going, as at a thing with which they had no manner of concern. Nor was it merely the stranger who noticed this, because there was a native organization in Coketown itself, whose members were to be heard of in the House of Commons every session, indignantly petitioning for acts of parliament that should make these people religious by main force. Then came the Teetotal Society, who complained that these same people would get drunk, and showed in tabular statements that they did get drunk, and proved at tea parties that no inducement, human or Divine (except a medal), would induce them to forego their custom of getting drunk. Then came the chemist and druggist, with other tabular statements, showing that when they didn't get drunk, they took opium. Then came the experienced chaplain of the jail, with more tabular statements, outdoing all the previous tabular statements, and showing that the same people would resort to low haunts, hidden from the public eye, where they heard low singing and saw low dancing, and mayhap joined in it; and where A. B., aged twenty-four next birthday, and committed for eighteen months' solitary, had himself said (not that he had ever shown himself particularly worthy of belief) his ruin began, as he was perfectly sure and confident

that otherwise he would have been a tip-top moral specimen. Then came Mr. Gradgrind and Mr. Bounderby, the two gentlemen at this present moment walking through Coketown, and both eminently practical, who could, on occasion, furnish more tabular statements derived from their own personal experience, and illustrated by cases they had known and seen, from which it clearly appeared — in short, it was the only clear thing in the case — that these same people were a bad lot altogether, gentlemen; that do what you would for them they were never thankful for it, gentlemen; that they were restless, gentlemen; that they never knew what they wanted; that they lived upon the best, and bought fresh butter; and insisted on Mocha coffee, and rejected all but prime parts of meat, and yet were eternally dissatisfied and unmanageable.

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**Task2:** Associate each of the following excerpts from Dickens’s *Hard Times* with the following stylistic features and then explain their effect on meaning.

*Humour, imagery, simile, repetition, detail on detail.*

“Now, what I want is, Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else. You can only form the minds of reasoning animals upon Facts: nothing else will ever be of any service to them. . . . . Stick to Facts, Sir!” (HT, P.1)

“THOMAS GRADGRIND, Sir. A man of realities. A man of facts and calculations. A man who proceeds upon the principle that two and two are four, and nothing over, and who is not to be talked into allowing for anything over. Thomas Gradgrind, Sir—peremptorily Thomas—Thomas Gradgrind.” (HT, P.2)

“Seen from a distance in such weather, Coketown lay shrouded in a haze of its own, which appeared impervious to the sun’s rays. You only knew the town was there, because you knew there could have been no such sulky blotch upon the prospect without a town. A blur of soot and smoke, now confusedly tending this way, now that way, now aspiring to the vault of Heaven, now murkily creeping along the earth, as the wind rose and fell, or changed its quarter: a dense formless jumble, with sheets of cross light in it, that showed nothing but masses of darkness:—Coke-town in the distance was suggestive of itself, though not a brick of it could be seen.”

(HT, P.98)

“He (Boulderby) had not much hair. One might have fancied he had talked it off; and that what was left, all standing up in disorder, was in that condition from being blown about by his windy boastfulness.”  
(HT,pp. 12-13)

“The emphasis was helped by the speaker’s square wall of a forehead, which had his eyebrows for its base, while his eyes found commodious cellarage in two dark caves, overshadowed by the wall. The emphasis was helped by the speaker’s mouth, which was wide, thin, and hard set.” (HT,p. 1)

...It was a town of unnatural red and black like the painted face of a savage” (HT,p. 19)

**PART TWO:**  
**AMERICAN LITERATURE**

# Unit One: Colonial Literature

## Objectives:

- \*Introducing American literature and its major phases.
- \*Highlighting the major themes of the colonial period with a reference to sample text.
- \* Displaying the Puritan tradition and its impact on the literature of this period.

## Lecture one: An Introduction to American Literature

### 1. Introduction:

American literature envelops the literary works that were written in the English language in the New World (America). Very similar to other literatures in other countries, American literature was a product of the history that America undertook. As commonly known, for a period of almost a century and a half, the country (America) was simply a group of colonies seeking independence from the British rule. And indeed, after a successful revolution, America finally became a nation with an official appellation "The United States of America".

The country witnessed a huge extension by the late nineteenth century to reach the Gulf of Mexico southward and the Pacific westward. Such an extension in size was accompanied by the achievement of power among other nations. The interrelation of American fortunes with competing countries entered the country in two world wars. In the meantime, with the advance of science, technology and industry, the life of Americans has drastically changed, including their ways of reasoning and feeling. All these factors that contributed to the rise and development of the country have been reflected in its literature.

The early American literature was neither American nor literature per se. It was not American in the sense that it was mainly the product of immigrants and settlers coming from England. It was not also literature in the fullest sense of the word because it was mainly a sort of an intersecting mixture of *travel accounts and religious writings*. The earliest colonial travel accounts are typically records of the dangers, sufferings and frustrations that encountered the new settlers.

American literature, therefore, started as a Colonial literature by writers who were mainly Englishmen and who sought to write as such and in favour of their motherland (England). Captain John Smith who was a soldier (a man of arm before being a man of art) is credited with starting American literature. His book *The General History of Virginia, New England and Summer Isles (1624)* was written with conformity with the tendency of explaining colonizing opportunities in America to the English people. This tendency is also depicted in other early works such as Daniel Denton's *Brief Description of New York (1670)* and Thomas Ashe's *Carolina (1682)*. Such books described America as a land of natural richness and economic promise.



## **2. Phases of American Literature:**

Below is a summary of the major phases/periods of American literature. The focus within the present course is mainly centered on three periods. These are: *The Colonial Period, The Revolutionary Period and the Romantic Period.*

### ➤ **The Colonial Period:**

American literature in its very beginning started as a sort of a travel literature. Such literature, by organizations and individuals, basically aimed at attracting people to America as a new land full of colonizing opportunities. On this basis, the colonial period of American literature is often said to begin with the writings about the first permanent English settlement in Jamestown, Virginia. Therefore, Writers such as Captain John Smith, John Hammond, William Bradford, William Byrd and Benjamin Franklin produced accounts of exploration and discovery.

Religion was also a major concern of the American colonial literature. The writings of this genre include sermons and spiritual biographies by John Cotton, John Winthrop, Cotton Mather, Jonathan Edward and John Woolman. It is worth mentioning that the proliferation of early American literature was significantly prompted by the immense immigration that took place in 1620 to Plymouth, Massachusetts. The waves of immigration to America were principally driven by religious persecution. This was the case of *The Puritans* who sought refuge to America.

Poetry also had its fair share during this period. Anne Bradstreet and Edward Taylor are the best representatives of this genre. Both of them produced personal and religious poetry. In short, the colonial period in American literature began from the time of the first permanent settlement at Jamestown (1607) and continued to the break of the American revolutionary war. As shown above, this early literature was centred on historical, religious and practical themes.

### ➤ **The Literature of Revolution:**

This period in American literature approximately stretched from 1765 to 1790. It witnessed the production of some of the greatest and influential documents in the American history, especially the Constitution of the United States that was drafted in 1787 and ratified in 1789. The best representatives of the revolutionary period are the great authors: Thomas Paine and

Thomas Jefferson. The former penned the famous revolutionary pamphlet *Common Sense*(1776) and the latter authored *The Declaration of Independence* (1776). Besides these two authors, it is worth mentioning other eminent writers such as Alexander Hamilton, James Madison and John Jay who jointly wrote *The Federalist Papers* between 1787-1788.

➤ **The Romantic Period:**

This period is also commonly referred as the Period of American Renaissance or else the period of Transcendentalism. It was a period of a truly American literature. The originality and excellence of the writings of this period are reflected in the authenticity of style, the chosen settings and the conveyed themes that were authentically American. Poets of this period, in particular, were to a larger extent independent of English precursors. The literature of this age was so influential that it contributed significantly to shaping ideas and ideals of many subsequent American authors. The most famous authors of the Romantic period include the following: Washington Irving, James Fennimore Cooper, Edgar Allan Poe, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Herman Melville, Nathaniel Hawthorne Walt Whitman and Emily Dickenson.

➤ **Period of Realism and Naturalism:**

The Realistic approach in American literature began after the Civil War and continued until the beginning of the twentieth century. The literature of Realism sought to produce a real-life picture of society. It was in fact a reaction to the Romantic approach that was centred on imagination and subjectivity. Therefore, while the Romantics were more concerned with the ideal, the realists writers focused on truth and accuracy in their depiction of ordinary life. In so doing, the realist writers did not select facts in accordance with preconceived ideals, they rather set down observations impartially and objectively. Mark Twain, Henry James and Kate Chopin are famous figures of Realism in American Literature. Naturalism claims to provide an even more accurate portrayal of life than Realism. In conformity with a post-Darwinian logic, naturalist authors claimed that their characters are merely higher-order animals whose behaviors are mainly the product of heredity and environment. Naturalists hold the belief that unpleasant experiences tend to reduce people to humiliating and degrading circumstances for the sake of survival. They also suggested that life on lowest levels is a trap; it is tough and very complicated. In presenting subjects with extreme

objectivity, naturalist writings are said to be frank, tragic and crude. Famous American naturalists include: Jack London, Stephen Crane, and Theodore Dreiser.

➤ **The Modernist Period: (1910-1945)**

Very similar to the British literature, American literature witnessed Modernism as a literary and artistic trend that was characterized by experiment and sophistication in terms of subject matter, style and form. Modernism in the United States began in the turn of the twentieth century; a century that Americans entered it optimistically as a strong and wealthy nation. But it soon turned to be an age of crisis characterized by the break of two World Wars besides a severe economic depression. These events marked a new phase in the history of American Literature known as the Modernist era. It was an era within which American writers sought to express modern life in their literary productions. The Modernist era witnessed the break with traditional styles of poetry and instead it encouraged an increased experimentation and sophistication in other genres of writing leading to gain an American international acclaim. Because of the cultural proliferation of this age (Harlem Renaissance & the Jazz Age), American modernist writers produced divergent types of writings, but they shared a common objective, that is, the capturing of the essence of modern life and its impact on the lives of American people. This is the reason why most of their writings reflected an extent of pessimism and confusion particularly during the time of the two wars and the Great Depression. Famous writers of this era include: Robert Frost, William Carlos Williams, e.e. Cummings, Edith Wharton, Sinclair Lewis, T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway and William Faulkner.

➤ **The Contemporary Period (1945- to present):**

The end of the Second World War marked the beginning of the contemporary era of American literature. The early period following the War witnessed the rise of eminent writers in different genres. Such writers include: John Updike, Sylvia Plath, Ralph Ellison, Alice Walker, Maya, Angelou and Toni Morrison. The 1950s was also a period of flourishing literature whose essence was against traditionalism and whose leaders include talented writers that were referred to as “Beat Writers” including: Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg. The anti-traditional literary movement continued with more intensity during the 1960s and

the 1970s under the label of “Counter -culture writing”. More recently, the American literary scene has been endowed with experimented writers in the different genres, such as Amy Tan, Anne Rice and John Grishman.

(Adapted from Grellet, 2000)

## **Lecture two: Captain John Smith's *The General History of Virginia (1624)***

### **1. Introduction:**

The first permanent English colonial camp in America was based in Jamestown, Virginia in 1607. The reasons for the first waves of immigration to America varied, yet the “Virginia Company” which was responsible for sponsoring settlement aspired for achieving greater financial profit. This intention and hope reflected the will of the British Crown at large to gain empire, power and profit. Therefore, the major motivating reason for the settlement of Virginia was to make money. It is true that the American wilderness did not afford a hearty welcome to the settlers; yet it offered them a wealth of natural resources. As stated earlier, the beginnings of American literature are to be sought in those books that were mainly written by the first explorers and adventurers whose purpose was to send informative accounts on the new land (America). Such accounts were basically records describing the new found territories and recounting the perils and frustrations that stood against the courage of the first settlers. One of the early figures who took the task of writing colonial records was Captain John Smith.

