

# BACKGROUND AND IMPORTANT CONCEPTS – THE RESTORATION PERIOD (1660 – 1700) - I

## Unit Structure

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 The Restoration Period or the Age of Dryden (1660 -1700)
- 1.3 Conclusion
- 1.4 Check Your Progress
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## 1.0 OBJECTIVES

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The objectives of this unit are:

- To make the students familiar with the Neo-Classical Age
- To enable the students to understand the contribution of various writers to the development of literature of Neo-Classical Age
- To introduce the students with socio-economic, political, historical and intellectual background of the Age of Dryden

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## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

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**The period between 1660 – 1798:** This period in English literature can be divided into three periods – i) The Restoration Period or the Age of Dryden (1660 -1700), ii) The Augustan Period or the Age of Pope (1700 – 1745) and iii) The Age of Johnson (1745 – 1798). This age was preceded by the Renaissance and followed by the Romantic Age.

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## 1.2 THE RESTORATION PERIOD OR THE AGE OF DRYDEN (1660-1700)

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**1.2.1 Background to the Restoration Period:** To understand the importance and impact of the Restoration Period on British history and literature we must go back in time from 1649 to 1660 which is known as the Commonwealth Period or the Puritan Interregnum. Between 1642 and 1651, the then king, Charles I, fought three civil wars against the supporters of the Parliament. The reason for these

wars was the reckless and wasteful behavior of the upper classes, encroachment of civil and constitutional rights of the common people by the King and disagreements among the people about religion and worship. In 1649, the Parliamentarians won and the Stuart monarch Charles I was executed. The execution of Charles I marked the beginning of Republican rule and the formation of the Commonwealth under the leadership of Oliver Cromwell, which lasted for eleven years until the restoration of Charles II to the throne. During the Commonwealth Rule Puritanism became a political, religious, social, and moral force. The Puritans were morally upright, God-fearing, and spiritual but at the same time denounced science and arts. With their stern, morose, and narrow outlook, the Puritans neglected the beauty of life and tried to confine the arts and literature within limits of their own interests. They shut down the public theatres on moral, religious, and political grounds in 1642 and thus drama disappeared from England for nearly eighteen years. Poetry and other prose writings too were censored. These acts of the Puritans almost sounded the death knell for arts and literature and the few gems, which shone on the literary scene, were John Milton, the representative poet, politician and prose writer, metaphysical poets like Henry Vaughan, Abraham Cowley, Andrew Marvell, John Donne, and prose writers like Sir Thomas Browne, Thomas Fuller, Jeremy Taylor and Izaak Walton.

After the death of Oliver Cromwell in 1658, his successors could not govern effectively, and the instability resulted in the restoration of Charles II to the throne in 1660 and the beginning of the Restoration Period in British politics and literature.

The Restoration Period in the British history begins with the restoration of the Stuart King Charles II to the throne of England in 1660 and lasts up to 1700. Politically it includes the reign of King Charles II (1660 to 1685), King James II (1685 to 1688) and even Queen Anne (1701 to 1714). As a period in British literature, the Restoration gave rise to the drama in the form of Restoration comedy and heroic drama, Neoclassical poetry with its focus on satire and mock heroic became popular, and the beginning of the novel form and professional writing. The Restoration period also saw the beginning of journalism, diary writing, and modern criticism.

The important writers of this age were John Dryden, the representative poet, satirist, essayist, and dramatist (the Restoration period is also known as the Age of Dryden in British literature), poets Samuel Butler and John Oldham, prose writers John Bunyan, Sir William Temple, John Locke, diarists Samuel Pepys and John Evelyn, and dramatists William Wycherley and William Congreve.

### **1.2.2 Major events of the Restoration Period and their impact on literature –**

The restoration of King Charles II to the throne of England brought sweeping political and social changes in the English society. There was a strong backlash against the Puritans who had supported the execution of Charles I and the Royalists who supported the monarchy and Charles II rejected the unwise restraints, as well as moral ideals, virtues, and decorum of Puritan society.

Everything the Puritans represented was denounced and laughed at and this went to such extremes that social behavior particularly in the court became indecent and vulgar. Charles II, who had developed an interest in the French and Spanish literature during his exile, considered himself a patron of arts and sciences.

His personality and likes-dislikes, and his love for leisure and indulgence permeated within society, particularly in the narrow circles of his court and aristocracy. William Henry Hudson in his book, *An Outline History of English Literature*, writes that, “England now touched the low-water mark in its social history. The court of Charles II was the most shameless this country has ever known; infidelity and profligacy became fashionable; ..... the spirit of corruption spread far and wide, and while piety and goodness were cherished among individuals, the general lowering of the moral tone was everywhere apparent.” (Page 93)

**1.2.2.1 Founding of the Royal Society:** Charles II sponsored the Royal society which was founded on 28 November 1660. The member scientists and philosophers met to promote scientific thought in everyday life and challenge traditional knowledge based on faith and religion. This was also the beginning of the Enlightenment which paved the way for the emphasis on reason and logic. The members gathered to discuss, explain, criticize, and publish their thoughts and discoveries in scientific papers. These papers were available to the general public and were in a language easily understood by all, and hence had a deep impact on the language and literature of those times.

**1.2.2.2 Impact on Literature:** It is important to note that literature reflects the society, and the writers of the Restoration period followed the lead of their king and emphasized on leisure and indulgence. The general trend of both poetry and prose was towards satire, argument, spectacular and gimmick. Its focus was on reason, intellect and attention to form, and the subject matter for both poetry and prose was social life and manners, politics, and religion.

A new prose style was developed during this period, which marked the birth of modern English prose. The Restoration literature is intellectual, lucid and easy to understand due to short simple sentence structures, and plain without poetic imagination and expression. The poetry during this period is also more prosaic with definite form like the heroic couplet and is the vehicle for satire and argument instead of philosophy, imagination, or emotion. The noted thinkers and their works which brought about this new style of prose were John Locke, philosopher physician who wrote the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690) which became the foundation of Empirical and scientific thought in England, the astronomer, architect and founding member of Royal society Sir Christopher Wren, the theologian and natural philosopher John Wilkins helped to establish modern English prose, the excellent laboratory chemist and philosopher Robert Boyle, the physicist and philosopher Sir Isaac Newton who in 1687 wrote *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy* which solved the major problems posed by the Scientific Revolution in mechanics and cosmology, and the poet philosopher, politician and modern critic John Dryden.

**1.2.2.3 Re-opening of the Theatres** – Charles II lifted the ban on the theatres imposed by the Puritan regime and the drama recreated and evolved rapidly. Two patent companies viz King's company and the Duke's company were established, attractive and luxurious theatres were built with moving scenery, the proscenium arch was introduced, special effects like the fireworks, lightening, trapdoors, illusionist paintings, song, dance and music, elaborate costumes and witty dialogs with sexual innuendos made the Restoration plays spectacular and well-liked by the audience. The period also saw the appearance of female actors on the stage as well as professional playwrights like Aphra Behn (the first professional woman playwright), Dryden, Wycherley, and Congreve.

**1.2.2.4 Development of theatre and creation of new genres like heroic drama, comedy and slapstick bawdy drama called the spectacular which were peculiar to the Restoration period:** This period saw a revival and reinterpretation of Elizabethan plays, especially Shakespeare plays, and the borrowed technology, style and ideas from the French opera which created a genre of English opera or semi-opera. The plots were fast paced, and the language was witty with lewd undertones. While the heroic dramas celebrated the aggressively masculine heroes who were a representation of the King as well as the rebel nobles, the later trend shows a shift towards female central characters or tragic heroines who were essentially innocent and virtuous women and suffered through no fault of their own. These dramas were emotional and centered around the social life, man-woman relationships, money, politics, and religion. The playwrights wrote without any concern for morality and realistically showed the corruption, drinking, and gambling prevalent in the society. They wrote without any restraints and intended to shock the audiences. The language used by them was appropriate for the new kind of public which consisted of the aristocracy, their servants, the lower classes, and a growing middle class.

**1.2.2.5 Beginning of Journalism - Newspapers, Periodicals and Coffee houses:** During the Restoration period, political views were communicated to the public through pamphlets like *The News* and *The Observer* published by Robert L'Estrange. The beginning of professional journalism in England started in the Restoration period in the late seventeenth century with Henry Muddiman's *London Gazette* in 1665 which is published even now and John Dunton's *The Athenian Mercury* which ran successfully from 1690 to 1697. These periodicals printed the news from the royal court, political views and amusing questions and answers concerning health, love, and bizarre topics. The papers sold well and set the stage for serious political journalism in later years.

The Restoration period also saw the growth of coffee houses as places to meet, discuss, gossip and debate on politics. The first coffee house opened in 1650 at Oxford and by 1683 there were over two thousand coffee houses in London! These places were frequented by political figures, professionals like lawyers, doctors etc., thinkers, philosophers, scientists, intellectuals, members of the aristocracy, journalists as well as people from the middle and lower classes. The atmosphere was level and each person irrespective of his class and status could have a say.

**1.2.2.6 Development of ‘Modern’ Prose:** The patrons who frequented the coffee houses attracted journals, pamphlets, periodicals, national and foreign newspapers, and other publications. Supported by education policies and meeting places like the coffee houses, a large body of general readers grew which were not only aristocrats or learned people, but they were people from all walks of life. The writers now had to cater to the miscellaneous reading public and hence the prose changed to being simple, easy to understand by all and entertaining. Thus, the readers and writers appeared together on the literary scene and influenced each other. Moreover, the Restoration period was a time of intense political and religious upheaval and hence a lot of literature to that effect was published and discussed upon. The prose, thus, broke away from the earlier style and with its clear, short, plain, and direct style became the ‘modern’ prose that we know today.

**1.2.3 Literary Characteristics of the Restoration Period:** As discussed in the earlier sections, the restoration of Charles II made the royal court the center of politics, religion, and literature. The writers wrote to please the monarch and flattery and eulogy became the literary style. The society was divided into the supporters of the king (royalists) and the opposition party (dissidents) and political literature flourished as each party engaged in propaganda. The writers used satire to spread their political views and attacks on opposing parties and individuals, was very common. The scientific temperament fostered common sense and intelligence and literature became hard and unsympathetic, lacking imagination, emotion, and spirituality.

**1.2.3.1 Imitation of ancient Greek, Roman and French Classics:** Moody and Lovett in their *History of English Literature* point out that, “... in the greater part of the Restoration period there was awareness of the limitations of human experience, without faith in the extension of the resources. There was the disposition to accept such limitations, to exploit the potentialities of a strictly human world.” The writers, particularly the poets, looked up to the Greek classics as models of excellence and imitated their rhyme and rules.

The king, Charles II was inspired by French culture and literature and hence French tastes and ideas of art became popular in England. W H Hudson comments that during those times French literature was “characterized particularly by lucidity, vivacity, and -by reason of the close attention given to form – correctness, elegance and finish.” The English writers found a model and accordingly developed a prose and verse which was of the polite society, and followed principles of regularity, order and intelligence instead of spontaneity and imagination.

**1.2.3.2 Realism:** Restoration writers were preoccupied by the urban life in the cities and towns as well as the drama of royal court. Social behavior, manners, vices, and virtues were realistically depicted by the writers. They laid stress on correctness and appropriateness of feeling and moderate behavior adhering to strict rules of prose and poetry (heroic couplet – explained in the following sections)

**1.2.3.3 Rise of Neo-classicism:** The Restoration poets made a clean break from the earlier metaphysical poetry which was of personal nature and concerned itself with lofty subject matter of platonic love, philosophy, and the human condition. The Restoration poetry was more realistic and concerned itself with the current society, it applied to reason and used clear lucid language. Poetry was no longer lofty and spiritual but became prosaic (like prose), public in nature and a vehicle for argument and satire.

**1.2.3.4 Development of New Genres:** The Restoration writers developed and perfected new genres like satire and mock-heroic poetry, heroic couplet, comedy of manners and heroic tragedy. The poets John Dryden and Samuel Butler are responsible for the poetic development in the Restoration period. Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel* and Butler's *Hudibras* are excellent examples of satirical verses on the current political situation. Long fictions and fictional biographies were the beginnings of novels in this period and the noted prose writer and dramatist is Aphra Behn, the first professional female novelist. Her most famous novel was *Oroonoko* in 1688 which was a fictional biography, published as a "true history", of an African king who had been enslaved in Suriname. The comedy of manners was a unique theatrical genre of the period which had a combination of satire, and humor with hilarious bawdy language. It poked fun and ridiculed the social customs and behavior of the people and it reflected the atmosphere of the court. The main themes were love, marital relationships, sexual intrigue which appealed to middle-class and lower middle-class elements. The heroic dramas were tragedies which had dashing male heroes and the pathetic tragedies had virtuous and innocent heroines who suffered due to patriarchy. Diarists Samuel Pepys and Evelyn's honest and masterly accounts of the Restoration and the coronation of King Charles II, the horrors of the plague, and the Great Fire of London give us a complete documentation of the various aspects of the everyday life of a seventeenth-century intellectual.

**1.2.3.5 Restoration Poetry – (Epic, Mock epic, and Satire):** Restoration poetry is different in form to its earlier times because it is public in nature instead of personal. The poets had the ambition to be read and also to please their audience. Hence, they paid a lot of attention to form, sound of words, and clear/ lucid method to convey their thoughts to their readers and listeners. The Heroic/ closed couplet became the main feature because a complete idea could be presented in two lines of verse which rhymed together. Consider Alexander Pope's famous lines:

*'To err is human, to forgive divine'*

This kind of couplet was used in heroic poetry or epic poetry by Greek and Roman masters like Homer, Virgil and later Chaucer, Milton, and others. The noted Restoration poet John Dryden perfected the heroic couplet and the later Neo-classical poets like Alexander Pope used it to the extreme which led to its downfall and paved the way for spontaneity and emotion of Romantic poetry.

Epic - The love for Greek classics like *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Roman classic *Aeneid*, French epic *Roland's Song* inspired the Restoration poets to write a national epic



for England. An epic is a long heroic poem which is serious in nature, has a lofty elevated style and is centered on a heroic or semi-divine figure on whose actions depend the fate of the nation or human race. Milton wrote *Paradise Lost* in 1667 and the later poets like Sir William Davenant and John Dryden attempted to write epics using the ballad form and the heroic couplet respectively.

**1.2.3.6 Mock Epic and Satire:** The aesthetic imitation of the Restoration poets merged into parody and burlesque to create brilliant mock-epics. A mock epic or a mock heroic poem has an elaborate form and lofty style of an epic but uses it to narrate a very trivial subject matter. A burlesque and a parody imitate the form and style of a serious literary work to make it amusing by showing the ridiculous disparity between the matter and the style in which it is presented. The closed couplet form of poetry was very well suited for satire as it was easy to build logical arguments in two-line format and the end rhymes made the poem easy to recite in public.

Mock epics, parodies and burlesques are forms of satire which gained importance during the Restoration. The society was divided into groups along political and religious lines, and satire was an important tool to ridicule and criticize each other. The mock epics were better suited to the language, style and the spirit of the Restoration period and it prepared the ground for the growth of modern prose form of novel and modern realism. The first literary political satire and mock epic was Dryden's *Mac Flecknoe*. Dryden elevates a bad poet (Mac Flecknoe) to the status of Emperor Augustus and narrates the imaginary coronation of a dull poet. Through this satirical poem Dryden attacks the poet T S Shadwell. A satire on Puritans, *Hudibras* was written by Samuel Butler in three parts from 1663 to 1678. It was styled on the Spanish burlesque romance *Don Quixote* and ridicules the representatives of Puritanism, Sir Hudibras and his attendant Ralpho.

**1.2.3.7 Restoration Drama – (Comedy of Manners, Heroic Tragedy):** The theatre began to flourish in the Restoration period as it received the King's patronage and funds to establish drama companies and theatres. King Charles II had a passion for French drama and in England it was re-interpreted into semi-operas with singing and dancing along with special effects. Dryden's critique on drama *Essay of Dramatic Poesy* (1667) discusses the merits of ancient Greek and Latin drama, French classical drama, and the English Elizabethan dramas of Shakespeare and Ben Jonson.

The main types of Restoration dramas are i) Heroic tragedy and ii) Comedy of manners.

**1.2.3.7.1 Heroic Drama/ Tragedy:** This was a popular form where love, gallantry and courage were shown on a larger-than-life scale. It was a fusion of drama, melodrama, romance and opera inspired from the ancient Greek theatre and French classics. These plays were also called histories or tragedies though they were not necessarily sad. John Dryden was the master of this form, and he wrote heroic dramas in verse which had kings, queens, and important persons who battled for the possession of the crown and other grand objectives. These

plays were male dominated and showed their glories and conquests and the audience could see the King and nobles reflected in these characters.

Dryden's idea of heroic drama written in verse (heroic couplet form) was an imitation of the heroic epic and accordingly he gave three rules for the heroic drama - First, the play should be composed in heroic verse (closed couplets in iambic pentameter). Second, the play must focus on a subject that pertains to national foundations, mythological events, or important and grand matters. Third, the hero of the heroic drama must be powerful and decisive. Dryden's most important heroic plays written in verse are *The Conquest of Granada* (1676), *Aureng-Zebe* (1676), and *All for Love* (1678, an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*). Other heroic dramatists were Nathaniel Lee and Thomas Otway.

**1.2.3.7.2 Comedy of Manners:** This was a popular genre which combined realism, satire and humor to question and ridicule the manners and conventions of the so called sophisticated but artificial society. These plays were written in prose and sometimes combined tragedy with comedy in a way that showed the imperfections, frailties, and vices of human nature with comic entertainment. The comedy of manners as a genre is not new because the Greek and Roman satirists were known to stage comedies during the Renaissance and Shakespeare and the French playwrights like Moliere popularized them in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. During the Restoration period the comedy of manners reflected the atmosphere of King Charles II's court and celebrated the loose morals and aristocratic lifestyle. The early Restoration comedy playwrights are John Dryden, William Wycherley, and George Etherege whose unsentimental comedies were popular due to their witty dialogs with sexual undertones. For example The Earl of Rochester, real-life Restoration rake, courtier and poet, is flatteringly portrayed in Etherege's *Man of Mode* (1676) as a riotous, witty, intellectual, and sexually irresistible aristocrat. The later plays of the 1690s written by William Congreve and John Vanbrugh were mindful of the changing times and took into consideration the middle-class or socially miscellaneous audience and hence focused on marriage, money, and intrigue. Congreve's *The Way of the World* (1700) is an excellent example of the later Restoration comedy of manners.

**1.2.3.8 Diary Writing:** Diaries written in the Restoration period are an important part of literary development not only as a genre but also as recordings of historical events. Samuel Pepys (1620 -1706) and John Evelyn (1633-1703) were noted diarists who honestly and masterfully recorded their lives, beliefs, careers, and the society in which they lived. Both were friends and members of the Royal Society and mention each other in their diaries. Pepys was an important figure in the Royal Navy, and was a keen observer and witness to Charles II's coronation, the Great Fire of London in 1666, the plague 1665, and to the wars that England fought with the Dutch. He started writing his diary in 1660 and wrote for nine years. The manuscript diary was bound in handsome volumes and included as part of the library that Pepys gave to Magdalene College, Cambridge, his alma mater. It was discovered in the early nineteenth century and translated, edited,



and published. Pepys' style of writing is personal, frank and he reveals himself as an ordinary human being with virtues and frailties.

Evelyn was a cultivated gentleman who travelled in France and Italy as well as in England and later held a variety of public positions. He writes about travel, architecture, the arts of life and science experiments and discoveries during his time. He writes about the first blood transfusion and about his ideas for rebuilding the destroyed areas during the Great Fire of London in 1666. His interests in architecture and the welfare of the people are seen in his plans for improvement of its streets and buildings and purifying its air of factory smoke. His diary also provides an insight into the deep influence of religion on the day-to-day life of people. Evelyn wrote from 1641, at the age of twenty-one till his death in 1703.

Both men saw the Restoration period through their own perspectives and through their diaries bring to life the Restoration period in a very engaging and masterful manner.

**1.2.4 Important Writers and their Works** would be helpful to understand the style and content of the Restoration period and the literature which reflects it.

- John Dryden, the most noted poet of this period, was a supporter of monarchy as he wrote two poems, "To His Sacred Majesty: A Panegyrick on His Coronation" and "Astraea Redux: A Poem on the Happy Restoration and Return of His Sacred Majesty Charles the Second" to celebrate the restoration of Charles II.
- Dryden's ("Mac Flecknoe" and "Absalom and Achitophel") and Butler's ("Hudibras") political satires in verse helped popularize "mock heroic" poetry.
- John Locke's "Essay Concerning Human Understanding" was an important political tract which later influenced the American Revolution.
- John Evelyn and Samuel Pepys wrote diaries which are a record of personal life and events and provide a unique and realistic view of the English society of those times.
- Dryden's "Essay on Dramatic Poesy" established him as the first modern critic.
- The corruption, love for scandal and infidelity of the society are themes of the Restoration comedy plays and William Congreve's "Love for Love" and William Wycherley's comedy "The Country Wife" are excellent examples of the comedy of manners.
- The influence of French literature is seen on the plays of Dryden and Wycherley. William Wycherley's "The Plain-Dealer" is based on Molière's French comedy "The Misanthrope". John Dryden's play "An Evening's Love" is borrowed from Molière's French play "The Love-Tiff".
- John Milton's "Paradise Lost" and John Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" reflect the religious thought of their times.

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## 1.3 CONCLUSION

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The above discussion shows that the Restoration Age in English literature brought in quite different features as with his restoration to the English throne, King Charles II had supported the same kind of arts including literature with which he was familiar. This resulted in changing the overall approach of the artists towards their arts that further led to alter the taste of the receivers of those different art forms. In literature, the new forms of poetry and drama evolved that catered to the tastes of the new audience.

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## 1.4 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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1. Name two important political satires of the Restoration Period.
2. What was the impact of re-opening of the theatres on literature?
3. Name any two literary characteristics of the Restoration period.

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## **BACKGROUND AND IMPORTANT CONCEPTS - NEO-CLASSICAL AGE (1700 – 1798) - II**

### **Unit Structure**

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 The Augustan Period / Age of Pope (1700 – 1745)
- 2.3 The Age of Johnson (1745 – 1798)
- 2.4 Check Your Progress
- 2.5 References

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### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

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The objectives of this unit are:

- To make the students familiar with the Neo-Classical Age
- To enable the students to understand the contribution of various writers to the development of literature of Neo-Classical Age
- To introduce the students with socio-economic, political, historical and intellectual background of the Neo-Classical Age

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### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

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As mentioned in the previous unit, Neo-Classical Age is divided in three distinct periods and as the first period known as Age of Dryden is discussed above, here an attempt is made to discuss remaining two periods namely, Age of Pope and Age of Johnson.

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### **2.2 THE AUGUSTAN PERIOD/ THE AGE OF POPE (1700 – 1745)**

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This Age of English literature is called the 'Augustan' after the Roman Emperor Augustus (27 BC – AD 14) when brilliant poets like Virgil, Horace and Ovid flourished. The writers of the 18<sup>th</sup> century from 1700 to 1745 imitated the subjects, styles and importance to reason, intellect, moderation, decorum and social concerns of the classical Latin writers and saw themselves as parallels to the Augustan writers. The important Augustan writer was Alexander Pope who is

the representative of his Age and hence the name 'Age of Pope'. The other important 18<sup>th</sup> century writers were Jonathan Swift, Joseph Addison, Daniel Defoe, and Lady Montagu.

### **2.2.1 Characteristics of the Augustan Period –**

**2.2.1.1 Desire for moral improvement in the society** – The English people were becoming sick of the corruption and licentious behavior of the higher classes and desired a decency and morality in public life. The hatred for Puritan censorship and fanaticism remained and the earnestness and mysticism of the preceding Elizabethan Age was also disliked. The society was divided along the political and religious lines in a similar manner of the Restoration times.

**2.2.1.2 Influence of Materialism and Scientific Empiricism** – The thought of the Augustan age is shaped by thinkers, philosophers and scientists who supported and strengthened by the advancement of empirical science. The idea that all facts related to human mind, will and history are dependent on physical processes and human experience is the only source of knowledge, made Pope declare the limits of man and the artist as well.

*"Know then thyself, presume not God to scan  
The proper study of mankind is man!"*

Dr. Merin Simi Raj concludes that "Under the influence of empirical philosophy and experimental science, writers of the age narrowed both their vision of man and view of life. The affairs of men, their politics, their morals, and manners became the chief concern."

**2.2.1.3 Love for human nature** – Augustan poetry like its predecessor the Restoration poetry is 'town' poetry, and its subject matter is limited to society and its culture. The rural and humble aspects of life, passion and emotions, nature as in trees, rivers, landscapes are completely ignored.

**2.2.1.4 Extreme devotion to form** – The classical form of Greek and Latin poetry was applied to all subject matters creating a stereotype of highly artificial style of poetry. The constant and repetitive use of closed couplet made the poetry monotonous, narrow, and inflexible. During the Restoration times, the classical form and heroic/ closed couplet were admired because they were new and apt for their time but now, they created a false sense of refinement, and the naturalness and simplicity of expression was lost.

**2.2.1.5 Didactic and Satiric style of poetry** – The Augustans used poetry as a vehicle for argument, intellect, and reason and hence their poetry is mainly didactic (intended to teach) and satiric in nature. It lacked imagination and emotion. The poets distrusted anything to do with emotions, chivalry, idealism and hence broke away from Elizabethan literary style. Pope, the representative poet of this age, had no depth of feeling nor imaginative power but his 'wit', craftsmanship, cleverness, and the perfection of his closed couplet was and still is admired.

**2.2.1.6 Rise of prose in the form of fictional biographies, prose satires, periodical essays, and sentimental comedy plays** – Daniel Defoe’s fictional biographies like *Robinson Crusoe* and *Moll Flanders* became popular as he narrated fictional stories as if they were true! His prose was easy to read and colloquial and contributed to the development of the novel in future. Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* were not only children’s books but brilliant satires on English politics and the human condition. Addison and Steele’s periodical essays contributed to the development of taste for good English literature through good humor, wit, satire, and common sense. This period also saw the development of sentimental comedy drama which had characters from ordinary life and was genteel and didactic in style. This was a break away from the earlier bawdy comedy of manners during the Restoration period. The character sketches in the periodicals by Addison and Steele and the plots of the fictional biographies of Defoe were precursors to the novel.

**2.2.1.7 Rise of the literate middle class** – The writers of the age showed the power of middle-class moral spirit, and the subject matter was related to the common people and their concerns instead of heroic tales and historical or divine figures. This change came because the prose writers themselves belonged to the middle classes or professions. For example, Daniel Defoe was the son of a butcher and worked as hosier, tile factor, tradesman, government spy, printer etc. Swift was a vicar and a pamphleteer, and Addison was a soldier and politician. The early 18<sup>th</sup> century saw education reaching the working classes and women which directly resulted in an increased readership which was further encouraged by circulating libraries in the Augustan Age.