### **2. About Captain John Smith:**

John Smith was born in 1580 in Willoughby, Lincolnshire, England. He was a soldier, a sailor, an adventurer and an explorer. After the death of his father, who was a farmer, Smith joined at an early age the Austrian forces fighting the Turks. When the Christian armies were defeated in Transylvania, Smith was taken as a prisoner; he was sold for a slave in the Middle East, but he was able to escape and make his return to England in 1605. He proved to be among the most experienced English soldiers of his time. The life of pillage disgusted him and, as a result, he turned to colonization. He was among the pioneering sailors -with the colonists- to Virginia in 1607. Smith recorded his captivity by the allies of the great Indian Chief –Powhatan- in 1608 as well as the saving of his life by Pocahontas, the Chief's daughter. Thanks to his outstanding courage and his distinguished managerial skills, he was elected President of the council in Virginia. For a period of

more than ten years, Smith kept coming to America for expeditionary and exploring journeys that stretched from Virginia to New England. In 1608 he published *A True Relation of such Occurrences and Accidents in North America*. This book is the first published report of the English settlements in North America. Other famous publications by Smith include: *A Description of New England (1616)*, *The General History of Virginia, New England and Summer Isles (1624)*, *The True Travels (1630)* and *Advertisements for the Inexperienced Planters (1631)*. Captain John Smith spent the last years of his life in England, and died in London in 1632.

**3. Text Study:** Read the excerpt below and then write a literary essay:

\*Identify the passage

\*Identify and describe the major character(s).

\*Identify the point of view.

\*extract the theme.

\*Pick out from the text a figure of speech and explain it.

\*Comment on language and style.

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Being thus left to our fortunes, it \*fortuned that within ten days, scarce ten amongst us could either go or well stand, such extreme weakness and sickness oppressed us. And thereat none need marvel if they consider the cause and reason, which was this: While the ships stayed, our allowance was somewhat bettered by a daily proportion of biscuit which the sailors would pilfer to sell, give, or exchange with us for money, sassafras, or furs. But when they departed, there remained neither tavern, beer house, nor place of relief but the common kettle. Had we been as free from all sins as gluttony and drunkenness we might have been canonized for saints, but our\* President would never have been admitted for engrossing to his private, oatmeal, \*sack, oil, \*aqua vitae, beef, eggs, or what not but the kettle; that indeed he allowed equally to be distributed, and that was half a pint of wheat and as much barley boiled with water for a man a day, and this, having fried some twenty-six weeks in the ship's hold, contained as many worms as grains so that we might truly call it rather so much bran than corn; our drink was water, our lodgings castles in the air. With this lodging and diet, our extreme toil in bearing and planting palisades so strained and bruised us and our continual labor in the extremity of the heat had so weakened us, as were cause sufficient to have made us as miserable in our native country or any other place in the world. From May to September, those that escaped lived upon sturgeon and sea crabs. Fifty in this time we buried; the rest seeing the President's projects to escape these miseries in our \*pinnacle by flight (who all this time had neither felt want nor sickness) so moved our dead

spirits as we deposed him and established Ratcliffe in his place . . . But now was all our provision spent, the sturgeon gone, all helps abandoned, each hour expecting the fury of the savages; when God, the patron of all good endeavors, in that desperate extremity so changed the hearts of the savages that they brought such plenty of their fruits and provision as no man wanted. And now where some affirmed it was ill done of the Council to send forth men so badly provided this incontradictable reason will show them plainly they are too ill advised to nourish such ill conceits: First, the fault of our going was our own; what could be thought fitting or necessary we had, but what we should find, or want, or where we should be, we were all ignorant and supposing to make our passage in two months, with victual to live and the advantage of the spring to work; we were at sea five months where we both spent our victual and lost the opportunity of the time and season to plant, by the unskillful presumption of our ignorant transporters that understood not at all what they undertook. Such actions have ever since the world's beginning been subject to such accidents, and everything of worth is found full of difficulties, but nothing so difficult as to establish a commonwealth so far remote from men and means and ----- where men's minds are so untoward<sup>11</sup> as neither do well themselves nor suffer others. But to proceed. The new President and Martin, being little beloved, of weak judgment in dangers, and less industry in peace, committed the managing of all things abroad to Captain Smith, who, by his own example, good words, and fair promises, set some to mow, others to bind thatch, some to build houses, others to thatch them, himself always bearing the greatest task for his own share, so that in short time he provided most of them lodgings, neglecting any for himself. . . .

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\*fortuned: occurred

\* President Wingfield, the leader of the colony.

\* sack: a sort of wine.

\* aqua vitae :brandy.

\*pinnacle : small ship.

## Lecture three: Puritan Literature

### 1. Introduction:

The English immigrants who settled on the northern sea coast of America- New England- essentially came for the sake of practicing their religion freely. In general terms, they were either Englishmen who aimed to reform the Church of England or people who desired to have an entirely new church for their own. These two categories combined, especially in what became “Massachusetts”, came to be known as “Puritans”. They were called so because they wished to purify further the Church of England. The Puritans were greatly influenced by the teachings of the Swiss reformer John Calvin (1509-1564) who was an outstanding figure in the second generation of the Protestant Reformation. On the basis of Calvinism, the Puritans tended to emphasize the belief that human beings were basically evil and could do nothing about it, and that many of them would surely be condemned to hell. Over the years, the Puritans in America were able to build a way of life that corresponded to their somber religion; a religion that valued hard work, thrift and piety.

### 2. Puritans and Pilgrims:

Puritans in general emigrated for religious rather than national or economic reasons. The first Puritans who arrived in Massachusetts founded Plymouth Plantation in 1620. Under the command of William Bradford, they initiated a settlement that was devoted to religious life. They thought of themselves as **Pilgrims**. They were Dissenters, **Separatists** whose beliefs were persecuted by the Church of England. They held the belief that the reforms of the Anglican Church did little to purify the Christian faith despite the divorce with the Catholic Church in 1535. This is the reason why they refused to conform to its rules and practices. They first moved to Netherlands in 1608, they stayed there for almost twelve years, and because of the hard life they endured and the corrupt milieu that was against their religious righteousness, they sought another better and easier place for living. They ultimately chartered the Mayflower and sailed for America.

Pilgrims and Puritans held similar beliefs, such as the doctrine of “election”, that God had predestined before birth those who would be saved and damned. Yet, despite the fact that the Puritans were strictly exclusive during their early colonial life, imposing public accounts of



conversion prior to admitting people to their church and communion, their faith accentuated delighted joy and zeal rather than bleak subsistence. Both of them were non-conformist religious groups that refused to accept an authority that goes beyond that of the revealed word. Yet, the most obvious differences between the Puritans and the Pilgrims lie in the fact that the Puritans were Congregationalists; they did not hold the intention of breaking completely with the Anglican Church. They were also wealthier and better educated in comparison with Pilgrims.

## **2. Religious Doctrine of Puritans and Pilgrims:**

The religious doctrine of the puritans and the pilgrims was basically founded on the following principles:

- Original sin: the fact that human beings are inherently evil. Because of the original sin, all men are depraved and they cannot do anything to save themselves.
- Elect: Very few are saved and will go to heaven.
- Predestination: An unfolding of God's will. Everything in this world is predestined by God. Therefore, God knows those elected and those who will be damned.
- Divine providence: God intervenes in daily life.
- Theocracy: the bible is the supreme authority on Earth.
- Morality and self-discipline: Puritans were righteous, severe, diligent and strict.

(Adapted from Grellet, 2002)

## **3. Impact of Puritanism on Early American Literature:**

The puritan values dominated much of the earliest American writings, including the sermons, books and letters of noted Puritan Clergymen, such as William Bradford (1590-1657), John Cotton (1585-1652), Cotton Mather (1663-1723) and John Winthrop (1588-1649). The Puritans distanced themselves from arts; they were much closer to what is social and religious. They admired the useful, the practical and the didactic. This tendency drove them to the conviction that the purpose of literature is to promote religious values and most importantly to defend the Puritan cause which they considered as being a sacred one.

John Cotton was a dominant Puritan theologian who emigrated to New England in 1633. He was a closer friend to John Winthrop who later became the chief leader of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Cotton wrote the early position papers in which he defined the New England Puritanism. Such papers include: *The keys of the Kingdom of Heaven* (1644), *The Way of the*

*Churches of Christ in New England (1645)* and *The Way of the Congregational Churches Cleared(1645)*. Cotton is also famous for his book *Spiritual Milk for Boston Babes (1646)*, a book that many critics consider as the first American children's book.

Cotton Mather wrote increasingly impressive religious works that truly reflected the Puritan norm and ideal of hard work. He was well equipped for authorship by deep learning. He published his famous book *The Wonders of the Invisible World (1693)* in which he defended his role in witch-hunt in Salem, Massachusetts. He argued that witchcraft is an evil magical power that must be fought. He considered that witches were tools of the devil in Satan's battle, and therefore, their prosecution was a way to protect God's blessings for the Puritan colony. John Winthrop's *Modell of Christian Charity (1630)* is full of hopeful wishes and promises that America will be "a beacon up on a hill" for other nations. Throughout the book, Winthrop claimed that the Puritans of New England would serve and exemplary model for other settled colonists and for other Puritans as well (Leo Lemay, 1988).

The last half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century witnessed the colonization of the Atlantic coast largely by the British. Among the colonists, there were some poets and essayists, but no novelists. The absence of novelists is quite understandable owing to the fact that the novel itself had not been fully developed in England. The second reason is that fiction was not favored and recommended by the Puritans who considered it as a lie, that is, something that is not true.

Biographies, autobiographies and diaries flourished among Puritans. They were primarily written for the sake of serving morality, perseverance and piety. The works of Samuel Seawals (1652-1730), Thomas Shepard (1605-1649) and William Byrd (1674-1744) reflected the significance of self-questioning, meditation and confession.

The poets who appeared in the seventeenth century, all too often, imitated the European shape and style of poetry in a different setting (America) and different circumstances. Of these poets are: Anne Bradstreet (1613-1672), Phillis Weathly (1753-1784), Michael Wigglesworth (1631- 1705) and Edward Taylor (1642-1729).Anne Bradstreet's early poetry- for instance her *The Tenth Muse (1650)*- depicts her fascination with Edward Spenser and Philip Sidney in expressing morality and submission to God's will. Her distinguished ability to portray the colonial experience through poetry promoted her to be among America's most notable early writers. The wilderness of the environment and the hardships she went through after coming to America is well expressed in her poem *Verses on the Burning of our House*

(1666). Yet, her later poetry was more personal, lyrical and moving meditations on issues tackled from a religious stance. This is clearly shown in her poem *To My Dear and Loving Husband* (1678).

## **Lecture four: William Bradford's *Of Plymouth Plantation***

### **1. William Bradford (1590-1657) : A Short Biography**

William Bradford was born in 1590 in Yorkshire, England. He became seriously interested in and strongly dedicated to the bible at an early age. In 1606, he joined the Congregational Church. Three years later he migrated with a group of non-Conformists to Amsterdam, then to Leyden, seeking religious freedom. In 1620 he sailed to New England on "The Mayflower". Aboard ship, he participated in framing "The Mayflower Compact", a civil contract that served the cornerstone of the Plymouth government. His wife died shortly after arriving, probably she committed suicide. Bradford became the leader of the Plymouth Colony and remained in this position until his death in 1657. His bravery, wisdom and piety served as an example to all men. He significantly contributed to the political stability of the colony. His famous book *Of Plymouth Plantation (1630)* is mainly about the motives that urged the Separatists to leave Netherlands and settle in New England besides their journey and suffering in Massachusetts. It provides a detailed description of the sea voyage and the multiple hardships and calamities that faced the settlers. In addition to this book, Bradford authored some poems and dialogues that depicted the Puritanical virtues and sacrifices of the pioneering founders of Plymouth Plantation. He was also a collaborating writer with Edward Winslow in the *Mourt's Relation* Journal.