**2.2.2 Age of Satire** – The Augustan Age can be called as Age of Satire because it was omnipresent in all forms of writing, and political and religious debates. Alexander Pope, Jonathan Swift, and John Gay formed the School of Satire in the Scribbler’s Club. Swift developed a new style of satire where he combined satire with irony and parody and while skillfully adopting an art to say one thing in order to convey something else. Swift wrote prose and poetry and through his satires made scathing attacks on society. His prose satires *Tale of a Tub* (1703 – 1705) and *Gulliver’s Travels* (1726) are very well appreciated by readers and critics. *Tale of a Tub* was designed to show the corruptions of modern Christianity while *Gulliver’s Travels* was a mix of autobiography, allegory, and philosophy with satire. It is a critique of human vanity and pride. “Book one, the journey to Lilliput, begins with the world as it is. Book two shows that the idealized nation of Brobdingnag with a philosopher king is no home for a contemporary Englishman. Book four depicts the land of the Houyhnhnms, a society of horses ruled by pure reason, where humanity itself is portrayed as a group of "yahoos" covered in filth and dominated by base desires. It shows that, indeed, the very desire for reason may be undesirable, and humans must struggle to be neither Yahoos nor Houyhnhnms, for book three shows what happens when reason is unleashed without any consideration of morality or utility (i.e. madness, ruin, and starvation).” (source Wikipedia [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Augustan\\_literature](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Augustan_literature))



The Augustan poetry was dominated by Alexander Pope and mock epics and satires. His masterpiece is *The Rape of the Lock* (1712) is written in mock epic style using the closed couplet. It depicts an incident in which a certain nobleman Lord Petre cut a lock of hair of a beautiful young woman, Arabella, which led to a quarrel between the two families. This trivial occurrence is handled with all the dignity and seriousness of an epic which creates a parody. Pope's aim was to settle the disagreement between the families by showing the trivial nature of the quarrel. Pope's *The Dunciad* was a long and elaborate satire on his contemporaries whom he called bad and dull poets. His inspiration was Dryden's *Mac Flecknoe* written in the Restoration period.

### 2.2.3 Rise of the Periodical Essay and the Novel –

**Periodical Essays** - In the 18<sup>th</sup> century the important names associated with the periodical essays were Joseph Addison (1672 – 1719) and Sir Richard Steele (1673 – 1729). Addison was a soldier politician while Steele was a diplomat. While Steele was modern, easy-going, and sympathetic, Addison was urbane and of refined tastes in literature. They became famous as essayists and founded the daily publication *The Spectator* in 1711 which continued till Dec 1712.

The essays of Addison and Steele are important in developing a sense of decency and love for good literature in Augustan society. They avoided sweeping condemnations and wrote in fairness to all viewpoints. Their criticism used humor and ridicule to criticize the social vices. They wrote about English manners and social and domestic conduct in order to popularize English culture. Their subject matter ranged from poetry, drama, philosophy to art in an engaging and easy to understand manner thus educating the general reader and developing their taste for good literature and art. Their focus on women and their domestic concerns brought them into social and intellectual spheres. They also created delightful fictional characters like Mr. Spectator, Roger de Coverley, and Isaac Bickerstaff which laid the foundation of character writing as a precursor to the novel.

**2.2.4 A few examples of writers and their works** would be helpful to understand the style and content of the Augustan Age/ Age of Pope and the literature which reflects it –

**1704: Jonathan Swift publishes *The Battle of the Books* and *A Tale of the Tub* - witty satires about literature and religion.**

**1709: Richard Steele founds the periodical *The Tatler* – beginning of journalism**

**1711: Richard Steele and Joseph Addison found *The Spectator* - a daily journal**

**1711: Alexander Pope publishes *An Essay on Criticism***

**1712: Alexander Pope publishes *The Rape of the Lock* – a mock epic**

**1714: George I becomes King of England after Queen Anne dies**

**1719: Daniel Defoe publishes *Robinson Crusoe* – beginning of novel form and realistic writing**

Background and Important  
Concepts - Neo-Classical  
Age (1700 – 1798) - II

**1726: Jonathan Swift publishes *Gulliver's Travels* – prose satire**

**Age of Johnson (1740 to 1798) Begins -**

**1740: Samuel Richardson publishes *Pamela; or Virtue Rewarded* – first novel**

**1744: Alexander Pope dies**

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## **2.3 THE AGE OF JOHNSON (1745 – 1798)**

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This Age is also known as the Age of Sensibility and Transition. It culminated the Neo-classical tradition of literature and paved the way for the later Romantic Period. It is known for its prose, particularly the novel form.

### **2.3.1 Characteristics of the Age of Johnson –**

**2.3.1.1 Growth of Democracy and spread of humanitarian spirit –** Democracy, literacy and recognition of the individual character and quality of the human being became important, and it gave way to aristocracy and rigid class divisions. The French Revolution of 1789 made people familiar to the ideas of liberty, equality, and fraternity. This freedom and equality changed the mood of people, giving rise to new ideas which contradicted the artificiality and superficiality of the Augustan age. The ideas of French philosophers, particularly Rousseau, influenced the English thinkers bringing sentiment and democratic principles and paving the path to Romanticism.

**2.3.1.2 Growing sympathy for Middle Ages –** Use of ballad and folk literature – development of sentiment and imagination in literature- The Age of Sensibility focusses on works which have anticlassical features like the old ballads and new bardic poetry. They moved away from heroic and epic poetry as well as satire. Some fiction examples from the Age of Sensibility include Laurence Stern's *Tristram Shandy* (1759) and Henry Mackenzie's *The Man of Feeling* (1771). The poetry of William Collins, William Cowper, Thomas Gray, and Christopher Smart are also attributed to the Age of Sensibility.

**2.3.1.3 Foundation of English Lexicography/ compilation of dictionaries –** Samuel Johnson, for whom this period is known, undertook the immense task of compiling *A Dictionary of English Language* for a period of eight years from 1747 to 1755. Though this was a definite and expert dictionary, it laid the foundation of English lexicography, and it also gave him financial independence.

**2.3.1.4 Development of historical and political prose –** The best writings in the field of history and on English history were done in the Age of Johnson. David Hume wrote *The history of England*, William Robertson wrote *The history of Scotland*, *History of Charles V*, and *The history of America*. Edward Gibbon's *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* is praised by the critics as a

historical masterpiece. Edmund Burke's and Thomas Paine's political writings brought about new ideas and passion, morality and earnestness to politics.

**2.3.1.5 Development of letter writing as an important form of prose** – Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Philip Dormer Stanhope, the Earl of Chesterfield and Horace Walpole are important names in the art of letter writing. These writers developed their own unique style of prose, and their letters are chronicles of history, politics, social manners, gossips, manuals of polite behavior and travels. These letters paved the way for the novel in the future.

**2.3.1.6 Growth of love for Nature and Development of Naturalism** – The earlier Restoration poetry or Neo-classical poetry was predominantly 'town' poetry, but in the 18<sup>th</sup> century the poets revived the love for nature and wrote about the English and Scottish landscapes, shepherds, and the beauty of nature. The love for nature further increased the appreciation for the pastoral and reflected the contrast between nature and artificiality of civilization. It also focused on the simplicity of subject matter, language and realism of nature.

**2.3.2 Rise of the Novel** - The Novel as a form came from the mixture of two literary forms existing before it viz the epic and the romance. The epic was written in verse form with a considerable length. The storyteller in the epic narrated a traditional story which was a mixture of myth, history, and fiction and its heroes were gods and goddesses or extraordinary men and women. Excellent examples of classical Indian epics are Mahabharata and Ramayana, Persian epic Shahnameh, Greek epics Iliad and the Odyssey. The central idea of an epic was to depict the highest morals upheld by society in those times and the identity of a nation and its culture.

Romance like the epic, also told a story of chivalry and love with larger-than-life characters in verse. The main idea in Romance was the pursuit of an ideal. Romances were full of tales of duty, courage, boldness, battles, and rescues of damsels in distress. The events narrated in a romance were the symbols of primal desires, hopes, and terrors of the human mind and very much similar to the dreams, myths, and rituals. Some examples of classic romances are 'Sir Gawain and the Green Knight' 'The Count of Monte Christo', 'Jane Eyre' 'Rebecca', 'Dushyant Shakuntala', 'Nala Damayanti'.

**2.3.2.1 Historical Antecedents of the Novel** - Historically the epics can be traced back roughly to 400 BC in India when 'Mahabharata' was written and 612 BC when 'The Epics of Gilgamesh' was written. Later in the 12<sup>th</sup> century the French romances became popular, and the subjects of the epics shifted from moral tales of Gods and goddesses to the knights and ladies of the courts with their adventures filled with chivalry, love, magic, mystery, and enchantment. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the Italian writer Boccaccio started writing in prose and his 'Decameron' which was an adventure story written in prose influenced many notable writers like Malory and Chaucer. Hence Italy is considered as the home of the novel form. The 16<sup>th</sup> and the 17<sup>th</sup> century saw a growth in the novel form with new styles in writing like burlesques which made fun of romantic heroes. The Spanish writer Miguel De Cervantes wrote 'Don Quixote' where the knight

instead of fighting against giants and dragons fights with windmills! The picaresque style of writing was also made popular by Spanish writers where the hero was a rogue or a rascal!

**2.3.2.2 The English Novel** - By the end of 17<sup>th</sup> century, English writers John Bunyan and Aphra Behn (first female novelist) had established an important model of novel writing which had story telling with characterization and dialogues. The 18<sup>th</sup> century is known as the period when the novel as a form became distinguished from its predecessors, the epic and romance. The novel grew and developed to write about real life characters, particularly the middle-class men and women, instead of giants, dragons and knights rescuing damsels in distress. The novel also became popular due to the following –

Industrial Revolution – Industries brought machines which made it possible to work faster and thus provided more free time which could be used by people to read. The printing press also made it possible to print newspapers, journals, magazines and books easily at low costs, which made them accessible to all classes; rich and poor alike. The spread of education created a large reading class which included children and adults, both men and women.

Declining popularity of romances – The earlier romances told tales of kings and knights and the rising middle class did not find these stories interesting as they were far removed from their daily life experiences. They wanted something which was about them and their lives so the realistic novel written in first person depicting contemporary issues became popular. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the British parliament closed down the theatres and this resulted in people moving towards novels in search of entertainment.

Rise of the middle class and women as readers – The work in the factories got money in the pockets of the people and leisure time to spend that money. The improved living standards and access to education created a middle class which was huge market for books. The women too started getting educated, although on a small scale and became a part of the reading class. Public interest in the human character led to the popularity of autobiographies, biographies, journals, diaries and memoirs.

Rise of publishing houses – Earlier the writers had to have patrons who provided money for publication, but with the printing presses came the business of publishing which helped the writers eliminating the patrons. The writers now had control over their own works and could raise money to publish them. Thus, a career of writing and a business of printing was established.

Mobile libraries – The mobile libraries brought books to the doorstep of the readers. Thus, easy access and affordable costs made reading popular. The women readers were the most benefitted as they got access to books easily without stepping out of their houses.

The early English novels told stories of middle-class people struggling with their changing moral values and circumstances. *Pamela*, a series of fictional letters written in 1741 by Samuel Richardson, is considered the first real English novel.

It was an epistolary novel which means the story was narrated in the form of letters and thus explored what went on in the mind of the character. *Pamela* and the later *Clarissa* can both be described as novels of character or ‘psychological novels’

Richardson tries to define his idea of a novel as a story “if written in an easy and natural manner, suitable to the simplicity of it, might possibly introduce a new species of writing.... Turn young people into course of reading different from the pomp and parade of romance writing, and tend to promote the cause of religion and virtue.”

Henry Fielding, the most important novelist of the 18<sup>th</sup> century wrote his masterpiece *Tom Jones* (1749) to “expose some of the most glaring evils, as well public as private, which at present infect the country” (his own words). These early novelists were the first great writers in our literature who did not take their plots from mythology, history, legend, or previous literature. They established the novel as an authentic story of real life experiences of men and women.

The important characteristic of the 18<sup>th</sup> century is growing interest in the Middle Ages and it resulted in the revival of the Romances which expanded in the directions of imagination, mysticism, gothic, supernatural and horror. Horace Walpole’s gothic romance *Castle of Otranto* (1765), Ann Radcliffe’s *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) are excellent examples of gothic fiction.

**2.3.4 A few examples of writers and their works** would be helpful to understand the style and content of the Age of Johnson and the literature which reflects it –

**1749: Henry Fielding publishes *Tom Jones* – 18<sup>th</sup> century masterpiece**

**1754 – 61: Hume publishes *History of England***

**1755: Samuel Johnson compiles *English Dictionary***

**1765: Walpole publishes *Castle of Otranto* – first gothic novel**

**1773: Goldsmith’s drama *She Stoops to Conquer* is staged**

**1776-88: Gibbon publishes *decline and Fall of the Roman Empire***

**1783 – 1786: Poems of Blake, Cowper and Byron become popular**

**1789: Blake publishes *Songs of innocence***

**1798: Wordsworth and Coleridge publish the *Lyrical Ballads* – Beginning of Romantic Age**

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## 2.4 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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1. Name two characteristics of the Augustan period.
2. What was Addison and Steele’s most important contribution to English literature?

3. Why is the Augustan period called the Age of Satire?
4. Give one example of a mock epic by Alexander Pope.
5. Name two reasons for the growth of novel in England.
6. What was Samuel Johnson's most important contribution to English literature?
7. Give two examples of gothic novels

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## JOHN DRYDEN'S ALL FOR LOVE - I

### Unit Structure

#### 3.0 Objectives

#### 3.1 Introduction

#### 3.2 Critical Summary of the Play *All for Love*

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### 3.0 OBJECTIVES

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To make the learners understand:

- The importance of choice that humans have to make and its consequences.
- the features of Heroic drama
- the art of John Dryden

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### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

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John Dryden was born on 9 August 1631, Aldwincle, Northampton shire, England and died 1 May 1700, London, was an English poet, literary critic, translator, and playwright who in 1668 was appointed England's first Poet Laureate.