### **2. *Of Plymouth Plantation(1630): An overview***

Bradford's book *Of Plymouth Plantation (1630)* remains a monumental achievement in early colonial literature. At the very onset of the book, Bradford claims that his writing will be basically based on a Puritan tradition that is based on plain and direct style with regard the truth of things. This is meant to be an assurance of a tone of humbleness in depicting concrete images and facts. Yet, the book is not merely a plain and factual series of events in the colony, it is rather an endeavour to decipher and uncover the meaning and implications of those events.

His account of the arrival of the Pilgrims fathers to America, for instance, is notable for the emphasis he lays on the perils and threats of the "wilderness" of the land and the significance of the grace of God on them to survive. Bradford portrays the survival of the Puritans during

and after their long journey to America as part of a divine plan sustained by God. America according to him was not originally a blessed garden, but the civilizing mission assigned to Bradford himself and his companions was precisely undergone to make it one thanks to God's infinite power and mercy.

3. **Text Study:** Read the passage from William Bradford's *Of Plymouth Plantation* and then discuss the questions below:

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*On their Safe Arrival at Cap Cod*

Being thus arrived in a good harbor and brought safe to land, they fell upon their knees and blessed the God of heaven, who had brought them over the vast and furious ocean, and delivered them from all the perils and miseries thereof, again to set their feet on the firm and stable earth, their proper element. And no marvel if they were thus joyful, seeing wise Seneca was so affected with sailing a few miles on the coast of his own Italy; as he affirmed, that he had rather remain twenty years on his way by land, then pass by sea to any place in a short time; so tedious and dreadful was the same unto him.

But hear I cannot but stay and make a pause, and stand half amazed at this poor peoples present condition; and so I think will the reader too, when he well considers the same. Being thus passed the vast ocean, and a sea of troubles before in their preparation (as may be remembered by that which went before), they had now no friends to welcome them, nor inns to entertain or refresh their weather-beaten bodies, no houses or much less towns to repair to, to seek for succor. It is recorded in scripture as a mercy to the apostle and his shipwrecked company, that the barbarians shewed them no small kindness in refreshing them, but these savage barbarians, when they met with them (as after will appear) were readier to fill their sides full of arrows then otherwise. And for the season it was winter, and they that know the winters of that country know them to be sharp and violent, and subject to cruel and fierce storms, dangerous to travel to known places, much more to search an unknown coast. Besides, what could they see but a hideous and desolate wilderness, full of wild beasts and wild men? and what multitudes there might be of them they knew not. Neither could they, as it were, go up to the top of Pisgah, to view from this wilderness a more goodly country to feed their hopes; for which way soever they turned their eyes (save upward to the heavens) they could have little solace or content in respect of any outward objects. For summer being done, all things stand upon them with a weather-beaten face; and the whole country, full of woods and thickets, represented a wild and savage hue. If they looked behind them, there was the mighty ocean which they had passed, and was now as a main bar and gulf to separate them from all the civil parts of the world. If it be said they had a ship to succor them, it is true; but what heard they daily from the master and company? but that with speed they should look out a place with their scallop, where they would be at some near distance; for the season was such as he would not stir from thence till a safe harbor was discovered by them where they would be, and he might go without danger; and that victuals consumed apace, but he

must and would keep sufficient for themselves and their return. Yea, it was muttered by some, that if they got not a place in time, they would turn them and their goods ashore and leave them. Let it also be considered what weak hopes of supply and succor they left behind them, that might bear up their minds in this sad condition and trials they were under; and they could not but be very small. It is true, indeed, the affections and love of their brethren at Leyden was cordial and entire towards them, but they had little power to help them, or themselves; and how the case stood between them and the merchants at their coming away, hath already been declared. What could now sustain them but the spirit of God and his grace? May not and ought not the children of these fathers rightly say: Our fathers were Englishmen which came over this great [ocean, and were ready to perish in this wilderness; but they cried unto the Lord, and he heard their voice, and looked on their adversity, etc. Let them therefore praise the Lord, because he is good, and his mercies endure forever. Yea, let them which have been redeemed of the Lord, shew how he hath delivered them from the hand of the oppressor. When they wandered in the desert wilderness out of the way, and found no city to dwell in, both hungry, and thirsty, their soul was overwhelmed in them. Let them confess before the Lord his loving kindness, and his wonderful works before the sons of men.

( From Chapter 9)

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### **Questions**

- How does the text portray the arrival of Pilgrims to Cap Cod?
- What feelings did the pilgrims have after their arrival?
- What is the predominant point of view in the passage? What implication does its use carry?
- What is the theme of the text?
- Pick out from the text two figures of speech and explain them in your own words.
- Comment on language and style.

## ***Unit Two: Literature of Reason and Revolution***

### **Objectives:**

- \*Introducing the age of Reason (Enlightenment) and its impact on America.*
- \* Displaying the major themes of the literature of this age with a reference to a sample text.*

## ***Lecture one: The Enlightenment and its impact on America***

### ***1. Introduction:***

The age of the Enlightenment was par excellence a time of rationality, reason and order. It witnessed a gradual decline of the preceding Calvinist beliefs. Most of the architects of the new republic were deists who held the belief that God was good and could be found in the contemplation of the natural universe. What seemed to matter much was the orientation towards toleration, harmony and conformity to the laws of nature.

The previous seventeenth century's harsh doctrine of predestination and the conception of wrathful God punishing sinners in hell were giving way to distrust of superstition and an optimistic belief that man was good and capable of infinite improvement. The age of reason was rather a time when people believed in science and inquiry; a time when men's ideals were becoming more and more social. What seriously mattered were reason, sympathy, ethics, and how certain forms of government could help in serving men. These principles and ideals of the Enlightenment were embodied in the writings of the famous figures of the time, such as Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* (1776) and *The American Crisis* (1776-1783), Thomas Jefferson's *Declaration of Independence* (1776), and Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography* (1784).

### **2. The Impact of the Enlightenment on America:**

The Enlightenment remarkably shifted allegiances away from absolute religious and political authority to skeptical and optimistic attitudes towards faith, human nature, and politics. In the American context, the impact of the age of reason has been reflected in a new tendency of thought held by thinkers and philosophers such as Thomas Paine, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, James Madison and Thomas Jefferson. These thinkers embraced and adopted revolutionary ideas with regard to scientific rationality, experimental political organization and religious tolerance. Such ideas had a significant impact on the evolution of a new nation. They supported the following orientations:



- **Deism:** the claim that the existence of God is revealed on reason and the observation of the natural world instead of basing it on revealed religion and miracles.
- **Liberalism:** It stems from the belief that people are born with some god-given rights that ought to be respected. These natural rights that include the right to property, liberty and happiness must not be infringed or violated by the authority of government. The advocacy of the indisputable respect of these natural rights was inspired from the ideas of the eminent philosopher John Locke. Americans inculcated these rights in their official political documents, namely the Declaration of independence and the Bill of Rights.
- **Republicanism:** The impact of the enlightenment on America resulted in the support of ideas that a nation ought to be governed as a republic. This system of governance as commonly known implies that the Head of the State is elected by the people. This in turn goes in a complete opposition within a *Monarchy* wherein governance is based on a hereditary blood line. The American colonists came up with the conclusion that the tyrannical British rule was inimical to republican values. This conviction exhorted them to recourse to rebellious acts. They first formed militias and eventually a Continental Army that was commanded by George Washington.
- **Religious tolerance:** The principles and ideas of the age of reason supported a religious approach based on tolerating difference and otherness. The writings of John Locke in this regard acknowledged the value of a tolerant approach to faith. In his famous work *A Letter Concerning Toleration (1689)*, Locke responded to the issue of religion and government when the fear from the potential dominance of Catholicism over Britain increased by suggesting religious toleration as the solution.
- **Scientific advancement:** It goes without saying that the philosophy of the Enlightenment was basically centered on the support of scientific advancement. The age of reason was par excellence an age of scientific progress and discovery. Being no exception to this trend, Americans founded *The American Philosophical Society* in 1743 and was headed by Benjamin Franklin.

The ideas above reached America at a time when a The Glorious Revolution (1688-89) was taking place in Britain , and which resulted in the disposal of King James II from the throne

owing to the impact of the writings of John Locke, particularly his *famous Treatise of Civil Government (1690)* Which advocated a theory of government that is not based on divine but rather on contract and strengthened the unquestionable respect of people's endowed rights to life, liberty, property as well as the right to rebel when the government violates these rights.

When George III came to throne, he started an unprecedented imposition of taxes on the American colonies. (Sugar Act,1764 Molasses Act 1764, The Stamp Act 1765, The Townshend Act 1767...etc).In response to such acts, a rebellious slogan grew among them. This slogan was "No Taxation without Representation".

This was followed by the Boston Tea Party (1773) that marked a new era in the relationship between Britain and the American colonies. Within these circumstances Thomas Paine published his famous pamphlet "*Common Sense*" (1776) attacking the ideas of hereditary monarchy and stimulating the American colonies to take up arms for independence.

## Lecture two: Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* (1776)

### 1. About Thomas Paine:

Thomas Paine was born in Norfolk, England in 1737. During his early life, he dreamed of a naval career, but his father was against the idea. Paine became an excise officer on the Sussex Coast in 1768. He had been forced to bankruptcy after writing his first pamphlet *The Case of the Excise Officer* (1772) in which he appealed to Parliament for the improvement of wages for his fellow excise officers. He was invited by Benjamin Franklin to come to America. When he settled in Philadelphia, he immediately started working journalism and became an editor of the Philadelphia Magazine. Paine brought the spirit of British radicalism with him to America. The situation he found in America urged him to write extensively about slavery and women's issues.

In January, 1776, he published his most famous pamphlet *Common Sense* which was widely circulated throughout colonies; thousands of copies were sold in few months. This pamphlet became the pivotal literary document in the Revolutionary movement. It strongly argued for the establishment of a representational government instead of a monarchy or other forms of rule based on aristocracy and heredity. When the Revolutionary War broke out, Paine enlisted in the army under the command of George Washington. Being closer to the fighting troops, he portrayed the terrible conditions they endured in the winter of 1776, and this prompted him to write a series of inspirational pamphlets entitled *The American Crisis*. Later, Paine served for two years as the secretary of the Congressional Committee for Foreign Affairs and in late 1779 he became the clerk for the Pennsylvania Assembly. Paine didn't make much money from his government service his popular pamphlets.

Back to Europe after the Revolution, he eventually published his book *Rights of Man* (1791-1792) in support of the French revolution and against the writings of Irish political thinker Edmund Burke. His liberal political views had him imprisoned. After his release, he wrote his last outstanding essay titled "*The Age of Reason*" which he published in three volumes (1794-1795-1802). It was basically a controversial critique and a harsh assault of institutionalized religion and Christian theology. Paine held the conviction that George Washington conspired with the French politician M. Robespierre to have him jailed, and as a response to this, Paine published his "*Letter to George Washington*" (1796) in which he accused him of

corruption and fraud both during the war and as president. The letter immensely reduced Paine's popularity among American people to the extent that the Federalists in the country accused Paine of Treason, claiming that Paine was an instrumental tool in the hand of the French Revolutionists to overthrow the New American Government. As a result, Paine became more and more despised.

He died in 1809 in New York and was buried on his own property in New Rochelle with very few people attending his funeral. His remains are said to be stolen and taken to England by the radical newspaperman William Cobbet in 1819 for the sake of giving him a worthy burial. Paine's bones were later discovered in Liverpool.

## **2. About *Common Sense* (1776):**

It was basically a call for American colonies to take up Arms against the British. Paine listed some reasons upon which he made his claim for rebellion as a response to the tyranny of the British Monarch. He tackled the issue of taxation without representation and raised the idea that America should be governed by a continental government. Stated differently, America as a continent should not continue to be ruled by a distant country (England) across the Atlantic. Paine harshly attacked the British Monarchy by exposing the flaws of this form of government and the injustice that grew out of it. According to him, this was a crime at a time when no freedom of press was allowed. Paine's essay saved and protected the revolution before it started. He called for assisting Massachusetts which was the only colony in rebellion. The major idea of Paine's essay is that it was illogical to accept the fact that England as a country rules over a whole continent (America). His essay reflected a revolutionary stance and strived to convince the American colonists that it was high time they revolted and made an end to the British tyrannical rule.

## **3. Text study: *Read the text and then answer the question bellow in an essay.***

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From chapter 4: *Of the present ABILITY OF AMERICA, with some miscellaneous REFLECTIONS.*

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I have never met with a man, either in England or America, who hath not confessed his opinion that a separation between the countries would take place one time or other; and there is no instance in which we have shown less judgment than in endeavoring to describe what we call the ripeness or fitness of the Continent for independence. As all men allow the measure and vary only in their opinion of the time, let us, in order to remove mistakes, take a general survey of things, and endeavor if possible to find out the very time. But we need not go far, the inquiry

ceases at once, for the time hath found us. The general concurrence, the glorious union of all things, proves the fact.

It is not in numbers but in unity that our great strength lies, yet our present numbers are sufficient to repel the force of all the world. The Continent hath at this time the largest body of armed and disciplined men of any power under Heaven, and is just arrived at that pitch of strength in which no single colony is able to support itself, and the whole, when united, can accomplish the matter, and either more or less than this might be fatal in its effects. Our land force is already sufficient, and as to naval affairs, we cannot be insensible that Britain would never suffer [permit] an American man of war [warship] to be built while the continent remained in her hands. Wherefore, we should be no forwarder a hundred years hence in that branch than we are now; but the truth is, we should be less so, because the timber of the country is every day diminishing, and that which will remain at last will be far off and difficult to procure.

Were the continent crowded with inhabitants, her sufferings under the present circumstances would be intolerable. The more seaport towns we had, the more should we have both to defend and to lose. Our present numbers are so happily proportioned to our wants that no man need be idle. The diminution [decrease] of trade affords an army, and the necessities of an army create a new trade.

Debts we have none, and whatever we may contract on this account will serve as a glorious memento of our virtue. Can we but leave posterity with a settled form of government, an independent constitution of its own, the purchase at any price will be cheap. But to expend millions for the sake of getting a few vile acts repealed, and routing the present ministry only, is unworthy the charge, and is using posterity with the utmost cruelty, because it is leaving them the great work to do and a debt upon their backs from which they derive no advantage. Such a thought is unworthy a man of honor, and is the true characteristic of a narrow heart and a piddling politician.

The debt we may contract doth not deserve our regard if the work be but accomplished. No nation ought to be without a debt. A national debt is a national bond; and when it bears no interest, is in no case a grievance. Britain is oppressed with a debt of upwards of one hundred and forty millions [pounds] sterling, for which she pays upwards of four millions interest. And as a compensation for her debt, she has a large navy. America is without a debt, and without a navy; yet for the twentieth part of the English national debt, could have a navy as large again. The navy of England is not worth at this time more than three millions and a half sterling.

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### ***Questions:***

- \*Identify the passage and its genre.
- \* Spot the main ideas in the text.
- \* Identify the point of view.
- \*What is the predominant tone in the text?
- \*Does the text make use of literary devices? If yes, illustrate.If no, justify.

## Lecture Three : From Paine's *The Crisis*

### 1. Introduction:

The Crisis or else the American Crisis is a pamphlet that was published by Thomas Paine from 1776 to 1783. This was during the time of the American Revolution. The American Crisis fundamentally sought to recharge the revolutionary attitudes towards the British rule. Similar to many other politicians and philosophers of the period, Thomas Paine was quite convinced that the colonists would not support the revolutionary cause if they are not exposed to proper and persuading reasons to undergo opposition to the British Monarchy. The pamphlet as a whole was written in common language that targeted the average men. It eloquently reflects the liberal philosophy of its author who equally made reference to religion by asserting the fact that the war against the British would be supported by God. Paine's words were so influential that they boosted the morale of the colonists and appealed to the British people's consideration of the war as well.

2. **Text Study:** The passage below is extracted from Paine's pamphlet "*The Crisis*" N°1, read it and then answer the questions that follow.

These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of his country; but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly: it is dearness only that gives everything its value. Heaven knows how to put a proper price upon its goods; and it would be strange indeed if so celestial an article as freedom should not be highly rated. Britain, with an army to enforce her tyranny, has declared that she has a right (not only to tax) but "to bind us in all cases whatsoever"; and if being bound in that manner is not slavery, then is there not such a thing as slavery upon earth. Even the expression is impious; for so unlimited a power can belong only to God.

Whether the independence of the continent was declared too soon, or delayed too long, I will not now enter into as an argument; my own simple opinion is, that had it been eight months earlier it would have been much better. We did not make a proper use of last winter; neither could we, while we were in a dependent state. However, the fault, if it were one, was all our own; we have none to blame but ourselves. But no great deal is lost yet. All that Howe has been doing for this month past is rather a ravage than a conquest, which the spirit of the Jerseys a year ago would have quickly repulsed, and which time and a little resolution will soon recover. I have as little superstition in me as any man living; but my secret opinion has ever been, and still is, that God Almighty will not give up a people to military destruction, or leave them unsupportedly to perish, who have so earnestly and so repeatedly sought to avoid the calamities of war, by every decent method which wisdom could invent. Neither have I so much of the infidel in me as to suppose that He has relinquished the government of the world, and given us up to the care of devils; and as I do not, I cannot see on what grounds the king of Britain can look up to heaven for help against us: a common murderer, a highwayman, or a housebreaker, has as good a pretense as he.

It is surprising to see how rapidly a panic will sometimes run through a country. All nations and ages have been subject to them: Britain has trembled like an ague at the report of a French fleet of flat-bottomed boats; and in the fourteenth century the whole English army, after ravaging the kingdom of France, was driven back like men petrified with fear; and this brave exploit was performed by a few

broken forces collected and headed by a woman, Joan of Arc. Would that heaven might inspire some Jersey maid to spirit

up her countrymen, and save her fair fellow sufferers from ravage and ravishment! Yet panics, in some cases, have their uses; they produce as much good as hurt. Their duration is always short; the mind soon grows through them, and acquires a firmer habit than before. But their peculiar advantage is, that they are the touchstones of sincerity and hypocrisy, and bring things and men to light, which might otherwise have lain forever undiscovered. In fact, they have the same effect on secret traitors which an imaginary apparition would have upon a private murderer. They sift out the hidden thoughts of man, and hold them up in public to the world. Many a disguised tory has lately shown his head, which shall penitentially solemnize with curses the day on which Howe arrived upon the Delaware.

...Quitting this class of men, I turn with the warm ardor of a friend to those who have nobly stood, and are yet determined to stand the matter out: I call not upon a few, but upon all: not on *this* State or *that* State, but on *every* State: up and help us; lay your shoulders to the wheel; better have too much force than too little, when so great an object is at stake. Let it be told to the future world that in the depth of winter, when nothing but hope and virtue could survive, that the city and the country, alarmed at one common danger, came forth to meet and to repulse it. Say not that thousands are gone—turn out your tens of thousands; throw not the burden of the day upon Providence, but “*show your faith by your works,*” that God may bless you. It matters not where you live, or what rank of life you hold, the evil or the blessing will reach you all. The far and the near, the home counties and the back, the rich and poor, will suffer or rejoice alike. The heart that feels not now is dead; the blood of his children will curse his cowardice who shrinks back at a time when a little might have saved the whole, and made *them* happy. I love the man that can smile in trouble, that can gather strength from distress and grow brave by reflection. It is the business of little minds to shrink; but he whose heart is firm, and whose conscience approves his conduct, will pursue his principles unto death. My own line of reasoning is to myself as straight and clear as a ray of light. Not all the treasures of the world, so far as I believe, could have induced me to support an offensive war, for I think it murder; but if a thief breaks into my house, burns and destroys my property, and kills or threatens to kill me or those that are in it, and to “*bind me in all cases whatsoever*” to his absolute will, am I to suffer it? What signifies it to me, whether he who does it is a king or a common man; my countryman or not my countryman; whether it be done by an individual villain, or an army of them? If we reason to the root of things we shall find no difference; neither can any just cause be assigned why we should punish in the one case and pardon in the other..

## Questions

1. Which category of Americans does Thomas Paine praise in his essay and which category does he criticize?
2. To whom does Thomas Paine compare the English King? What attitude does he appeal to through this comparison?
3. Thomas Paine claims that this is not an “offensive” war. Why does he feel so?
4. How does Thomas Paine use religion as part of his argumentative essay? To what extent is this approach effective in persuading his audience?
5. Highlight in the essay the Enlightenment idea that the government ought to function by the consent of the people.
6. Thomas Paine urges and exhorts his fellow people to defend themselves against the tyranny of the British rule. What qualities does he insist on? How might these qualities contribute to the building of a new nation?
7. Summarise the passage above in your own words.

## **Unit Three : Romanticism and Transcendentalism**

### **Objectives:**

- \*Surveying the social and the literary backgrounds that characterized the rise of Romanticism in America.**
- \*Spotting the major themes and principles of American Romanticism with a reference to a sample text.**
- \* Introducing the Transcendentalist movement and its tenets with a reference to a sample text.**
- \*Touching on the gothic influence in American with reference to a sample text.**



## ***Lecture one: The Romantic Period in America (1820-1865)***

### **1. Introduction:**

The nineteenth century in America was an era of an enormous growth of industrialization. Inventions such as the cotton gin, railroads and the telegraph rapidly changed the outlook of the country towards an excessive urbanization. On the other hand, the poorer regions grew in size, and as a result, a proletarian class emerged. This situation led to an apparent social contrast between the rich and the poor.

Besides, the advanced mechanization in the northern states turned slavery into an increasingly inhuman business in the southern regions. Within such injustice circumstances, a growing optimism of the new nation coupled with its strong faith in utility, drove the country into a passion for an urgent reform; a reform whose key aspect was the sense of humanitarianism. This sense of humanitarianism flourished rapidly, giving birth to multiple sorts of charities, utopian societies and communal governments.

Within this background, Romanticism emerged and strengthened its faith in the power of man, in the deep sense of intuition, and in the innate goodness of the world. Such aspects stood against the corrupt shapes and practices of civilization. To recall, Romanticism, as a philosophical and artistic movement, began in Europe in the late eighteenth century and drastically flourished during the nineteenth century. It partly emerged as a rejection of the abusive consequences of the industrial age and its norms of reason (The Enlightenment). Romanticism revived an unparalleled emphasis on what is natural, individual, fanciful, irrational, emotional, visionary and transcendental.