*Restoration drama* flourished from 1664 to 1684 and was notably different from earlier English drama in several important ways. For one, women were allowed to act on the English stage for the first time. The Restoration period also saw the rise of women playwrights like Aphra Behn, whose most celebrated play was *The Rover* (1677), a comedy of manners involving the sexual and romantic lives of a group of banished royalist noblemen. Her work is characteristic of the Restoration period in its emphasis on raunchy dialogue and sexually explicit content, themes that also typify other well-known Restoration plays like George Etherege's *The Man of Mode* (1676) and William Wycherley's *The Country Wife* (1675). Restoration comedies frequently focused on rakes, virgins, unfaithful wives, and other stock types, Restoration tragedies—the sort of play that Dryden was writing—was serious and aimed to imitate European models. Dryden is seen as dominating the literary life of *Restoration England* to such a point that the period came to be known in literary circles as the *Age of Dryden*. Romanticist writer Sir Walter Scott called him "Glorious John". Besides being the greatest English poet of the later 17th century, Dryden wrote almost 30 tragedies, comedies, and dramatic operas. He also made a valuable contribution in his commentaries on poetry and drama, which are sufficiently extensive and original to entitle him to be considered, in the words of Dr. Samuel Johnson, as "the father of English criticism." John Dryden was a prolific playwright, creating heroic plays, political plays, operas, heroic tragedies, comedies, and tragicomedies; however, he is best remembered for his poetry and criticism, as many of his plays did not stand the test of time. *All for Love; or, the World Well Lost*, is a 1677 heroic drama by John Dryden which is now his best-known and most performed play. It is a tragedy written in blank verse and is an attempt on

Dryden's part to reinvigorate serious drama. *All for Love*, a tragedy is an imitation of Shakespeare's earlier great work *Antony and Cleopatra* (pr. c. 1606-1607), but it focuses on the last hours of the lives of Anthony and Cleopatra. Dryden himself commented that he had never written anything "for myself but Antony and Cleopatra." The drama reflects Dryden's vision of tragedy, sometimes designated by critics as "heroic tragedy" to indicate certain similarities to the heroic play. Unlike the heroic plays, this is written in blank verse and its source is Shakespearean and recognizes his gratitude not only to Plutarch but also to Appian and Dion Cassius in the prologue to *All for Love*. Although it has fewer of the epic dimensions of the heroic play and the characters are realistic. Dryden succeeds in presenting human emotions in part because the medium of blank verse is more suited to emotional expression, he achieves the effects of pathos and sentiment rather than pity and fear. English heroic drama was influenced by French dramatist Racine but Dryden in writing *All for Love* followed English critic Thomas Rymer, who emphasized the necessity of dealing out poetic justice in drama and another French writer by the name of Racin. Therefore, *All for Love* teaches audiences to regard illicit love as something obnoxious and deserving punishment, at the same time he excites our sympathy and admiration for both Anthony and Cleopatra.

In *All for Love*, Dryden follows the dramatic unities of time, place, and action, which he regarded as ornaments of tragedy, though not indispensable. The hero, Antony, is presented on the final day of his life, which happens to be his birthday. Facing imminent defeat at the hands of Octavius, he encounters temptations to abandon the great passion of his life, Cleopatra, in order to prolong the contest or to minimize the consequences of the loss. Restrictions inherent in the dramatic unities result in characters that are not nearly so complex as those of the source, Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra. Cleopatra neither wavers in her devotion to Antony nor reflects at length on her role as queen, as she does in Shakespeare's tragedy. Dryden's Ventidius shares qualities drawn from Shakespeare's character of the same name but also from Shakespeare's Enobarbus, the devoted adviser who abandons Antony. This drama involves a generous amount of sentimentality compared to other plays of Dryden. Dryden achieves in *All for Love* an intensity that is lacking in most of his plays, one whose emotional effects are not dissipated through digressions or loosely related subplots. The play reveals a tightly unified plot line in which characters' motives and actions are influenced primarily by strong romantic love. The play is dedicated to Earl of Danby.

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### 3.2 CRITICAL SUMMARY OF THE PLAY ALL FOR LOVE

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**Prologue:** "Errors, like straws, upon the surface flow; / He who would search for pearls must dive below". The prologue begins by observing that poets often have to fear the responses of critics, who wait like "vultures" for their prey. Dryden admits that he has come "unarmed" to the fight, he doesn't have the authority of tradition to shield him. For example, he has abandoned a rhyming scheme in favor of blank unrhymed verse

He introduces the principal characters: Antony, a decent but "somewhat he doesn't have the authority of tradition to shield him. For example, he has abandoned a rhyming scheme in favor of blank unrhymed verse at lewd" man, his wife Octavia, and his mistress Cleopatra.

**Act I:** The play opens with the discussion of some citizens of Egypt. Serapion tells his fellows about the queer supernatural incidents that he witnessed last night. Alexas, the eunuch, who is in the service of Cleopatra comes to them and scolds Serapion for telling his cooked dreams to others and warns him of doing so. Ventidius, a Roman knight comes. Alexas recognizes him and tells the citizens that though he hates Ventidius, yet it cannot be denied that he is the bravest Romans.

As Alexas sees Ventidius approaching him, he announces that Egypt will celebrate Antony's birthday with great pomp and show. Ventidius is displeased with the Alexas announcement as Antony's life is in danger and Egyptians are celebrating his suffering.

Ventidius goes to Alexas and abuses Cleopatra as "she has quite unmanned him (Antony)". He says that Antony was a brave soldier but Cleopatra has made him useless with her false love. Ventidius then asks about Antony and is told that he is quite depressed and does not meet anybody. Ventidius, being a close friend of Antony, goes to him. Antony first repels him but when Ventidius weeps, he feels pity and both are reconciled. Ventidius praises his chivalry and asks him to accompany him to River Nile, where 10,000 brave soldiers are waiting for him so that he may command them to fight against Caesar.

Antony first denies his proposal but at last, agrees to quit Egypt. Ventidius talks about Cleopatra saying that she has ruined his life. Antony doesn't like words against Cleopatra and asks him to prevent such statements. However, he agrees to leave her for the sake of honour.

**Act II:** Alexas has informed Cleopatra about the discussion of Antony and Ventidius. Cleopatra becomes sorrowful. Charmion enters and talks about the current situation. Alexas tells Cleopatra a plan by which Antony will probably change his mind. Meanwhile Alexas enters the chamber of Anthony where Antony and Ventidius ridicule and laugh at the cowardice of Octavius Caesar. Alexas informs Anthony that Cleopatra has prayed for him and also given some gifts as a token of her love. As Alexas distributes gifts to the soldiers but Ventidius calls them "poisoned gifts" rejects them and saying, "I'm not ashamed of honest poverty, nor all the diamonds of the east can bribe Ventidius from his faith." Antony, in spite of Ventidius's disapproval, accepts the gift but is unable to wear it. As Cleopatra enters, Antony starts blaming her of every untoward incident that have happened in his life, right from losses in wars or bad relations with his wives or even Cleopatra being unfaithful to him or a run away.

Cleopatra, to defend herself first tells him that though she had given her body to Julius Caesar, but her soul belongs to Antony. To prove her faithfulness and loyalty, she also shows a page to him on which a message is written which Antony recognizes as the writing of Octavius Caesar in which Octavius has promised safety to Cleopatra if she betrays over Anthony to him. Antony melts. Alexas exclaims, "He melts, we conquer." Antony and Cleopatra are reconciled. Ventidius, is annoyed and helpless, goes away saying, "O women! Women! All the gods have not such power of doing good to man, as you of doing harm."

**Act III:** Antony and Cleopatra are enjoying the pleasures of love, "In thy embrace, I would be beheld by heaven and earth at once." As Ventidius enters, Antony wants to leave the room unnoticed but is challenged to return back to army. Anthony has no desire to repeat the past and boasts that he has killed 5000 Romans (of Octavius Caesar). Ventidius says that Octavius is not short of the army and danger stills prevail over them. Ventidius then brings Dolabella who

was exiled from Egypt because he fell in love with Cleopatra. When Anthony meets Dolabella, he criticizes Anthony for being a servant of Cleopatra and pleads Anthony to befriend and reconcile with Octavia so that the danger of Caesar will wither away. As a part of Anthony's return to Rome Ventidius also brings Octavia and her daughters but Anthony remains cold to them. Dolabella and Ventidius scold him for his behaviour and force him to accept his wife and daughters. Anthony, at last, accepts them and once again agrees to quit Egypt. Meanwhile, Cleopatra is informed about the reconciliation between Anthony and Octavia.

Alexas once again ensures her that Anthony will change his decision. Octavia enters the inner chambers of Cleopatra where they both indulge in a heated discussion over Anthony. Octavia goes away and Cleopatra fears that she has lost Anthony

**Act IV:** This scene is a rehash of mousetrap scene where Anthony forces Dolabella to bid his goodbye to Cleopatra as he lacks the courage to do so. Dolabella while going to Cleopatra conspires of deceiving his friend by proposing Cleopatra.

Meanwhile, Alexas induces Cleopatra to show Anthony that she loves Dolabella and out of jealousy, Anthony will return back to her. Dolabella pretends that he is crestfallen by the unfaithfulness of Anthony towards Cleopatra. But soon realizes his mistake of doing so because Cleopatra faints after listening to the lies of Dolabella. Dolabella repents and tells Cleopatra the truth Cleopatra also tells him the real motive of flirting with him (to make Anthony jealous). Ventidius and Octavia hearing partly the discussion assumes that Cleopatra and Dolabella have fallen in love with each other They run to inform Anthony about it but he does not believe in them. Ventidius in order to prove his statement brings Alexas, who gives his consent to Ventidius and Octavia. Anthony is quite enraged. A little later, Dolabella and Cleopatra enter, who are unaware of the situation. Anthony blames both of them for being deceitful. They protest but Anthony dominates. Both go away sorrowfully.

**Act V:** Cleopatra blames Alexas for bringing her to such a situation and orders this eunuch to resolve the matter. On the advice of Serapion, she goes to her castle to remain safe. In the meantime, Alexas goes to Anthony and tells him that Cleopatra has committed suicide. Anthony recognizes the innocence of Cleopatra and considers the world and the kingdom to be useless for him without her. He asks Ventidius to kill him. But Ventidius instead kills himself. Anthony in a flinch with his sword gives himself a deadly wound. Meanwhile, Cleopatra is informed about suicidal wound inflicted by Anthony on himself, she rushes to Anthony to reconcile but it is too late. Anthony dies in her lap. A little later Cleopatra dies in the arms of Anthony by making a snake bite her. Egypt is conquered by Caesar. Thus, inaugurating the beginning of the Roman Empire and the end of the Roman Republic.

**Epilogue:** In his appeal Dryden suggest that audiences should emotionally respond to the story of Anthony and Cleopatra. Their choice of passion over reason-sacrificing "all for love"-will go straight to the hearts of the audiences rather than to the minds. But the final verdict belongs to the judgement of the audiences whether to admire or condemn the two lovers who gave up everything or "*All for Love*", "*Sleep blest pair/And fame to late posterity shall tell/No lovers lived so great and died so well*" (V.i.514-519)

In spite of the flawlessness of technique and structure, the play fails to inspire that feeling of awe and pity which audiences experience while reading Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*. In fact, the play lacks that emotional fire and ardour which Shakespeare's play does possess. But the play offers an "excellent moral" in its depiction of the unfortunate consequences of "unlawful love." Antony and Cleopatra are the ideal tragic protagonists because they are neither pictures of "perfect virtue" nor "altogether wicked." This middle course in their characterization makes them sympathetic figures. Dryden didn't stop from making significant changes to Shakespeare's version of the story. Unlike Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, *All for Love* is set entirely in Egypt rather than Rome and focuses narrowly on the romantic lives of its two protagonists, including an invented love triangle featuring a new character, Dolabella. In this sense, the play is much more a romantic tragedy than Shakespeare's political drama and is aptly called 'high tragedy.' But it must be acknowledged that in plot construction Dryden strictly abides by Greek unities, the convention in classical drama that all the action of a play should take place in the same place and within twenty-four hours. As a result, he has used artistic license in making Octavia, Antony's Roman wife, come to Egypt and (unhistorical) meet Cleopatra. He also demonstrates the Neo-classical love of order, organization, design, and logical progression of thought. The play was very popular and revived twice: at Lincoln's Inn Fields in February 1704, and at Drury Lane in December 1718. The character list of *All for Love* features a list of the actors who played the roles in the original 1677 production are Charles Hart as Marc Antony and Elizabeth Boutell as Cleopatra; both were well-known in the Restoration period, which was the first historical moment of "celebrity" actors who had mass name recognition among the population. This drama exerted a tremendous influence on the upcoming genre, and became a prototype to *Sentimental Tragedy* of the 18th Century.