### **2. Romanticism in the American Context:**

Romanticism in the American context is all often considered as being the first period of literary creativity. This is the reason why it is largely referred to as the “American Renaissance” as writers and artists in America sought to build up a native and distinct American voice. The historical context of the Romantic Movement is usually placed between

the Westward expansion and the American Civil War. The Romantic influence in America gained ground by the 1930s as the movement was engendering deep transformations and profound changes in European culture. Thus, similar to the European Romanticism, the American Romantic spirit carried new attitudes towards nature, society and humanity at large. Such emerging attitudes reflected a prominent and an unprecedented privilege of imagination, individualism and freedom of thought and expression. Nonetheless, and as stated earlier, American Romantics- despite the influence of the European counterparts and more particularly the British- showed their strong commitment to establish a separate literary tendency. In so doing, they focused much more on the idea that the human nature is good, pure and free. They also paid a special attention to examining their national identity, moving away from European form, structure and tradition.

The Romantic literature in America began with the works of the Knickerbockers (a group of writers who followed the tradition of Washington Irving. Diedrich Knickerbocker is the name of the chronicler of Irving's *History of New York*). The Knickerbockers sought to gain popularity through entertaining their readers besides their remarkable interest in nature and natural surroundings that stemmed from the popularity of the Hudson School in the art of painting. These writers desired to explore genuine American themes, though their works were to some extent transitional only, following European models, but set in purely American settings. Famous works of this category include: Washington Irving's *Sketch Book* (1819-1820) and *Tale of a Traveller* (1824); James Fenimore Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales* (1823-1841) and William Cullen Bryant's poems of nature such as: *Thanatopsis* (1815), *A Forest Hymn* (1825) and *The Prairies* (1833).

The development of Romanticism expressed itself in Transcendentalism (a sub-movement within American Romanticism that rejected materialism and emphasized instead on individualism, intuition and self-reliance) with the eminent works of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau. The ideas expressed by the pioneering transcendentalists had a great influence on three categories of writers:

- **American Renaissance writers:** The writers of American Renaissance include: Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville and Edgar Allan Poe. Their works are characterized by their distinguished symbolism and attitudes of pessimism in reflecting the gap between their own values and those imposed by society.

- **Walt Whitman:** He is famous for his prophecy of and belief in democracy. He considerably contributed to the rise and development of American poetry.
- **The Schoolroom (also called Household poets):** These are popular poets that were widely read and appreciated both at home and in schools. In their productions, they used historical themes, folk materials and other traditional forms, particularly ballads. Famous figures of this category include: Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth , John Greenleaf and James Russel Lowell.

### **3. Major Principles of American Romanticism:**

The major influential drives and attitudes that characterized American Romantic literature might be summarized in the following points:

- ✓ A profound idealization of nature.
- ✓ A strong power of imagination.
- ✓ An exceptional adoration of emotion over reason and the senses over the intellect.
- ✓ An assault against the artificiality of modern forms of civilization.
- ✓ A deep celebration of individual freedom of expression.
- ✓ A great sense of optimism and the hope for a better life stemmed from the westward expansion.
- ✓ A strong desire for reforms was clearly mirrored in the advocacy of women's rights as well as in the abolition of slavery.
- ✓ An overt or implicit opposition to organized religion
- ✓ A deep exploration of the dark side of the human nature and the evocation of supernatural and gothic themes.

### **4. Language of American Romanticism:**

As previously stated, Romantic literature in general emerged as a reaction against the eighteenth century's formal orthodoxies of Neoclassic age that heavily stressed logic, order and witty insights. In other words, Romantic literature tended to replace the neoclassic exaggerated focus on rationality and logic by an accentuation of the human power of

imagination, feelings and emotions. In so doing, it fiercely challenged the predominant societal absolutism by advocating and championing individuality.

Generally speaking, the language of American Romantic writings was less formalized compared to those of earlier periods. This is because nature from the Romantic perspective is seen as a reflection of man, and therefore, simplicity is prized over the established conventions inherited from the past. In other simpler words, both the simplicity and spontaneity of the romantic language is the analogous side of organic nature itself. Romantic literature was more personal and more intense. It served to portray more emotions than ever seen in neoclassical literature.

The unprecedented concern with the value of freedom among Americans motivated the Romantics to be productive without fear of ridicule and/ or controversy. They invested in their artistic talent to explore and portray the psychological development of their major characters who all too often depicted higher levels of excitement and sensitivity. The simplicity of language in many of their works is but an illustration of a literature that spoke to a wider readership, including women. It is worth mentioning that the Romantic period witnessed the flourishing of fiction (novels/short stories) and poetry that replaced sermons and pamphlets as America's literary genres.

## **5. Famous American Romantic writers:**

The Romantic Movement in American literature was led by brilliant writers such as:

- ✓ Washington Irving
- ✓ William Cullen Bryant
- ✓ Emily Dickinson
- ✓ Walt Whitman
- ✓ Nathaniel Hawthorne
- ✓ Edgar Allan Poe
- ✓ Herman Melville
- ✓ James Fenimore Cooper
- ✓ Ralph Waldo Emerson
- ✓ Henry David Thoreau

## Lecture two: Washington Irving's "*Rip Van Winkle*" (1820)

### 1. Introduction:

The age of American Romanticism witnessed a noticeable rate of popularity and a significant level of development of the short story. Indeed, the early nineteenth century marked the appearance of some famous writers who took the lead in the sophistication of this literary genre as a vehicle carrying Romantic themes and motifs. Such writers include: Washington Irving, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Edgar Allan Poe who created literary forms and ideas regarding how to write short stories that remain important today.

Yet, before probing to the merits of their writings, it seems wiser to define what a short story is. As its name implies, the short story is condensed and concise piece of prose fiction. Despite its limited length, compared to other genres such as the novella or the novel, the short story is a complete work of art, having a beginning, middle and an end. It is concise because it tends to make its point quickly and economically in terms of language. As such, it does not seek to provide its readers with an extended treatment of characters and incidents (Abrams, 1999). Most often, it is centred on one or two important characters with a particular focus on one significant incident. Therefore, the short story aims at producing a single impression. In the American context, writers of this period of time were conscious enough of the rareness of a native literary tradition. This was especially true in the area of fiction. Early American as culture as commonly known was to a larger extent dominated by the beliefs of Puritanism, and therefore, it had no place for made-up stories seeking entertainment. Such attitude towards fictitious literature lasted until the rise of American Romanticism.

### 2. Elements of the short story:

Since the short story is a form of prose fiction, it would be important to mention its main literary devices. These envelop the following:

- **Plot:** It refers to the sequence of incidents (events) in the story; it is developed around a conflict that involves opposing forces.
- **Setting:** It denotes the time and place in which the incidents take place in the course of the story.

- **Characters:** These are the animators of action in the story. The major character is all too often referred to as the “protagonist”. This latter might well be in conflict with an opposing character known as the “antagonist”. Characters in the short stories might also be labeled into two categories: major characters and minor ones.
- **Point of view:** It refers to the perspective of the narrator of events.
- **Theme:** It is the central message of the story. It can be overtly stated or implied. Because literature is often didactic, readers can apply the theme of a given story to real-life.

### 3. Washington Irving’s Biography:

Washington Irving was born in New York City in 1783. As a child, he used to spend many hours roaming around the Hudson River valley and occasionally wandered into the Dutch neighborhood of New York City. It was there that he used to hear traditional stories and folktales. These experiences were depicted later in his writings. He studied law but also began writing stories and essays.

His first writing was in 1802, in the form of a series of humorous essays. He travelled to Europe and stayed there for two years (1804-1806). He visited England, Italy, Holland and France. This European journey inspired Irving to record his experiences in a travel journal. When he returned to America in 1806, he became an established lawyer. Nonetheless, his fascination with writing persisted. He died in 1859. His famous works are listed in what follows:

\**Salmagundi* (1807): it is a series of some twenty essays about society of the day.

\**The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent* (1819–20): It is a collection of about thirteen stories and essays. It includes “*The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*” and “*Rip Van Winkle*”. These are considered the first American short stories; they are in essence his retelling of folktales.

\* *The Alhambra* (1832): it is a collection of Irving’s versions of traditional stories of Spanish folktales.

#### 4. Summary of “*RIP VAN WINKLE*”:

This story was first published in *The Sketch Book (1819-1820)*. It is about a man named Rip Van Winkle who used to live in an old village near the Kaatskill Mountains; a village that was founded by the Dutch. He was a good man, a nice neighbor and an obedient husband. He was very loved by children as he was always so kind to them. He was fond of hunting in the woods. Yet, he did not use to work a lot in his farm which grew potatoes and corn only. Rip Van Winkle had a son named after him. His wife used to blame him for his laziness. His best friend was his dog, Wolf.

To escape his nagging wife, Rip Van Winkle used to go to the woods with his dog. One autumn day as he climbed to one of the highest points of the Kaatskill Mountains, he got tired and wanted to take rest; he threw himself down on a steep green hill. There from a narrow opening between trees, he could see the Hudson River, and from another angle, he saw a small empty valley. Suddenly, he heard someone calling his name, he continued walking, but he heard the calling again. As he looked in the direction of the voice, he was surprised to see a short, square built old man with tick bushy hair and a grizzled beard in antique clothes of old Dutch fashion.

They went together into a theatre where they met ornately dressed silent bearded men playing ninepins. Rip remained silent and started drinking large glasses of moonshine until he was badly drunk and felt asleep. After a long sleep, he woke up to find himself on the same green hill where he first met the old man. He started looking for his own stuffs and his dog that was nowhere to be found. He could not find the theatre nor the people who were in it. His musket became rotting and rusty; his beard became a foot long.

Being hopeless, Rip headed home. When he arrived at his village, he was very surprised to find that everything had changed. He found his house fallen apart. His wife died and his children grew up. He was also astonished to find the portrait of the first American President George Washington standing in the place of that of the British Monarch George III. Fortunately, his daughter Judith was able to recognize him. She took him to her house. Rip

entertained the people of his village with his strange tale in the mountains. People got fascinated with what they heard from him and wished to share his good luck for not witnessing the hardships and the sufferings of the American Revolution.

## 5. Text study:

**Task1:** Read the excerpt and answer the questions below

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Certain it is, that he was a great favourite among all the good wives of the village, who, as usual with the amiable sex, took his part in all family squabbles, and never failed, whenever they talked those matters over in their evening gossiping, to lay all the blame on Dame Van Winkle. The children of the village, too, would shout with joy whenever he approached. He assisted at their sports, made their playthings, taught them to fly kites and shoot marbles, and told them long stories about ghosts, witches, and Indians. Whenever he went dodging about the village, he was surrounded by a troop of them hanging on his skirts, clambering on his back, and playing a thousand tricks on him with impunity; and not a dog would bark at him throughout the neighborhood.

The great error in Rip's composition was an insuperable aversion to all kinds of profitable labor. It could not be from the want of assiduity or perseverance; for he would sit on a wet rock, with a rod as long and heavy as a Tartar's lance, and fish all day without a murmur, even though he should not be encouraged by a single nibble. He would carry a fowling-piece on his shoulder for hours together, trudging through woods and swamps, and uphill and down dale, to shoot a few squirrels or wild pigeons. He would never refuse to assist a neighbor, even in the roughest toil, and was foremost a man at all country frolics for husking Indian corn or building stone fences. The women of the village, too, used to employ him to run their errands, and to do such little odd jobs as their less obliging husbands would not do for them – in a word, Rip was ready to attend to anybody's business but his own; but as to doing family duty, and keeping his farm in order, he found it impossible.

In fact, he declared it was of no use to work on his farm; it was the most pestilent little piece of ground in the whole country; everything about it went wrong, and would go wrong in spite of him. His fences were continually falling to pieces; his cow would either go astray, or get among the cabbages; weeds were sure to grow quicker in his fields than anywhere else; the rain always



made a point of setting in just as he had some out-of-door work to do; so that though his patrimonial estate had dwindled away under his management, acre by acre, until there was little more left than a mere patch of Indian corn and potatoes, yet it was the worst-conditioned farm in the neighbourhood.