## JOHN DRYDEN'S ALL FOR LOVE – II

### Unit Structure

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 The Major Characters
- 4.2 The Major Themes
- 4.3 The Use of Symbols
- 4.4 Conclusion
- 4.5 Check Your Progress
- 4.6 Bibliography

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### 4.0 OBJECTIVES

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This unit will enable the students to understand:

- The major characters
- The major themes
- The use of symbols

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### 4.1 THE MAJOR CHARACTERS

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**4.1.1. Antony:** At the time of the events of *All for Love*, Antony is a renowned Roman general and political leader. Described as “emperor of half the world,” he rules Rome with two other politicians, including Octavius. Examines Antony’s character. Claims that he is a “Herculean hero” because he is brave, generous, passionate, and indifferent to public opinion. For all his power and prestige, however, he has a fatal weakness: his love for the Egyptian queen Cleopatra. Since first meeting Cleopatra ten years earlier, he has been living in Egypt as her lover and unofficial consort. This choice has involved many sacrifices: he abandoned his first wife Fulvia and his second wife Octavia, Octavius’s sister, along with their children. It has also led to disastrous political consequences. Enraged at the insult to his sister, Octavius has brought an army to attack Antony and Cleopatra in Egypt. By the end of play, Antony has lost everything: his army, his power, and his throne. He is a tragic figure, described as a noble, honorable man undone by his fatal romantic passion. His friend Ventidius observes that Antony is naturally given to “virtue,” but that he sometimes “bounds into a vice” (i.e. his love for Cleopatra) that draws him off course. For Dryden, Antony’s mixed temperament—neither a model of “perfect virtue” nor “altogether wicked”—makes him a sympathetic figure. He is not flawless, but neither is he

villainous. He is also a romantic hero because he allows himself to be ruled by his passions. Although Antony highly values his honor and reputation, he ultimately chooses his love for Cleopatra above all other considerations, deciding to die with her in Egypt—and thus giving up rule of half of the world for love. “[The crimes of love which they both committed were not occasioned by any necessity or fatal ignorance, but were wholly voluntary, since our passions are, or ought to be, within our power”

**4.1.2. Cleopatra:** Cleopatra is the queen of Egypt and the lover of Antony. She is famously beautiful and charismatic, and by her own account has received many marriage proposals. But although she has been involved with other men before—most notably Julius Caesar, before the events of the play—she is unshakably loyal to Antony, whom she regards as her great love. For instance, although she toys with the possibility of flirting with Antony's friend Dolabella in order to make Antony jealous, she ultimately can't go through with it because she loves Antony too much. She is jealous of Antony's legal wife, Octavia, and frequently laments her socially degraded status as Antony's mistress. She is tempestuous, passionate, and self-dramatizing. For example, she alternatively rages and cries in order to stop Antony from leaving Egypt. And she is theatrical to the end of her life, when she commits suicide dressed in her crown and royal robes. She dies in order to avoid humiliating capture by Octavius, demonstrating her pride in her royal lineage as well as her romantic devotion to Antony. Seeing that he is dead, she declares that her life is no longer living. She hopes they will meet in heaven and be waited on by many loving couples—demonstrating that she sees herself as a great success as a romantic heroine, if not as a ruler. The crimes of love which they both committed were not occasioned by any necessity or fatal ignorance, but were wholly voluntary, since our passions are, or ought to be, within our power.

**4.1.3. Ventidius:** Ventidius is a general in the Roman army and one of Antony's oldest and closest friends. He is fiercely proud, honorable, and eager to fight in war rather than remain in the palace. He is depicted as Antony's “other half” in the Platonic sense—which is to say, the classical ideal of friendship in the writings of Plato, in which friends are imagined as sharing the same soul. And indeed, in some ways, Ventidius does know Antony very well, having experienced many battles with him. But he also proves that he doesn't understand Antony in some fundamental ways. For instance, he is harshly critical of his love affair with Cleopatra, calling Antony her “slave” and a ruined man who has lost everything for “this toy,” as he refers to Cleopatra. He thinks Cleopatra is a dangerous seductress and constantly works with her enemies (including Antony's abandoned wife Octavia) to try to turn Antony against her. In his hatred of Cleopatra, he misses the fact that she is not wholly responsible for the changes in Antony's fortunes—he made those choices himself. He also fails to understand the depth of the love Antony has for Cleopatra, such that Antony would prefer to die with her rather than make peace with Octavius. He only comes to realize this at the end of the play, when Antony asks him to help him commit suicide. Ventidius stabs himself instead, demonstrating his own love and loyalty to Antony. Although Ventidius is a flawed reader of people, then, he is unmistakably a constant friend to Antony.

“Can any Roman see and know him now? Thus altered from the lord of half mankind,

Unbent, unsinewed, made a woman’s toy,

Shrunk from the vast extent of all his honours,

And cramped within a corner of the world?

unbreakable bonds that encircle Antony’s heart.’

As said above the source is its Shakespearean, “In my Stile I have profess’d to imitate the Divine Shakespeare....I hope I need not explain myself, that I have not Copy’d my Author servilely: Words and Phrases must of necessity receive a change in succeeding Ages: but ’tis almost a Miracle that much of his Language remains so pure...” But we must acknowledge that there is a balance between respectful imitation and individual innovation immediately turns into a divided remark on language change in *All for love*. Dryden also accepts that language change is inevitable, especially in the characterization. *All for Love* is a socially and politically a subversive play because it challenges the power and their claim by holding up for our admiration an unlawful but fully achieved love. Dr. Johnson was well aware of the kind of effect Dryden's play produced on the readers and the audiences. According to Dr. Johnson, *All for Love* "has one fault equal to many, though rather moral than critical, that by admitting the romantic omnipotence of love, Dryden has recommended as laudable and worthy of imitation that conduct which, through all ages, the good have censured as vicious and the bad have despised as foolish." Dr. Johnson's comment, with its awareness that Dryden was recommending neither the values of conventional marriage nor the reckless indulgence in the pleasures of the flesh, is one of the best interpretations of the play. This play language is filled with imagery and deep meaning as it is, for example Serapion is describing the portent he has witnessed, and while his language is vividly descriptive, it is also clear and not overly ornate: “A whirlwind rose, that, with a violent blast / Shook all the dome: the doors around me clapt.” The language allows us to imagine the doom coming by its directness and flowing simplicity. The linguistic change and the resulting desire for purity and stability are entirely in keeping with Dryden's well-known commitment to language reform.

To conclude this drama, “portrays man in an environment of inner and outer instability...it mirrorizes ideals of political authority which Dryden formulates in the role of Anthony: “the world / Should have a lord, and know whom to obey”. Although Dryden is in favor of some degree of personal freedom, when it comes to outright rebellion, he is stern. He thinks that all attempts at “reform” are dangerous, since any rebellion even if it just claims to want to reform rather than take down the government strikes at “the root of power, which is obedience”. While *All for Love* offers a sympathetic depiction of two lovers, Antony and Cleopatra, who rebel against forms of political and social authority, Dryden doesn’t allow them to triumph. This suggests the play’s fundamental political

conservatism. In the end, Antony and Cleopatra commit suicide and Octavian takes power as sole emperor—thus teaching the world “whom to obey.”

John Dryden's *All for Love* – II

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## 4.2 THE MAJOR THEMES

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**4.2.1. Authority and Freedom:** *All for Love* dramatizes the clash between the forces of authority in the world and the desire for personal freedom. The former is represented by Rome under the new emperor Octavius, with its strict laws, military power, and strong central government. The latter is represented by Egypt under Antony and Cleopatra, a kingdom outside the sway of the Roman Empire yet that values pleasure and personal choice. The clash between Octavius and Antony is particularly resonant for Dryden, who was writing in the aftermath of significant political upheaval. Dryden wrote. Throughout the play, Dryden argues that authority and freedom should be mixed, though he particularly extols the value of authority in the form of a strong government. The fact that the play ends with Antony and Cleopatra's double suicide, the ascent of Octavius and the end of the Roman Republic suggests that Dryden was strongly invested in the assertion of hierarchical political authority, even as he values the romantic freedom and passion of his central protagonists.

**4.2.2. Honor and Love:** As Antony observes, “we have loved each other / Into our mutual ruin.” Love leads to “ruin” because it draws down Octavius's wrath upon them, leading to the destruction of their army and their joint suicide. Throughout *All for Love*, Antony is conflicted about whether he cares more for honor or love. At times, he thinks of leaving Cleopatra in order to preserve his honor as a husband, father, and political leader; he claims that he loves her beyond “life, conquest, empire” yet not beyond “honour.” In reality, however, he can't go through with it, suggesting that he does not in fact value honor more than love. Ultimately, he decides that “the world” is “not worth my care” in comparison to Cleopatra, and chooses suicide and military defeat in order to be by her side.

**4.2.3. Continuity and Change:** *All for Love* is a play preoccupied with change. It asks how the sudden loss of power impacts two people, Antony and Cleopatra, whose sense of self been defined by their status as two of the ancient world's most powerful monarchs. Antony's response to the ruination of his fortunes is to constantly speculate about how his time in Egypt has changed him. Cleopatra, too, is obsessed with retaining her royal authority even as that power slips away from her. The decline and fall of the historical lovers Antony and Cleopatra offer a new, updated version for seventeenth-century English audiences that speak to their own concerns. In this sense, Dryden sees the authority of antiquity and English literary history itself as subject to change and alteration. His willingness to innovate—inserting new characters, new verse styles, and unhistorical events—further implies his overarching interest in the theme of change and suggests the value of creating art that resonates with contemporary audiences. Antony and Cleopatra in that, like other fictional depictions of the lovers, he has drawn heavily on classical sources (particularly Plutarch) in his generally positive depiction of the protagonists. However, his version is more

contemporary in that it is written in a “neoclassical” style. *All for Love* is written exclusively in blank verse (non-rhyming poetry) rather than rhyme. In the 1600s, blank verse was a relatively new innovation and was associated with progress, as when John Milton claimed in *Paradise Lost* (1678) that he was restoring poetry to “liberty” by freeing it from the “bondage” of rhyme. Another major innovation is that Dryden uses artistic license in making Octavia, Antony’s Roman wife, come to Egypt and meet Cleopatra. In the preface, he defends himself for creating this fictional meeting on the grounds that it is dramatically necessary. Antony almost leaves Cleopatra to return to his wife Octavia, a decision that throws Cleopatra into despair. Ultimately, however, Antony decides to remain on the grounds that it is better to be constant and loyal, even in a technically illegitimate and illegal love affair. In this sense, Antony is paradoxically a disloyal and changeable husband to Octavia and a constant lover to Cleopatra. For Dryden, this constancy in love is what makes Antony and Cleopatra admirable. Although they may have neglected their public and political duties, they are models of loyal lovers. For Antony, change is also defined as cultural difference. He clearly sees himself as Roman still: for example, he declares that “I’m a Roman, / Bred to the rules of soft humanity.” The present tense—“I am a Roman”—suggests that Antony thinks this aspect of his identity has remained constant, despite the ten years he has spent in Egypt. At the same time, however, Ventidius suggests that there is something about Antony that isn’t quite Roman anymore: “Can any Roman see and know him now?” he asks. This raises questions about what it means to be a Roman—does it require being in Rome, or is it a certain set of behaviors and values that can survive the loss of Rome itself? Similarly, Cleopatra tries to reassert her identity even when she has lost everything. Just before her suicide, Cleopatra dresses herself in her finest royal robes and seats herself beside Antony on the throne of Egypt. This is a reminder of their former greatness, demonstrating to the onlookers that she is still queen of Egypt, even if Octavius has conquered her country. After learning that Cleopatra has allegedly died, Antony says that he has no more desire for power and glory. He admits that “I was but great for her; my power, my empire / Were but my merchandise to buy her love.” Throughout the play, people have accused Antony of losing his empire for love of Cleopatra. In this moment, however, Antony suggests that it is precisely the opposite: he only had an empire in the first place because of her. In this way, the real constant of *All for Love* turns out to be Antony and Cleopatra’s love for each other, not the rise and fall in their political fortunes.

**4.2.4. Passion and Reason:** *All for Love* might be regarded as one of the early texts of Romantic “sentimentalism”—a literary movement largely associated with the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that emphasized passion, sentiment, and feeling over rational considerations. Dryden clearly hoped that his play would appeal to the finer feelings of audiences, particularly women, since he writes in his verse epilogue that he hopes that he will be judged by the “fair sex,” who will enjoy the story of a man, Antony, who died “all for love.” Ultimately, *All for Love* is the story of the tragic outcomes that result from choosing passion over reason. Yet the play also suggests that passion is “noble,” admirable, and appealing as a character trait—and that however “unreasonable,” Antony and Cleopatra are tragic because they choose passion over the cold-hearted logic that

would see them separate. Reason would dictate that they prioritize their duties as rulers above their personal life, but their feelings for each other are so powerful that they cannot be controlled or contained. Cleopatra even calls her love a “noble madness.” Cleopatra says that only low-born people have “moderate sadness”; she has “transcendent passions” that “soar ... quite out of reason’s view.” In this way, the “transcendence” of her passion is associated with the nobility of her social position as a queen. Similarly, Antony also claims that “I have lost my reason” because of his love. Dryden is careful to stipulate that Antony and Cleopatra have the capacity for both reason and passion but she chooses passion over reason which results in tragedy. *All for Love* is not a tragedy in classical sense of a hero who is subject to a fate beyond his control. Antony and Cleopatra did not commit their “crimes of love” by any “necessity or fatal ignorance.” Their choice was “wholly voluntary, since our passions are, or ought to be, within our power. “This free choice is what makes Antony and Cleopatra such appealing tragic protagonists. They are neither pictures of “perfect virtue” nor “altogether wicked.” This “middle course” in their characterization makes them sympathetic figures. The dichotomy between reason and passion is particularly stark in Antony’s choice between Cleopatra and his wife Octavia. It is certainly the more reasonable choice for Antony to go back to Octavia, thus returning to his family and making peace with her brother Octavius. However, her reasonableness is in the question as why he can’t love her, Antony admits, that he cannot leave Cleopatra. “I can ne’er be conquered but by love, / And you do all for duty. For Antony, passion is what motivates romantic love—and by extension, the drama of his downfall.