His children, too, were as ragged and wild as if they belonged to nobody. His son Rip, an urchin begotten in his own likeness, promised to inherit the habits, with the old clothes of his father. He was generally seen trooping like a colt at his mother's heels, equipped in a pair of his father's cast-off galligaskins, which he had much ado to hold up with one hand, as a fine lady does her train in bad weather.

Rip Van Winkle, however, was one of those happy mortals, of foolish, well-oiled dispositions, who take the world easy, eat white bread or brown, whichever can be got with least thought or trouble, and would rather starve on a penny than work for a pound. If left to himself, he would have whistled life away in perfect contentment; but his wife kept continually dinning in his ears about his idleness; his carelessness, and the ruin he was bringing on his family.

Morning, noon, and night, her tongue was incessantly going, and everything he said or did was sure to produce a torrent of household eloquence. Rip had but one way of replying to all lectures of the kind, and that, by frequent use, had grown into a habit. He shrugged his shoulders, shook his head, cast up his eyes, but said nothing. This, however, always provoked a fresh volley from his wife, so that he was fain to draw off his forces, and take to the outside of the house – the only side which, in truth, belongs to a henpecked husband.

### **Questions of Analysis:**

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- Identify the passage and the literary genre.
- Identify characters and describe them.
- Identify the setting
- Identify the dominant point of view in the text
- Extract the major theme.
- Pick out from the text two figures of speech and explain them.
- Comment on the author's style.



## Lecture three: Transcendentalism

### 1. Introduction:

The Romantic Movement was so prominent that it gave rise to another sub-movement known as “Transcendentalism”. This latter presented the individual with a more personalized relationship with God. Both Transcendentalism and Romanticism were of a great appeal to the American people in a very similar fashion as they championed emotions over reason and intellect; besides their heavy emphasis on the indisputable value of the freedom of expression in countering the restraints of tradition and absolutism. Transcendentalism was an idealistic and Romantic philosophical movement that was based on men’s conscience and intuition. Its early European seeds are found in the doctrines of Emanuel Kant, Von Goethe, Coleridge and Wordsworth, but it flourished in the United States around 1836-60. It turned to be a literary movement that drastically influenced some American writers in New England, such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, David Henry Thoreau, Margaret Fuller and Boston Alcott. These writers rejected Calvinism and materialism of society; they instead asserted their beliefs in deism, individualism and self-reliance. They also expressed the need for a national literature.

Transcendentalism in the United States originated in New England during the early 1800s with the birth of Unitarianism. Concord Village in the west of Boston was the cradle of transcendentalism which basically resulted from the opposition between two major Christian religious groups: The New Light theologians and the Old Light theologians. The former group believed that religion ought to be based on emotional experience. The latter group, however, strongly championed and praised ‘reason’ as the major driving force of religious philosophy. As a result of this opposition, the Old lights became initially known as Liberal Christians and later as Unitarians. They (Unitarians) denied many aspects of the Christian religion, such as the Holy Trinity. The divide between the Transcendentalists and the Unitarians was mainly due to the excessive rationality Unitarianism. The transcendentalists instead embraced German Romanticism in their quest for more spiritual freedom and experience. They adopted the ideas and ideals of philosophers, such as Immanuel Kant and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel in addition to those of the famous English poets like Coleridge and Wordsworth. In his comment on the Transcendentalists’ orientation of

thought, Mac Donald (2008, p.92) posits that “In their search for an intellectual grounding of religion, they rejected Locke’s barren empiricism and turned instead to the idealism of Kant, Schelling, and Coleridge.” In short terms, Transcendentalists embraced the idea of a personal knowledge of God.

## **2.The Tenets of Transcendentalism:**

Transcendentalism was a nineteenth century philosophical, religious and literary movement which champions the capacity of the individual in knowing truth intuitively, that is, attaining knowledge transcending the reach of the senses. This movement represents one of the outlooks of American Romanticism. The Transcendentalists strongly held the belief that true reality transcends, or exists beyond, the physical world (Grellet, 2000). Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Margaret Fuller and Bronson Alcott stood at the center of American Transcendentalism. This movement made a deep impression upon the American people and upon Europeans too. Stemming from high mindedness, moral intensity, a strong desire to bring about reform and change to society and a strong assertion for the superiority of the philosophy of individualism over tradition and society, Transcendentalism marked new avenues in the American history and philosophy. The movement’s fundamental belief lies in the perceived unity of the world, including human beings, and God. On this basis, the soul of every individual is meant to be identical with the world. In other words, the individual soul is equated with a microcosm of the world itself. Hence, the notions of individualism and self reliance stem and therefore evolve from the belief in the existing identification of the individual soul with God (Baym, 2007).

**3. Summary of Transcendentalists’ Basic Beliefs:** The basic beliefs within the Transcendentalist movement are succinctly summarized in what follows:

- Everything in this universe, including people, reflects God.( *The Divine Soul*)
- The physical world is a leading road to **the spiritual world**.
- Man is capable of utilizing intuition to see God in nature and in his own soul too.
- The individual, not society, serves man’s best authority.

- Emotions, feelings and intuitions **are championed and privileged over reason and intellect.**
- The belief in action : Due to their strong belief in the possibility of attaining perfection, the Transcendentalists:
  - Set and sustained practical goals for bringing change and improvement to people's lives.
  - Envisioned plans that sought to build a utopian society.
  - Worked hard for concretizing social change. (clearly seen in their strong appeal for the abolition of slavery and the advocacy of women's rights).
  - Served as activists of democratic and egalitarian spirit.

### **Nature and the Oversold:**

- Throughout their writings, the Transcendentalists displayed semi-religious feelings vis-à-vis nature.
- They held the faith of the existence of a direct connection between the individual soul and the universe.
- Divinity is fused in everything (animate and inanimate)
- The ultimate and noble goal of the human life is rather to achieve a union with the "Over soul" .**This is a convergence involving *the individual, God and Nature.***

### **4 Major Philosophical Driving forces of Transcendentalism:**

To trace the origins of this movement and have a better understanding of its beliefs, it is necessary to illuminate its key philosophical driving forces, which include the following:

**4.1. Idealism:** Idealism was essentially a philosophy proposed by the famed Greek philosopher Plato in the 4th century B.C. True truth can be discovered in ideas, not in the physical world, according to idealism. On the influence of Idealism on Transcendentalism, Ralph Waldo Emerson argued that Transcendentalism was to, a larger extent, Idealism re-discovered and applied to the nineteenth-century world. Within the same vein of thought

Macdonald (2008, p.92) argues that “The attraction of idealism to the Transcendentalists was its conception of the mind as creative, intuitive, and interpretive rather than merely reactive to external events.”

The following points must be considered while assessing impact of Idealism on Transcendentalism:

- Transcendentalists were influenced by Plato’s notion of “**an all-encompassing spiritual reality**”.
- Transcendentalists strived to apply Idealist ideas to human life. This in turn strengthened their belief in *human perfectibility*, and they worked to achieve this goal.
- Transcendentalists gave an intuitive conception of the human mind.

#### **4.2. Puritanism:**

Transcendentalism rejected many aspects of Calvinism which, in turn, had a great influence on the rise of Puritanism. Nonetheless; transcendentalism shared with Puritanism the belief in the personalized nature of religion and the desirability of self-reliance. Yet, one has to point to the significant fact that Transcendentalists differed from puritans in the followings:

- Taking nature, not the Bible as the primary source of divine revelation.
- Believing that all humans, not only the “elect,” were connected to a divine soul.

#### **4.3. Romanticism:**

As previously stated Romanticism began in late eighteenth-century in Europe and spread to America in the nineteenth century. Basically, the Romantic writers throughout their works sought to:

- Value imagination and feelings,
- Celebrate and idealize nature,
- Privilege nature over reason, logic and civilization,
- Champion individualism and personal freedom,
- Prompt reflection on nature to gain spiritual wisdom

The transcendentalists shared the romantic conviction that spiritual wisdom might be discovered in nature. They even went so far as to believe that everything in the universe, including people, is a reflection of God. Furthermore, the Transcendentalists believed that because man is a part of the Divine Soul, he is capable of obtaining perfection. The Transcendentalists, like their romantics, were attempting to create a unique American literature and philosophy that emphasized the individual's power.

**5. FAMOUS FIGURES:** The prominent figures of American Transcendentalism are:

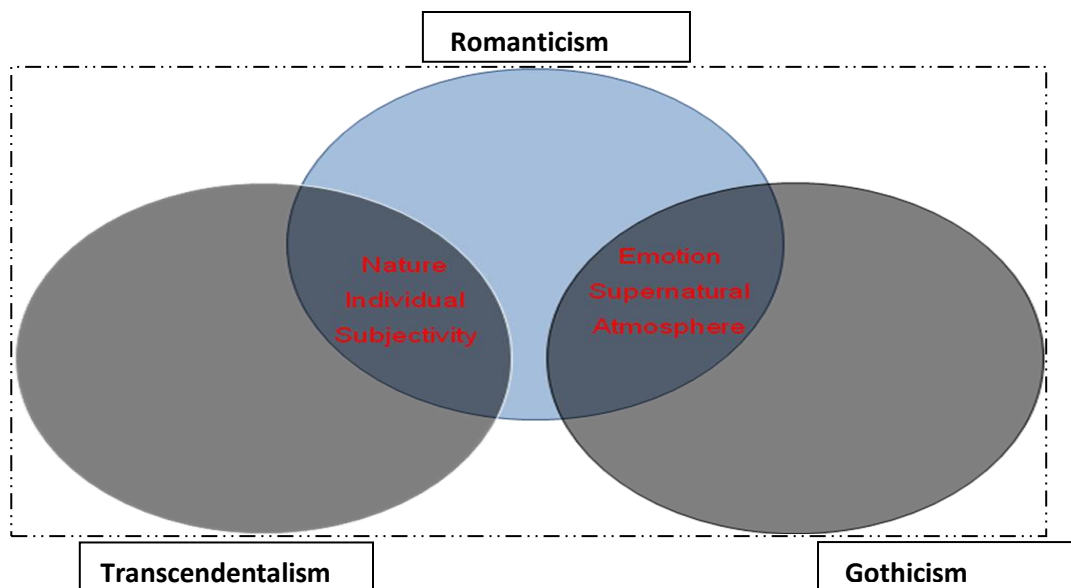
- Ralph Waldo Emerson
- Margaret Fuller
- Henry David Thoreau
- Bronson Alcott

The Transcendental Club was founded in 1836 in Boston. This marked the beginning of Transcendentalism in America. “The Dial” (magazine) represents the movement's first publication. The following are some of the most prominent quotes by the leaders of the movement:

“Great men are they (those) who see that **spiritual is stronger than any material force**; that thoughts rule the world”. **(Ralph Waldo Emerson)**.

“We will walk on our own feet; we will work with our **own hands**; we will speak **our own minds**...A nation of men will for the first time exist, because each believes **himself** inspired by the **Divine Soul** which also inspires all men.” **(Ralph Waldo Emerson)**

**6. The Intersection between Transcendentalism, Romanticism and Gothicism.**



**Figure2:** The intersection between Transcendentalism, Romanticism and Gothicism.

**7. Major Transcendentalist Works:** Below are examples of the most influential transcendentalist works:

- **Ralph Waldo Emerson**

  - “Self-Reliance” 1841

- **Henry David Thoreau**

  - Walden* 1854

  - “Civil Disobedience”1849

- **Margaret Fuller**

  - Woman in the Nineteenth Century (1843)*.