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### 4.3 THE USE OF SYMBOLS

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The use of symbols is immense and used in the foreshadowing in the drama. Foreboding omens (of storms, whirlwinds, and the flooding of the Nile) of Egypt's impending doom are the symbols used. Nature is also associated with achievement of heroic ideals, ‘Twas I blew up the fire that scorched his soul, ...In spite of all the dams my love broke o’er, And drowned my heart again (IV.516-20)

Similarly, Anthony speaks of “The rivers ran in, and raised my fortunes”(III.130)The image of **meteor** is used to describe Anthony’s career(I.206-09) Contrasting to these symbols water is used as loss , “ebbing love”(II.165) **Dryness, coldness, and infertile land** is used as symbols, “My torch is out”(V.286)”a few cold ashes”(I.221), “dull, insipid lump, without desires”(II.83) and “a lump of senseless clay”(V.409)Cleopatra’s **ruby bracelet** in the most obvious sense, the bleeding hearts symbolize Cleopatra’s love for Antony and pain at his departure. However, this symbol of Cleopatra’s love also contains another, subtler message. Cleopatra’s servant Alexas, who delivers the bracelet, tells Antony that Cleopatra hopes the bracelet “may bind your arm.” This may mean simply that the bracelet will literally encircle Antony’s arm—but the word “bind” also carries connotations of restraint and imprisonment. This is not the only time the metaphor of bonds is used to describe the relationship between Antony and Cleopatra. Antony’s friend Ventidius, for instance,



compares Cleopatra's love to "golden bands" that have captured Antony and led him to his "ruin." This turns out to be an apt metaphor, for the bracelet does indeed "bind" Antony to Egypt and make it impossible for him to leave. The bracelet symbolizes both Cleopatra's love and the power.

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#### 4.4. CONCLUSION

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To conclude it can be said that John Dryden is a promising dramatist having mastery over his art that has been reflected in his play, *All For Love*. The play is well-constructed divided into different acts. The characters are nicely created having the mixture of both round and flat characters. The play is based on certain solid themes that enable it to reach to the larger audience. The use of apt symbols is one more important aspect of the play.

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#### 4.5 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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- 1) Discuss the major themes in All for Love?
- 2) Write a short note on the characters of Anthony and Cleopatra
- 3) Describe the roles of Alexas and Ventidius in the conflict of the drama.
- 4) Write a note on the language and the use of symbols in All for Love
- 5) Write a summary of the drama All for Love

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John Dryden's All for Love – II



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## OLIVER GOLDSMITH'S SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER-I

### Unit Structure

- 5.0 Objectives
- 5.1 Introduction: Oliver Goldsmith
- 5.2 Background to the play *She Stoops to Conquer*
- 5.3 Introduction to Major Characters in the play *She Stoops to Conquer*
- 5.4 *She Stoops to Conquer*: Summary
- 5.5 Conclusion
- 5.6 Check Your Progress
- 5.7 Bibliography

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### 5.0 OBJECTIVES

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After studying the unit, students will be able to:

- know Oliver Goldsmith as an Anglo-Irish writer
- understand the significance of Goldsmith's literary artefacts
- appreciate the play *She Stoops to Conquer*
- analyse the plot of the play *She Stoops to Conquer*

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### 5.1 INTRODUCTION: OLIVER GOLDSMITH

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Oliver Goldsmith is one of the most influential writers emerged during the Augustan Age, which is also known as Neoclassical Age or the Age of Reason. He has been remembered for his versatility leading him to be the writer who has tried his hands across number of literary genres including poetry, novels, plays, essays, biographies, pseudo-letter, history etc. during the eighteenth century English literature. He is always appreciated for his good sense, intellectual honesty, unquestionable brilliance, balanced structures and moderate articulations in the history of British literature. Although Goldsmith has never narrated the real accounts of his life to his biographers, commonly it is believed that he was born on 10<sup>th</sup> November, 1728 in Ireland (the exact birth place is also not known). He was fifth child among the seven siblings born to Reverend Charles Goldsmith who was Anglican curate of the parish of Forgnay.

Goldsmith's early education started at Elphin diocesan school where his grandfather Oliver Jones was a master and clergyman. His family moved to parsonage at Lissoy when he was only two years old because of his

father's appointment as a rector of parish of Kilkenny West which is in County Westmeath. Though his family was not poor, they started facing financial crisis due to the arrangements, in the form of huge dowry, made for his older sister's marriage that affected on the university education of Goldsmith. He was admitted to Trinity College, Dublin in the year 1744 under the tutorship of Theaker Wilder where he worked as a sizar – a system that enabled him to attend college with nominal charges and in exchange of a type of maintenance work in the school campus. His father died on 1747; and on the same year, he fell in his studies because of his disappointments with the menial works given to him in the campus and scorned by the wealthy fellow students, consequently leading him to be the part of a riot resulting in expelling him from the university. Although he graduated from the university as a Bachelor of Arts in 1749, he failed to secure distinction ultimately restricting his entry into the profession of a clergyman or lawyer. However, he had developed his taste in apparel, gambling, playing flute and singing; and tried his hands at several fields before going to pursue his studies in medical science.

Goldsmith had taken admission to the University of Edinburgh in 1752 in the faculty of medicine, but could not complete his studies. In 1753, after his medical training in the Leiden University, he started his walking tour to the Continent including France, Northern Italy, Flanders, and Switzerland; the wandering tour inspired many of his later works. Finally, he reached to London in 1756, where he tried to settle down for a while; but his financial needs led him to try many of the jobs including an assistant to apothecary and attendant in school. His addiction to gambling and extravagant life-style pushed him in debts that gave way to his literary career initially as a reviewer for Ralph Griffiths' *Monthly Review*. His acquaintance with Griffiths helped him to step in the literary world introducing him to the novelist Samuel Richardson and then to Samuel Johnson with whom he later founded The Club. One of the Club members called Edmund Burke introduced him to Sir George Savile who helped him to grab a job at Thornhill Grammar School.

Goldsmith continued writing miscellaneous essays, reviews of novels and plays as well as short pieces of fictional work for the magazine called *The Bee* by John Wilkes. In one of his reviews, he praised the works of Samuel Johnson and Tobias Smollett that fetched the attention of Smollett to his writings, who then invited him to write for his magazine entitled *Critical Reviews* and *The British Magazine*. During this period, he published his first long essay entitled *An Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe* in 1759 presenting his views on European culture and literature leading him to be a recognized figure in the literary realm.

In 1760, Goldsmith started writing a series of essays periodically for the magazine called the *Publick Ledger* that appeared in the form of "Chinese Letters" which were collectively published in the year 1762 with the title *The Citizen of the World; or, Letters from a Chinese Philosopher Residing in London to His Friends in the East*. There are 98 letters in the collection with four essays that provided insights into his philosophical contemplations as well as introspective assessment of the London's

customs, morals and manners in humorous, witty and satirical way. His next popular work is the 160 lines romantic ballad called *The Hermit* which was published in 1765. The ballad had then been incorporated in his novel *The Vicar of Wakefield* with the title 'A Ballad,' where Mr. Burchell in the eight chapter of the novel sung the ballad. It tells the story of Edwin who tried to woo Angelina but feels to be dejected by the scorn of the lady and turns into a hermit. His next popular poem *The Deserted Village* was published in 1770 that represents his experiences in 1760s when the ancient village was destructed for the sake of a garden for the wealthy man. The poem presents the image of convergence of villages, its farm land into ornamental gardens ready to destruct the peasantry.

Goldsmith's most popular novel *The Vicar of Wakefield*, which is subtitled as *A Tale, Supposed to be written by Himself*, came out in the year 1766 that remained widely read in the literary circle thereafter during the eighteenth century. Dr. Charles Primrose is the vicar in the novel is living a satisfactory life with his family in a country parish. He has received a huge wealth as inheritance from a distant relative which he invested with a merchant; however, on the day of his son George's wedding, he loses all his wealth due to the bankruptcy of his investor. The family then moves to the land of Squire Thornhill where vicar's daughter Sophia is saved from drowning by Mr. Burchell, who then is attracted towards him. After a few days, vicar's another daughter Olivia is eloped with Mr. Thornhill who deceives her promising marriage. In the end of the novel, Mr. Burchell rescues vicar's family from all the troubles of life.

The popularity of the novel *The Vicar of Wakefield* gave assured readers to Goldsmith which is reflected in the subsequent popularity of his plays like *The Good-Natur'd Man* and *She stoops to Conquer*. Published in 1768, *The Good-Natur'd Man* presents the story of Young Honeywood who is good natured person; however, his uncle Sir William Honeywood sets a series of tests in order to let his nephew and heir learn a valuable lesson of his life. The play *She Stoops to Conquer* is a sentimental comedy published in 1773 where the characters from high and low class communities are juxtaposed in order to create farce. Goldsmith's other popular works are a poem *The Traveller* (1764), *Account of the Augustan Age in England* (1759), *The Life of Richard Nash (Beau Nash)* (1762), *The History of England, from the Earliest Times to the Death of George II* (1771), *Dr. Goldsmith's Roman History Abridged by Himself for the Use of Schools* (1772) and *An History of the Earth and Animated Nature* (1774). On 4<sup>th</sup> April, 1774, he died suddenly because of a kidney disease and was buried in Temple Church in London.

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## 5.2 BACKGROUND TO THE PLAY SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER

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The play *She Stoops to Conquer* is a comedy of manners that comments on sentimental comedy which reflects a philosophical movement that was at its height during 18<sup>th</sup> century England. The sentimentalist philosophy believes that human sentiments like sympathy and empathy give birth to ethics. Consequently, these comedies are based on the sentiments of

human beings which lead the audience to feel sympathy with the characters and cry with their emotions; and, while providing laughter, end happily. However, Goldsmith considered the primary function of comedy is to laugh at human vices and hence he satirized sentimental comedy in this play where he let his audience only to laugh rather than cry.

The play is set during the reign of King George III, which is considered as one of the peaceful reigns in Britain, where the Agricultural Revolution had taken place consequently resulting in the massive agricultural production. However, there is the immigration of rural people into the city in search of jobs as they had lost their agricultural fields because of the bad harvesting years, inflation, hunger and wars. In addition to it, the industrial revolution forced the rural population to work in factories that gave rise to the middle class. Soon the class division becomes visible between the working class poor rural people and the wealthy elite urban class society. The divide begins to grow as the elite class people begin to consider themselves more cultured and worldly than the working class communities who were residing in the countryside. This class divide in the society serves as a background to the play *She Stoops to Conquer*. Marlow and Hastings are the representatives of the elite class whereas the Hardcastle family, even though is rich, represents the lower working class. The developments in the social classes also affected the marriage market of the society which is reflected in the play.

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### 5.3 INTRODUCTION TO MAJOR CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER

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#### 5.3.1. Charles Marlow:

Charles Marlow is the protagonist of the play who belongs to the wealthy family. He is young, handsome and well educated man, and has spent much of his time in educating himself as well as travelling. He is reluctant to participate in the conversation with upper-class women as he is shy, reserved and does not have self-confidence. He mistakenly considers Hardcastle's house as an inn and behaves irrationally with Kate.

#### 5.3.2. Kate Hardcastle:

Kate Hardcastle is the daughter of Mr. Hardcastle. She is moderate, good-humored, intelligent, sensible and beautiful girl which makes her the favourite daughter of her father. She has remarkable intuition which enables her to identify the good qualities in others. Consequently, she identifies Marlow as a good natured man and stoops to conquer his despite his ill temper. She seems to reflect absolute confidence in making her own decisions.

#### 5.3.3. Mr. Hardcastle:

Mr. Hardcastle lives in the house at countryside with his wife, son and daughter. He is old-fashioned man and does not like the modern trends of the life. Hence, he does not like the unruly behaviour of his step-son Tony Lumpkin, whereas he loves his daughter Kate dearly. He served in the war



of Spanish Succession and loves to tell his stories in the war. Marlow and Hastings, who are misled, consider him as the innkeeper.

#### **5.3.4. Mrs. Hardcastle:**

Mrs. Hardcastle, who is also known as Dorothy, is the wife of Mr. Hardcastle and step-mother of Kate and Tony. Though she is sympathetic and human, she is greedy, manipulative and sentimental woman. She neglects the follies of her son for which she himself is responsible and tries to dominate him. Although she lives at country side, she is fascinated with the city life and desires to live it. She controls the life of her niece and ward Constance and tries to encourage her to marry with her son Tony. She has also the habit of exaggerating which can be witnessed with her reaction to the robbery of jewel.

#### **5.3.5. Tony Lumpkin:**

Tony Lumpkin is a mysterious character in the play, but plays significant role in the development of the plot. He is clever young man, but as per his country upbringing, he is rustic and uneducated. He expects to escape from his mother's dominance, but could not find an opportunity as he is aware that he has no fortune to his credit. However, he seems to be rebellious as he never follows the instructions of his parents. He usually passes practical jokes and performs love pranks, yet he is also not unkind person. He is very much clear about his emotions and does not love Constance leading him to prove all the efforts of his mother in matching a pair in vain.

#### **5.3.6. Constance Neville:**

Constance is young, practical, affectionate and kind girl, and ward of Mrs. Hardcastle. She lives with Mrs. Hardcastle since the death of her father; and she is aware of the fact that she is motivated to marry Tony only to retain her jewel in Hardcastle family. Therefore, she pretends to be attracted towards Tony only to keep safe her property. She loves George Hastings and ready to elope with him only after she grabs her jewels. She has a good rapport with her cousin Kate and informs her about Marlow's nature that makes the course of their love easy.

#### **5.3.7. George Hastings:**

George Hastings is young and well-educated man having good nature and fashionable outlook. He is best friend of Marlow and suitor of Constance. He is confident and has good communication skills, which Marlow lacks, that leads him to serve as a foil to Marlow. He is deeply in love with Constance and is ready to elope with her that indicates his sense of responsibility, eagerness to form the relationships with his love-lady, and boldness against the social norms during the period.

### **5.3.8. Aunt Pedigree:**

She is the aunt of Constance who lives at a distance from the Hardcastle family. Mrs. Hardcastle plans to send Constance to her house when she learns about Constance plan of elopement with George.

### **5.3.9. Sir Charles:**

Father of Marlow and a best friend of Mr. Hardcastle. He sends his son to Hardcastle's house with the plans of his son's future marriage with Kate.

### **5.3.10. Pimple:**

She is servant of Kate at the house of Hardcastle.

### **5.3.11. Diggory:**

Diggory is a servant in the house of Hardcastle. She is talkative, opinionated but intelligent person.

### **5.3.12. Bet Bouncer:**

Bet is a red-faced and fat girl residing at the country-side. Tony desires to marry her; and although she does not appear on the stage, it seems that she is jolly girl.