## **Lecture four: Ralph Waldo Emerson's *Self Reliance* (1841)**

### **I. Introduction:**

As stated before, Transcendentalism has been philosophically conceived as the capacity of man of knowing truth through intuition, or to put it another way to attain knowledge by transcending the reach of the senses. In his famous address at Harvard University in 1838, Ralph Waldo Emerson glorified intuition and attacked all other sorts of external and formal religious authority. Transcendentalism equally stressed the influence of nature on men's happiness and sense of tranquility and inspiration. Nature within the transcendentalist spirit is ennobling, and therefore, other forms of business are a wasted life. The movement also marked a noticeable emphasis on the individual soul (or else the over soul as referred to by Emerson) and its indisputable capacity to reach God without the help of churches and clergy. These doctrines had been preached by Emerson for a good period of time throughout America through his lectures, poetry and essays.

### **2. About the author:**

Ralph Waldo Emerson was born in Boston in 1803. His father was a Unitarian clergyman. Being a student at Harvard University, he started keeping journals and records of his own thoughts. Such records had a great influence on his later writings, including essays and poetry. After his graduation, he became -for a short period of time- a director of a school for young ladies. He eventually joined back Harvard University to study for the ministry, and after his second graduation he served for some years as pastor of a church before he resigned because of his skeptic attitude towards the beliefs of the church. Emerson traveled to Europe in 1832, where he met with outstanding English Romantic poets namely, S. Taylor Coleridge and William Wordsworth. His acquaintance with these influential poets introduced him to German idealism and Transcendentalism. When he returned to Boston, he devoted much of his time and effort to sustaining reform movements, not least that of anti-slavery. He was among the pioneering figures of Transcendentalism in Boston and an active member in its Magazine "The Dial".

Being a founding figure of Transcendentalism in America, Emerson was a liberator from the traditional conventions and a leader in experimentation and self-reliance. He rejected the philosophy of materialism and moral relativism that was prevailing both Europe and America. This stance made him attack both the formal religion of the church as well as the Deistic thought that presented the World as being a watch-like mechanism set in motion by a non-present deity. His faith instead was based on the intuition within a harmonious unity (the Over soul). He conceived religion as a sort of an emotional communication between the individual soul and the universal Over Soul of which it is a constituent part. The intuitive power of man according to him is conducive to knowledge and truth, and that having this power; man should trust himself and be self-reliant to opt for what is right and to act accordingly.

Emerson's impact on American literature does not only stem from the originality of his thoughts, but also from the guidance and the intellectual environment he created for other eminent writers such as Henry David Thoreau , Walt Whitman, Robert Frost , Hart Crane and Emily Dickenson. In his first essay entitled *Nature (1836)* Emerson evoked his controversial idea that there exist tight correspondences between all aspects of the universe and that the unity of divinity lays beneath the diversity of existence. Nature, according to him, is a source of beauty and moral truth. As such it serves a mediator that assists one to become part and parcel of God. The essay terminates with an appeal for transcendental intuition as a means to attain truth. His second famous essay *Self Reliance (1841)* is a good and illustrative instance of his thoughts. It is an invaluable piece of writing in which he incited the American people to trust themselves and give full rein to nature as a source of goodness. The essay, therefore, is an advocacy of a romantic individualism based on the belief that every soul is divine.

Emerson also wrote poetry, and in his essay *The poet(1844)*, he expressed some of his own poetic theories. He claimed that poetry should grow and evolve naturally and spontaneously similar to a plant without being bound to the established rigid norms of metre. The poet, in his view, has to act as a liberator whose spiritual inspirations transcend the outworn traditions. Other important works of Emerson include: *Representative Men (1850)*, *English Traits(1856)* and *Conduct of Life (1860)*. He died in 1882.

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**3. Text Study:** Read the passage below from Emerson's *Self Reliance* and then answers the questions of analysis.

There is a time in every man's education when he arrives at the conviction that envy is ignorance; that imitation is suicide; that he must take himself for better for worse as his portion; that though the wide universe is full of good, no kernel of nourishing corn can come to him but through his toil bestowed on that plot of ground which is given to him to till. The power which resides in him is new in nature, and none but he knows what that is which he can do, nor does he know until he has tried. Not for nothing one face, one character, one fact, makes much impression on him, and another none. This sculpture in the memory is not without pre-established harmony. The eye was placed where one ray should fall, that it might testify of that particular ray. We but half express ourselves, and are ashamed of that divine idea which each of us represents. It may be safely trusted as proportionate and of good issues, so it be faithfully imparted, but God will not have his work made manifest by cowards. A man is relieved and gay when he has put his heart into his work and done his best; but what he has said or done otherwise shall give him no peace. It is a deliverance which does not deliver. In the attempt his genius deserts him; no muse befriends; no invention, no hope.

Trust thyself: every heart vibrates to that iron string. Accept the place the divine providence has found for you, the society of your contemporaries, the connection of events. Great men have always done so, and confided themselves childlike to the genius of their age, betraying their perception that the absolutely trustworthy was seated at their heart, working through their hands, predominating in all their being. And we are now men, and must accept in the highest mind the same transcendent destiny; and not minors and invalids in a protected corner, not cowards fleeing before a revolution, but guides, redeemers and benefactors, obeying the Almighty effort and advancing on Chaos and the Dark.

What pretty oracles nature yields us on this text in the face and behavior of children, babes, and even brutes! That divided and rebel mind, that distrust of a sentiment because our arithmetic has computed the strength and means opposed to our purpose, these have not. Their mind being whole, their eye is as yet unconquered; and when we look in their faces we are disconcerted. Infancy conforms to nobody; all conform to it; so that one babe commonly makes four or five out of the adults who prattle

and play to it. So God has armed youth and puberty and manhood no less with its own piquancy and charm, and made it enviable and gracious and its claims not to be put by, if it will stand by itself. Do not think the youth has no force because he cannot speak to you and me. Hark! in the next room his voice is sufficiently clear and emphatic. It seems he knows how to speak to his contemporaries. Bashful or bold then) he will know how to make us seniors very unnecessary.

The nonchalance of boys who are sure of a dinner, and would , disdain as much as a lord to do or say aught to conciliate one, is the healthy attitude of human nature. A boy is in the parlor what the pit is in the playhouse; independent, irresponsible, looking out from his corner on such people and facts as pass by, he tries and sentences them on their Inerits, in the swift, summary way of boys, as good, bad, interesting, silly, eloquent, troublesome. He cumpers himself never about consequences, about interests; he gives an independent, genuine verdict. You must court him; he does not court you. But the man is as it were clapped into jail by his consciousness. As soon as he has once acted or spoken with eclat he is a committed person, watched by the sympathy or the hatred of hundreds, whose affections must now enter into his account. There is no Lethe for this. Ah, that he could pass again into his neutrality! Who can thus avoid all pledges and, having observed, observe again from the same unaffected, unbiased, unbribable, unaffrighted innocence must always be formidable. He would utter opinions on am passing affairs, which being seen to be not private but necessary would sink like darts into the ear of men and put them in fear.

These are the voices which we hear in solitude, but they grow faint and inaudible as we enter into the world. Society everywhere is in conspiracy against the manhood of everyone of its members. Society is a joint-stock company, in which the members agree, for the better securing of his bread to each shareholder, to surrender the liberty and culture of the eater. The virtue in most request is conformity. Self-reliance is its aversion. It loves not realities and creators, but names and customs.

Whoso would be a man, must be a nonconformist. He who would gather immortal palms must not be hindered by the name of goodness, but must explore if it be goodness. Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind.

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### **\*Questions of analysis**

1. Pick out from the first two paragraphs of the excerpt examples that illustrate Emerson's reasons for his firm belief in self-reliance. Explain each example.

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2. Why does Emerson believe that conformity is the enemy of self-reliance?

3. Consider the following quote and explain its meaning:

“ the adult is clapped into jail by his consciousness”.

4. How does youth exhibit force according to Emerson?

5. Are you for or against conformity? Justify!

## Lecture five: The Gothic Influence in America

### 1. Introduction:

The gothic fashion of writing has traditionally involved medieval settings and supernatural aspects. The most recurrent scenarios within gothic fiction would include dark and haunted mansions inhabited by innocent damsels in a status of distress, and evil men preying on them. The essence of the supernatural elements within gothic literature is usually manipulated by the author by means of his sense of creativity. Therefore, the author of a gothic story is not bound to the standard artistic conventions and elements, especially the realistic one (Abrams, 1999).

Gothic literature is hence associated with and tightly linked to darkness, mystery, terror and horror. Etymologically speaking, the word gothic is derived from the “Goths”. These were typical Germanic tribes that settled in the different parts of Europe approximately from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 5<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D. The term was subsequently used to refer to and describe a medieval type of architecture that is often perceived as being barbaric.

Gothic literature evolved in the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century in Britain primarily as a reaction to the Enlightenment ideology that was prevailing at the time. During the eighteenth century, American writers of this genre of literature were witnesses of the tragic life that American people were enduring. As a response to this, they initiated this genre to express their beliefs, sufferings and the darkness they were experiencing inside themselves.

As previously stated, gothic writings are filled up with pictures of deaths, mysteries, terror and horror. In other words, the primary concern of gothic literature is the exploration of the dark side of human nature. Such characteristics are predominantly found in the writings of Edgar Allan Poe who himself endured psychological unrest. This enabled him to produce successful gothic stories such as *The Fall of the House of Usher* (1839), *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* (1841) *The Black Cat* (1845) and *The Masque of the Red Death* (1850.) Poe contributed significantly to the development of the New American literary magazines into marketplaces for short stories. Most importantly, he is regarded as the path breaker of new literary genres, namely mysteries or else detective stories and science fiction.

## 2. Edgar Allan Poe's Biography:

Poe was born in 1809 in Boston. His father died one year after his birth. His mother looked after him and other two children until her death in 1811. What marked Poe's life is that he was adopted by a wealthy family (The Allans). However; he never got along with his foster father (John Allan). When this latter died, nothing was attributed to Poe in his will. This urged Poe to turn to writing poems and stories to earn his living. Unfortunately, because he was given to drinking, he did not use to keep his job for long. He got married in 1835, but his wife –Virginia- died few years later. Her death worsened Poe's conditions of mind. His state of health was swinging between "Euphoric" drunkenness and "Neurotic" depression. Within such a state of mind, Poe felt very helpless to face his problems, and this led him, at times, to attempt suicide. Poe was a skilled writer; his contribution to the evolution of the gothic genre in American literature is indisputably significant. He died in 1849. Below are some of his major works:

- **Poems:** *To the River (1829)- Spirits of the Dead (1829)- The Conqueror Worm (1843)- The Raven (1845)-Annabel Lee (1849)- The Bells (1849)- - Alone (1875).*
- **Short stories :** *The Fall of the House of Usher (1839), The Murders in the Rue Morgue (1841) The Black Cat (1845) The Masque of the Red Death (1850), The Angel of the Odd (1844), Bernice (1825), Hop-Frog (1849), Mesmeric Revelation (1849), The premature Burial (1850)*

## 3. Summary of *The Fall of the House of Usher* (1839):

The story opens with the arrival of Roderick Usher's boyhood friend (an unnamed narrator) after receiving a letter from him asking for his company. Usher's house was an old mansion encircled by a small tarn (lake). A bridge across this lake was the only access to the mansion. Roderick received his friend cordially despite his illness. He was suffering from a strange mental disease that was the source of his unrest. He lived in the house was his twin sister called Madeline. This latter was also suffering from a strange disease. During his stay in the house, the guest provided company to Roderick who used to spend time inside painting and playing guitar avoiding the sunlight. Roderick sadly attributed his mental and physical

uneasiness to the house, and this is something that his friend too has suspected since his entry. When Madeline died, Roderick decided to bury her in a vault underneath the house. In so doing, he sought help from his friend (the narrator).

A few days later and during a stormy night, Roderick got agitated and couldn't sleep. His friend joined him in his room and tried to calm him down. He started reading for him "The Mad Trist", a story about a knight who slays a dragon and wins a shield of shining brass. Strangely, as his friend was reading, they could both hear identical sounds narrated in the story. At these terrifying moments, Roderick declared that his sister Madeline was still alive when he buried her. Suddenly, she appeared to them bloodied and started to throttle Roderick until he died. Terrified by this scene, the narrator escaped; turning his back, he saw the house crumbling down into the tarn.

**4. Text Study:** Read the excerpt below from the Story *The Fall of the House of Usher* and elaborate an analysis in which you:

- Identify the passage and its literary genre.
- Identify and describe Characters.
- Identify the setting.
- Extract the Point of view.
- Pick out from the passage two figures of speech with explanation and their effect on meaning.
- Spot the predominant tone with reference to the passage.
- Spot the theme of the passage.

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Upon my entrance, Usher arose from a sofa on which he had been lying at full length, and greeted me with vivacious warmth which had much in it, I at first thought, of an overdone cordiality — of the constrained effort of the ennuyé man of the world. A glance, however, at his countenance, convinced me of his perfect sincerity. We sat down; and for some moments, while he spoke not, I gazed upon him with a feeling half of pity, half of awe. Surely, man had never before so terribly altered, in so brief a period, as had Roderick Usher! It was with difficulty that I could bring myself to admit the identity of the wan being before me with the companion of my



early boyhood. Yet the character of his face had been at all times remarkable. A cadaverousness of complexion; an eye large, liquid, and luminous beyond comparison; lips somewhat thin and very pallid, but of a surpassingly beautiful curve; a nose of a delicate Hebrew model, but with a breadth of nostril unusual in similar formations; a finely moulded chin, speaking, in its want of prominence, of a want of moral energy; hair of a more than web-like softness and tenuity; these features, with an inordinate expansion above the regions of the temple, made up altogether a countenance not easily to be forgotten. And now in the mere exaggeration of the prevailing character of these features, and of the expression they were wont to convey, lay so much of change that I doubted to whom I spoke. The now ghastly pallor of the skin, and the now miraculous lustre of the eye, above all things startled and even awed me. The silken hair, too, had been suffered to grow all unheeded, and as, in its wild gossamer texture, it floated rather than fell about the face, I could not, even with effort, connect its Arabesque expression with any idea of simple humanity.

In the manner of my friend I was at once struck with an incoherence—an inconsistency; and I soon found this to arise from a series of feeble and futile struggles to overcome an habitual trepidancy—an excessive nervous agitation. For something of this nature I had indeed been prepared, no less by his letter, than by reminiscences of certain boyish traits, and by conclusions deduced from his peculiar physical conformation and temperament. His action was alternately vivacious and sullen. His voice varied rapidly from a tremulous indecision (when the animal spirits seemed utterly in abeyance) to that species of energetic concision—that abrupt, weighty, unhurried, and hollow-sounding enunciation—that leaden, self-balanced and perfectly modulated guttural utterance, which may be observed in the lost drunkard, or the irreclaimable eater of opium, during the periods of his most intense excitement.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix I : Sample analyses of texts.

#### 1. Sample analysis of an excerpt from Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719)

##### *\*Aspects of analysis :*

- Identifying the passage and its genre*
- Characters*
- Setting*
- *Point of view*
- Figures of speech with explanations.*

The wave that came upon me again, buried me at once 20 or 30 foot deep in its own body; and I could feel my self carried with a mighty force and swiftness towards the shore a very great way; but I held my breath, and assisted myself to swim still forward with all my might. .... I was covered again with water a good while, but not so long but I held it out; and finding the water had spent it self, and began to return, I struck forward against the return of the waves, and felt ground again with my feet. I stood still a few moments to recover breath, and till the water went from me, and then took to my heels, and run with what strength I had farther towards the shore. But neither would this deliver me from the fury of the sea, which came pouring in after me again, and twice more I was lifted up by the waves and carried forwards as before...

The last time of these two had well near been fatal to me; for the sea having hurried me along as before, landed me, or rather dashed me against a piece of a rock, and that with such force as it left me senseless, and indeed helpless as to my own deliverance; for the blow taking my side and breast, beat the breath as it were quite out of my body; and had it returned again immediately, I must have been strangled in the water; but I recovered a little before the return of the waves, and seeing I should be covered again with the water, I resolved to hold fast by a piece of the rock, and so to hold my breath, if possible, till the wave went back; now as the waves were not so high as at first, being nearer land, I held my hold till the wave abated, and then fetched another run, which brought me so near the shore, that the next wave, though it went over me, yet did not so swallow me up as to carry me away, and the next run I took, I got to the main land, where, to my great comfort, I clambered up the cliffs of the shore and sat me down upon the grass, free from danger.

## **\*Analysis**

The present excerpt from Defoe's novel *Robinson Crusoe* published in 1719. This novel is regarded by many critics as the first English novel. It tells the story of an adventurous young man –Crusoe- who wanted to become a sailor and travel the world. He sailed to Brazil where he could make a great fortune. In one of his voyages from Brazil to Africa, his ship wrecked in the sea. He therefore found himself on a desert island where he spent almost twenty-eight years before he finally managed to go back to his homeland (England). The present excerpt renders the very critical moments of the shipwreck. It provides a detailed account on the hardships he encountered, striving to survive.

The events within the present excerpt take place first in the sea when Crusoe was wrestling the huge waves, and later on the desert island which truly represents wildlife. Crusoe is the major character of the story. He shows an exceptional courage in facing the hazardous conditions of the shipwreck. His sense of self reliance and perseverance are quite clear in the text.

The predominant point of view in the text is the first point of view. The vents are narrated by the central character. The use of such a narrative perspective invites and urges the reader to vividly with Crusoe his emotions during the critical moments of the shipwreck and to value his endless perseverance for the sake of survival.

The passage exemplifies the instinct of survival. It is Crusoe's distinguished sense of perseverance and persistence that enabled him to overcome dangers.

The author used some figures of speech to make the story attractive, and most importantly, vivid. Example of these devices include simile when he wrote: "mountain like" as he compares the huge tides to mountains. This image is rather an illustrative instance of the hazard in which Crusoe was involved.

Another implemented figure of speech is Personification as he stated that "The wave that came upon me again buried me" .The author here attributed human action (burying) to the waves. This image again depicts the struggle of Crusoe with the huge waves in the sea.

To conclude this analysis, one can an easily notice Daniel Defoe's talent in the art of writing. He exhorts the reader to follow the development of events thanks to the suspense he created within the story. Moreover, Dofoe's journalistic stylistic tactics are omnipresent in the passage. Indeed, he seems very attentive to provide the subtleties of the critical times of the shipwreck.

## 2. Sample analysis of an excerpt from Poe's: *The Fall of the House of Usher* (1839)

### **\*Aspects of Analysis:**

-Identifying the passage and its literary genre

-Setting

-Point of view

-Theme

-Figures of speech

-Tone

Upon my entrance, Usher arose from a sofa on which he had been lying at full length, and greeted me with vivacious warmth which had much in it, I at first thought, of an overdone cordiality — of the constrained effort of the ennuyé man of the world. A glance, however, at his countenance, convinced me of his perfect sincerity. We sat down; and for some moments, while he spoke not, I gazed upon him with a feeling half of pity, half of awe. Surely, man had never before so terribly altered, in so brief a period, as had Roderick Usher! It was with difficulty that I could bring myself to admit the identity of the wan being before me with the companion of my early boyhood. Yet the character of his face had been at all times remarkable. A cadaverousness of complexion; an eye large, liquid, and luminous beyond comparison; lips somewhat thin and very pallid, but of a surpassingly beautiful curve; a nose of a delicate Hebrew model, but with a breadth of nostril unusual in similar formations; a finely moulded chin, speaking, in its want of prominence, of a want of moral energy; hair of a more than web-like softness and tenuity; these features, with an inordinate expansion above the regions of the temple, made up altogether a countenance not easily to be forgotten. And now in the mere exaggeration of the prevailing character of these features, and of the expression they were wont to convey, lay so much of change that I doubted to whom I spoke. The now ghastly pallor of the skin, and the now miraculous lustre of the eye, above all things startled and even awed me. The silken hair, too, had been suffered to grow all unheeded, and as, in its wild gossamer texture, it floated rather than fell about the face, I could not, even with effort, connect its Arabesque expression with any idea of simple humanity.

### **\*Analysis:**

The excerpt is taken from the Gothic Short story "*The Fall of the House of Usher*" (1839) by Edgar Allan Poe. The story is about Roderick Usher who was suffering -together with his twin sister Madeline- from a mental disease. He asked his boyfriend to come to comfort him. During his stay in the mansion, the narrator witnessed horrifying incidents that ended in the death of Usher and his sister and the fall of the house.

The present passage is basically about the arrival of the unnamed narrator (Roderick's childhood friend) to his childhood friend (Roderick). The characters are, therefore, Roderick and his friend (unnamed narrator). The manner in which Roderick received his friend was

warm and cordial. But it was quite clear for the narrator that Roderick was suffering from mental disorder and physical unrest.

The events in this text take place in the old mansion of Usher (a scary house). The predominant point of view in passage is the first person point of view. The nameless character describes the events as he witnessed them with details, using first person pronouns (I, my). The use of this narrative perspective brings the reader closer to the mysterious atmosphere inside the mansion.

The excerpt clearly exemplifies the close relationship between Roderick Usher and his friend who came to comfort him as Roderick was suffering from mental and psychological unrest. The detailed description of Usher's mental and physical state carries the narrator's feeling of sympathy towards him.

The author used some figures of speech in this passage. For instance, he used a hyperbole when he said "of the constrained effort of the ennuyé man of the world" .This is an exaggeration to show the depressing condition of Roderick.

He also used personification in describing the physical traits of Roderick, He wrote "a finely moulded chin, speaking, in its want of prominence, of a want of moral energy." Here he attributed the human act of speaking to an inanimate object (the chin). Such figures of speech gave intensity and expressiveness to meaning. The images he used bring the reader closer to the mental and physical conditions of Roderick.

The tone of the narrator is to some extent saddening .It reflects his feelings of sympathy and pity for his friend Roderick.The text clearly expresses the theme of friendship the narrator shows to his boyhood friend who was living the hardships of depression and uneasiness.

## Appendix II: Sample analytical questions

**Q1.** “Realism is an approach that attempts to describe life without idealization or romantic subjectivity”. Discuss the statement to show the contribution of this literary approach in the making of the English novel.

**Q2.** The eighteenth century English novel was, to a larger extent, concerned with standards of conduct and moral ends. Explain and illustrate.

**Q3:** “Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility.” — **William Wordsworth.**

On the basis of the statement above, write an essay on the English Romantic poetry focusing on its major characteristics and its leading figures.

**Q4.** Write an essay on the English Romantic poetry focusing on its major characteristics and its leading figures.

**Q5.** “The trend towards the supernatural and the irrational was an important component of British Romantic literature”. Explain the statement with reference to Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*.

**Q6.** “The love of nature and natural surroundings was a basic interest to the British Romantic poets.” Explain and illustrate!

**Q7.** American literature in its early phase served a means to justify the British settlement in America and its significance in escaping religious persecution. Explain and illustrate.

**Q8.** “American literature started as a colonial literature. The writings of this period were centred on historical, practical and religious themes”. Explain and illustrate.

**Q9.** Write an essay on the influence of “Gothicism” on American literature and illustrate by referring to a literary text that you have studied.