### **5.3.13. Landlord:**

Landlord is the owner of a bar called Three Pigeons. Tony spends much of his time there with lower class persons.

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## **5.4 SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER: SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS**

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### **Act I**

The play *She Stoops to Conquer* is set in the countryside where the Hardcastle family lives in an old fashion house. The play opens with Mrs. Hardcastle who seems to be not happy as her husband never takes her to London during holidays. However, Mr. Hardcastle does not have any interest to visit London as according to him everything there is pretentious. Mrs. Hardcastle complains that they never experienced anything interesting in life and live in a house which is not better than an inn. Furthermore, he tells the uninteresting stories of war indicating how good the old days were. Mr. Hardcastle very affectionately replies to her that he likes everything which is old including his old wife. Yet, Mrs. Hardcastle comments that she is not very much old as when her son Tony was born she was just twenty-one years old. According to her she is just forty years old at present but Mr. Hardcastle points out that she is now fifty-seven years old. Mr. Hardcastle does not like the behaviour of Tony and he holds Mrs. Hardcastle responsible for his being rude to everyone. He is not well educated and behaves very badly with his elders. Mrs. Hardcastle views education as insignificant in the development of her son

as he will own fifteen-hundred-pound fortune per year. Instead, she desires her son could have a good sense of humour. Mr. Hardcastle then directs her attention to the pranks Tony is involved every time. Mrs. Hardcastle gives excuses that she was unable to give good education to her son only because he was sick but he believes that his sickness is derived only after he is drunk.

Tony, who is going to Three Pigeons House, enters and Mrs. Hardcastle asks him to spend time with them, but Tony refuses to stay there because his friends are waiting for him. Therefore, she grabs him in her attempt to stop him from going out but he pulls her along with him to the door. Mr. Hardcastle remains alone on the scene thinking that both mother and son will spoil each other; Meanwhile, his daughter Kate enters in fashionable clothes. As he remarks on Kate's fashion, she reminds him of the deal between them that she will wear the clothes of her choice in the morning and the clothes of his choice during the evening. He then informs Kate that Marlow who is the son of his best friend is going to visit the house tonight; and he desires Kate to marry him. She is surprised to hear the intentions of her father and is very much doubtful if she could get along with her suitor introduced in a formal way. However, Mr. Hardcastle assures her that he will never force her to marry against her desires; but Marlow is a handsome looking young man with intelligent, courage and generous nature. He further says that Marlow is a reserved person who is shy in speaking with women. Kate likes the intelligent, generous and kind nature of Marlow but she doesn't like him being bashful. She admits that she will marry Marlow except for his other qualities; yet, as Mr. Hardcastle thinks, Marlow should also approve her as his wife. Kate assures him that she will blame mirror for deceiving her, change her clothing style and find someone less handsome to marry with, if Marlow disapproves. Mr. Hardcastle shows his agreement to Kate's attitude and then exits to make ready his servants to welcome Marlow.

Kate is lost in the thoughts of Marlow wondering whether it is possible to change the bashful nature of Marlow while Constance Neville enters revealing to her that Marlow is the best friend of Mr. Hastings and that she knows him very well. She further says that Marlow is very shy while speaking with upper class, respectable and modest women of his own background and becomes comfortable with the lower class women to whom he often seduces. Kate initially feels that she will not handle the situation, but then decides to wait for the right moment. Kate inquires to Constance whether Mrs. Hardcastle is still trying to convince her to marry Tony and Constance replies that she is continuously forced to accept Tony as her husband. Kate is aware that the efforts of Mrs. Hardcastle in forcing Constance into a love relationship with Tony are aimed at keeping the wealth of Constance in the family. Constance tells her that she owns jewels in the form of fortune which is not significant to her like money. She is in love with Mr. Hastings and she believes that he will never abandon her for the sake of fortune. She will pretend to Mrs. Hardcastle that she is in love with Tony till she elopes with Mr. Hastings. Both Kate and Constance are aware that Tony is not interested in marrying

Constance. Meanwhile, they hear the bell ringing and assume the arrival of Mrs. Hardcastle, so Constance exits from the place.

Oliver Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer-I*

At the Three Pigeons House, Tony sings a song he has written to be performed at the bar for his lower class friends who appreciate Tony for such a wonderful performance. They say that once Tony owns his fortune he will pay for everyone's drink like his father. Tony nods in agreement and further adds that he will buy a new horse and marry his lady love Bet Bouncer once he becomes of the age of twenty-one. The landlord meanwhile enters and informs Tony that the fashionably dressed two gentlemen have reached Three Pigeons House in search of Hardcastle house. Tony identifies that the gentleman must be Marlow and plans to take revenge on his stepfather. The landlord re-enters with Marlow – who is irritated with the difficult journey – and Hastings, who comments that the journey would have been easy if they had asked for the directions, which they did not ask as Marlow thought it would be risky to be insulted by strangers. Tony interrupts the discussion of two men and tells them that they have reached the wrong place. The landlord who is the part of Tony's plan tells them the direction to Hardcastle's house which is complicated leading both of them to be discouraged and resolving to spend a night there. However, Tony reports to them that there is no bed available and they can spend the night in the armchairs by fireside; but both the gentlemen reject the idea. Tony thinks for a while and then tells them that there is another inn a mile away; but the innkeeper pretends to be a rich man and will talk with them to show his social status. He even offers his help to them in reaching the inn.

## Act II

The second act of the play is set at Mr. Hardcastle's house where Mr. Hardcastle is instructing the servants about the way to welcome the guests. Diggory, one of the servants in Hardcastle's house, says that it would be difficult for them to control laughing if Mr. Hardcastle starts telling the story of Ould Grouse leading all of them to burst in. Mr. Hardcastle continues instructing his servants how to refill the glass of wine while he listens to the horse cart outside and exits from the meeting to receive his guests leaving his servants in confusion about their behaviour in front of the guests.

A servant takes Marlow and Hastings into the house. They peer at the house and comment that well maintained old houses are always turned into a fine inn when their owners lose all their wealth. Hastings of Marlow why has he been bashful while speaking with the upper class women; and Marlow replies that he has spent much of his life at college and in the inn so he has never known how to spend the time with women of his own class but he is very good with women of lower class. He is so afraid of the women of his own class and always wants to get away quickly from them. However, Hastings points out that he can be a popular figure with the women of his own class if he starts speaking with them as expressively as he speaks with barmaids and housemaids. Hastings thinks that it would be difficult for Marlow to marry a woman of his class if he fails to overcome

his shyness and asks about his plans to propose a girl for marriage. Marlow tells him that he is visiting Hardcastle house only because his father asked him to do so and he will not overcome his shyness with Kate. The other reason for Marlow to visit Hardcastle house is to help Hastings in courting Constance. He knows that Hastings will be welcomed in the Hardcastle house only when he is introduced as a friend of Marlow. Hastings will get an opportunity to present his modesty there so that Hardcastle may give him their consent to marry Constance. Hastings is overwhelmed with the kindness of Marlow and says that he would not have taken the help of Marlow if he did not have the purest intention to marry Constance. He has also taken the permission of her dead father for their marriage and he is aware that she also loves him. Marlow thinks of Hastings as a lucky fellow as he can deal with the women of his class; and at the other hand, finds himself incapable to shade off his nervousness. He can only dream of the women belonging to the lower social class and will never marry anyone.

Mr. Hardcastle joins the two gentlemen introducing himself as their host; but supposing him to be the innkeeper Marlow neglects him and continues speaking with Hastings about the clothes they should wear while meeting Constance and Kate. Mr. Hardcastle tries to engage them with his stories of the war but they continue to speak about clothes neglecting him. At last, Marlow asks for a punch in order to keep Mr. Hardcastle away from disturbing them. Mr. Hardcastle, who is very much surprised with the rudeness of his guest, serves them a glass of punch and also offers toast. Marlow considers the act of offering a toast is inappropriate for the innkeeper reflecting his attempts to maintain the social standard.

Finally, Marlow realizes that it is difficult to get rid of Mr. Hardcastle and then tries to speak with him in a mocking manner. Ironically, he refers to the punch and says that Mr. Hardcastle must have a huge business during the political campaigns; and Mr. Hardcastle reply is that he now pays attention in family business only. When Mr. Hardcastle tries to present his another story at the war, Marlow asks about the menu available for dinner. Mr. Hardcastle is again surprised with the rude behaviour of Marlow and gives the details of the dishes he planned for the dinner. Both Marlow and Hastings do not like the list of delicious foods presented by Mr. Hardcastle and say that they usually prefer simple food while travelling. Then Marlow expresses his desire to see their rooms so that he can check whether the beds are made freshly or not which is very much distressing for Mr. Hardcastle who then takes both the gentlemen to show their rooms.

Constance visits Hastings who is surprised to see her; and asks how she has come there. He tells her that a young man in a Three Pigeons House guided them to this house which they consider as an inn. Constance identifies it as a trick played by Tony and tells him that they are in the house of Mr. Hardcastle. When Hastings hears the name of Tony, he asks Constance whether it is the same person with whom she is forced to marry by her aunt. Constance tells Hastings that Tony is her cousin and though her aunt convinces her to marry Tony, neither Tony nor she desires to

marry one another. However, she has pretended in such a way that her aunt now begins to believe that she is in love with Tony. Hastings finds it as a great opportunity to elope with Constance and plans to flee from the house as soon as the horses take some rest. Yet Constance is not ready to leave behind her jewels inherited from her uncle. She tells him that she has been persuading her aunt to let her wear the jewels and she is now near the success. Once she gets the jewels she will be ready to elope with him; but Hastings tells her that he does not care for the jewels, rather he cares only for her. Hastings fears that if Marlow discovers that he has mistaken the house of Mr. Hardcastle for the inn, their plan will be ruined as he will not stay there anymore. Hence they decide that they will not disclose to Marlow that he is in Hardcastle's house.

Marlow is irritated with the behaviour of the innkeeper who is following him every time in the house. He finds Constance in the company of Hastings who then tells him that Constance and Kate are accidentally present in the same inn at the present moment. Marlow becomes very nervous as soon as he hears about Kate's presence in the inn and determines that he will not meet her until the next day as her clothing has been bad after a whole day's travelling. Constance tells Marlow if he meets Kate the next day in her house rather than meeting her there in the inn, she will take it as a sign that he does not want to wait for her. So Marlow requests Hastings to stay with him during his meeting with Kate. However, Hastings tries to convince Marlow that Kate is after all a woman; but Marlow says that Kate is a woman to whom he is very much afraid to meet. Meanwhile Kate who has gone for a walk returns there thinking that she will present herself very modestly as Marlow expects. Hastings introduces Marlow to Kate, but Marlow becomes uncomfortable and couldn't speak with Kate; so she breaks the silence and says that she is happy to find Marlow safely arrived there. Marlow still struggles to speak with Kate, so Hastings tries to encourage him with the words that he has been impressing Kate. As Marlow becomes more reserved, Hastings and Constance decide to leave them so that they can speak with one another. Marlow becomes silent in the absence of Hastings so Kate asks him about his experiences with women. He tells her that he has never spent time with women and he knows that he is now making her feel bored. Kate tries to motivate him by assuring that she is enjoying his company and sometimes even completes his incomplete sentences. She tries to discuss the topics of virtue, refinement and hypocrisy leading him to again believe that she is enjoying his company; however, Marlow starts feeling embarrassed and leaves her telling that Constance is calling them. When he exits, Kate laughs at his unbelievable bashful nature. She wonders if she could boost a little confidence in him as she feels that she has started liking him.

Mrs. Hardcastle, Tony, Constance and Hastings are together where Constance is flirting with Tony who tells her that he does not like her and expects to be left alone; whereas Hastings tells Mrs. Hardcastle about the fashionable life in London in which she is interested. Although she has never visited London, she says that she has learned much about fashions and trends in London from her friends and through the magazines. She asks him his opinion about her hairstyle and, as he praises her, she tells him that she has



imitated the hairstyle from the magazine. She further says that she is disappointed with Mr. Hardcastle's old fashioned views about her hairstyle who forces her to put on a wig. She then asks Hastings about the most fashionable age; and he replies that recently in London forty is considered to be the most fashionable age, however women are thinking to make it fifty. She considers herself too young to come to the age of fashion whereas Constance will be considered as a child in the society in terms of fashion. She then points towards Constance and says that Constance thinks that she is too old to wear the jewels. As Hastings asks if Tony is her brother, she tells that Constance and Tony are going to marry soon. She then turns her attention to Tony asking him what romantic things were going on between them; and Tony replies that he just wanted to be alone and asked Constance to leave him. Mrs. Hardcastle then tries to convince Constance that Tony is in love with her. She scolds Tony to act like a grown up man as he hits Constance while standing by her to show their height. So Tony demands to treat him like a grown up man and allow him to use his wealth. Consequently, an argument starts between Tony and Mrs. Hardcastle, so Tony rushes to help Mrs. Hardcastle asking her that he will talk with Tony in order to let him know his responsibilities. Mrs. Hardcastle likes the idea and exits with Constance expressing her misery over her son's behaviour. When Hastings asks Tony if he does not like women, he answers that he does not like the disgraceful women like Constance who play tricks. He then tells Hastings that he is in love with Bet Bouncer, a girl with broad, red cheeks and black eyes. So Hastings exposes his love for Constance and asks for his help in marrying her as well as escaping from the place with Constance's jewellery. Tony shows his readiness to help the couple to get the jewellery as well as elope from the house.

### Act III

Mr. Hardcastle contemplates on the character of Marlow who has been described as a modest person by his friend Sir Charles. He is surprised with Marlow's rudeness who has asked him to clean his shoes. When Kate enters in a plain dress, which he usually prefers, he advises her to not change her style as it was his mistake to suppose Marlow as a modest man. As Kate expresses her amazement over Marlow's shy behaviour, he feels that she has also experienced his rude behaviour. However, later he realizes that he has a different opinion than his daughter as she expresses him to be a timid and awkward person, while he considers him to be presumptuous. So, though he rejects Marlow, she thinks of giving him another chance as he can be a better person than he appears for the first time. He taunts Kate as she is thinking to change him into a good husband only because he is physically attractive, but then asks her pardon because both of them are aware that Kate is a smart and intellectual girl who will not be fascinated with physical beauty. Finally, both of them decide to give Marlow another chance so that they can check if Marlow is an impolite man or a modest person.

Tony enters with a jewellery box of Constance, which he has taken out from his mother's drawers, and hands it to Hastings. He says that he has

secret keys which he always uses to take out the money from his mother's drawers whenever he wants to visit the Three Pigeons House. Hastings tells Tony that Constance is trying to persuade Mrs. Hardcastle to give her the jewellery which is the correct way to take it from her. However, Tony suggests to him that his mother will never give her the jewellery, so he can keep it at the present moment. Hastings becomes anxious if Mrs. Hardcastle discovers the stealing of the Jewel box. Meanwhile they see Mrs. Hardcastle and Constance entering the room discussing about the jewellery where Mrs. Hardcastle suggests that Constance does not require jewels to look more beautiful as wearing jewellery has become out-dated fashion. Constance tries to convince Mrs. Hardcastle that probably Tony will be attracted to her when he sees her wearing the jewellery. Yet, Mrs. Hardcastle says that wearing jewellery has become risky and she is now not certain that she still has the jewellery. In the aside, Tony tells Mrs. Hardcastle to inform Constance that her jewels have been lost; so she informs Constance that her jewels have been missing and she would provide her with the nice garnets to put on until she discovers it. As she exits to bring the garnets, Tony tells Constance that her jewels have been given to Hastings and she can run away with him. Mrs. Hardcastle reenters informing Tony about the robbery of the jewellery; and Tony assures her that he will be the witness for the robbery. She tries to convince him that the jewels have been really stolen; but he continuously tells her that he will be the witness of her false story. Mrs. Hardcastle understands that Tony is teasing her and hence starts shouting at him.

Pimple informs Kate that Tony has misguided Marlow who mistakenly supposes Hardcastle house as an inn. When he finds Kate there in a simple dress, he has become more confused and starts thinking Kate to be a barmaid. Furthermore, he does not remember Kate's face as during their conversation he became too restless and uncomfortable to look at her face. Kate admits that there was a bonnet on her face during their conversation and in addition to it, Marlow became too shy to look at her. She decides to do not reveal the reality to Marlow. Rather his confusion will give her an opportunity: firstly, as he speaks freely with lower class women she will impress him pretending to be a barmaid; and secondly, she will get a chance to judge him in terms of the qualities he possesses to be an ideal husband. Then Kate prepares herself to look like the lower-class woman.

Marlow is very much disappointed as the innkeeper and his wife are not providing him privacy. Kate appears in front of him in the form of servant and ask him if he has called her but Marlow ignoring her replies that he has not called the servant and starts speaking to himself about Kate who seemed to him very unattractive and that he will return as his task of meeting the daughter of Mr. Hardcastle given to him by his father has been completed. Meanwhile, Kate approaches him continuously asking if he called her; hence he looks at her and finds a charming young girl standing in front of him. He is immediately attracted to her and starts flirting. He asks her age and tries to kiss her; so she gets away from him, maintaining the dignity of a lower class servant girl. She remarks that he seemed to be very shy when he met Miss Hardcastle. He tries to control the situation and says that Miss Hardcastle is an abstinent girl who

frightened him and that he does not want to disclose his rejection of her as it would hurt her. Kate comments that he seems to her as a real ladies' man and he explains that he is called a Rattle because he spends much of the time in the club with the older women. He then asks her whether she works there and she points out that she did all the embroidery work in the house. He expresses his desire to see the work and grabs her, so she tries to escape from his clutches. Meanwhile, Mr. Hardcastle enters only to find Kate in the arms of Marlow; so Marlow leaves her and starts cursing his luck as he has been caught by the innkeeper. After Marlow exits from the place, Mr. Hardcastle asks her if this is the modesty and bashfulness of a man she was trying to convince. Kate tries to convince her father that she will prove the decency of Marlow but disappointed with his behaviour Mr. Hardcastle intends to throw Marlow out of his house. Kate then persuades her father to give her an hour to prove her stance; so Mr. Hardcastle permits her but with a promise that she will be transparent throughout the period and tell everything to him.

#### **Act IV**

Constance informs Hastings that Sir Charles is going to visit Hardcastle house tonight. Hastings tells her that they should leave before the arrival of Sir Charles otherwise he will expose Hastings' identity to Mr. Hardcastle. He further tells her that he has given the jewels to Marlow in order to keep it safely, and Tony has also promised him to give fresh horses for their journey.

Marlow tells a servant that he is confused with the behaviour of Hastings as he has given him the box of jewellery to take care of even though they both are travelling together. He then gives the box to the servant and asks him to hand it over to the innkeeper's wife so that she will guard the box. Within a short period, the servant enters informing Marlow that the landlady is asking him who has given him the box leading Marlow to laugh at the innkeeper and the landlady and thinks of them as an eccentric. Meanwhile Hastings, who has been tired with all the arrangements for their elopement, enters the room and finds Marlow lost in the thoughts. Marlow says that he has talked with a lovely barmaid and it seems to him that she is ready to have a relationship with him. Hastings advises him to not exploit the honour of a barmaid but Marlow tells him that the barmaids are disrespectful and he is going to pay in exchange of sexual pleasure. However, he also assures Hastings that if he found the barmaid to be an honoured woman, he will not seduce her sexually. Then, Hastings asks him if he has kept the jewel box safe and Marlow replies that he has given the box to landlady so that it can be safe. Hastings realises that he will not again win the fortune of Constance as Mrs. Hardcastle took the jewel box in her custody.

Mr. Hardcastle has been annoyed with the behaviour of Marlow's servant who has been drunk. He thinks that Marlow's servant can be a dreadful example for his own servants and expresses his anger for such behaviour. Marlow mistakes what Mr. Hardcastle tells him and thinks that the innkeeper has been angry because his servant is not drinking excessively

limiting innkeeper's business; so he calls the servant in order to show him how much he has drunk. Mr. Hardcastle becomes impatient with the arrogant replies of Marlow and asks him to leave his house right the moment. When he finds Marlow claiming his right to stay there, he tells him to take all the valuable things including silver, mahogany table, Hogarth print of the Rake's Progress, etc. in the house with him. He even ignores Marlow asking for the bill and continues to scold him for acting badly. He intended to welcome a modest young man when he received a letter from Sir Charles, but is frustrated to experience the insolent behaviour of Marlow. He says that he will report about the bad manners of Marlow to Sir Charles and then exits from the place.

Marlow begins to think over the way Mr. Hardcastle scolds him while Kate enters. She recognises that Marlow has probably realized that he is in Hardcastle house, but she decides not to reveal the complete truth to him. When he asks her who she is, she tells him that she is distantly related with the house. So, he asks her whether she works there as a barmaid, and she tells him that he is in Mr. Hardcastle's house. Marlow realizes that he has made a huge mistake supposing the house as an inn. He confesses that he has mistaken her to be a barmaid and now desires to leave the Hardcastle house as early as possible in order to save himself from the humiliation. Kate pretends to be very sad to see him leaving her suddenly as he acted kindly with her. Marlow is moved with Kate's despair and becomes unhappy to separate from her. He says that they belong to different social backgrounds. He further adds that she is a virtuous girl and he will never seduce her. So, she tells him that though she is poor, she belongs to same class of Miss Hardcastle and the only difference between them is the fortune in possession of Miss Hardcastle. Marlow promises to accept her as his wife if his family permits him that revealed his real character further leading Kate to determine to stop him leaving in every possible way.

Tony tells Constance that Mrs. Hardcastle has got back the jewel box from the servant, hence she will not suspect of its stealing. Meanwhile Mrs. Hardcastle enters, finds Tony and Constance together and thinks that they are in love. Diggory arrives with a note for Tony who asks to give it to his mother to read aloud, but Constance glimpses the handwriting of Hastings and tries to divert her attention to the story. Tony gets the sights of his name in the latter and attempts to take it, so Mrs. Hardcastle hands it over and asks him to read aloud. However, Constance seizes the letter and tells them that it is not important as it is about cockfighting. Tony is very much eager to know the content in the letter, so he gives it to her mother who discovers the plan of Hastings and Constance to flee from there with the help of Tony. She becomes angry at Tony and Constance and decides to send Constance under the strict guard of Aunt Pedigree. She exits to prepare for the passage of Constance leaving Tony and Constance together. Constance blames Tony for giving the letter to Mrs. Hardcastle and ruining the plan. After a while, Hastings enters and starts scolding Tony for destroying his plan; then Marlow enters and rebukes Tony for deceiving him in such a way that he started feeling humiliated. He also holds Hastings responsible for his embarrassment as he has kept him in

darkness by not telling that they are in Hardcastle house. In the meantime, servant enters informing them that Mrs. Hardcastle asked Constance to come to carriage hastily; so Constance tells Hastings to wait for her. Marlow rebukes Tony for complicating the things; but Tony assures that he will make everything fine and asks Hastings to meet him in the garden after two hours.

### **Act V**

A servant informs the departure of Constance and the arrival of Sir Charles at the house of Mr. Hardcastle who then learns that Marlow has mistaken Mr. Hardcastle as an innkeeper. Mr. Hardcastle says that Marlow should have told him that he is well-born, whereas Sir Charles tells Mr. Hardcastle that Marlow probably has considered him as an eccentric person. Mr. Hardcastle says that he is excited to see the marriage of Marlow and Kate, so Sir Charles asks him whether he is sure about Marlow's love for Kate. Mr. Hardcastle says that Kate told him that Marlow likes her and he has even seen Marlow holding the hand of Kate. Marlow appears at the scene, who is ashamed of his behaviour and asks Mr. Hardcastle to forgive him for his being unkind to him. Mr. Hardcastle asks Marlow whether he likes Kate and desires to marry her, but Marlow denies having such intention. Mr. Hardcastle considers Marlow's refusal as his embarrassment and tries to motivate him to express his true feelings about Kate. However, he is shocked when he finds Marlow refusing to hold the hand of Kate.

As per the instructions of Tony, Hastings waits for Tony in the garden contemplating whether Tony will keep his promise. Tony enters and tells Hastings that he has brought Constance back to the house. When Hastings asks how he has succeeded to stop Constance from going to Aunt Pedigree, Tony says that his mother is afraid of being lost far from the house and hence he asked the carried man to take them to a large circle and bring them back to the house. Hastings expresses his gratitude and leaves Tony to find constants in order to run away with her. Tony assures him that he will engage Mrs. Hardcastle during their elopement.

Mrs. Hardcastle enters in dirty clothes assuming that she is away from the house and lost somewhere. Tony further leads her to believe that she is really lost. When Mr. Hardcastle comes out in the garden to stroll Tony tells Mrs. Hardcastle that a highwayman is coming there and instructs her to hide somewhere in the bush. He assures her that he will cough if the stranger seems to be dangerous so that she can remain hidden. Meanwhile Mr. Hardcastle comes there and asks Tony whether he has returned from his Aunt Pedigree's house leaving his mother and Constance. Tony tells him that they have safely reached his aunt's house; however, Mr. Hardcastle is suspicious of Tony's quick return and asks him with whom he was talking there. When he goes towards the bushes Mrs. Hardcastle jumps out pleading the stranger to forgive her son, so Mr. Hardcastle asks her whether he is really unknown to her and whether she has not recognised their garden. He quickly understands that this is another trick of Tony that led Mrs. Hardcastle in confusion. Mrs. Hardcastle realizes her



deception and shouts at him but Tony holds her responsible for his behaviour.

Oliver Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer*-I

Hastings is trying to convince Constance to elope with him but she is so tired that she cannot run away with him. Hastings attempts to persuade her that they do not require Constance's fortune as they love each other. However, Constance thinks to report the matter to Mr. Hardcastle so that he can convince his wife to permit her to marry Hastings which will also be beneficial to her to receive her jewels.

Marlow visits Kate to say goodbye before departing from the house; but Kate, who now speaks in her own voice, says that he can stay there if he desires. He tells her that he is very sad to leave her but he does not wish to annoy his father by marrying a woman from a lower class. Kate tells him that she does not belong to the lower class; in fact, she is born in the house of high rank equal in status to the woman he comes to visit. She says that she knows he wants to marry a rich woman. Meanwhile Mr. Hardcastle and Sir Charles hear Kate and Marlow discussing with one another and hide behind the curtain. They hear Marlow telling Kate that he does not care for the fortune. He also admits that he was initially attracted towards her beauty but then is impressed with her smartness and intelligence. He now determines to stay there and is sure that his father will approve him to marry her; but Kate says that she does not want to force him to marry a woman whom he considered belonging to a lower class. So he kneels in front of her and tells that he is also of the equal rank to her. Sir Charles and Mr. Hardcastle come out of the curtain and ask Marlow why he lied to them that he does not like Miss Hardcastle leading once again him in the confusion. Kate tells him that she is the daughter of Mr. Hardcastle whom he considered to be an unattractive and tall girl. He feels very embarrassed when he realizes his mistake; however, Mr. Hardcastle assures him that they will forgive his mistakes.

Mrs. Hardcastle enters along with Tony informing that Constance and Hastings have eloped from there. Sir Charles tells everyone that Hastings is a respectable man; so, Mr. Hardcastle becomes very happy to find Constance marrying such a good person. Mrs. Hardcastle is also happy as she has retained the fortune of Constance. She says that she would have given the fortune to her if she had waited for Tony to come to the age of twenty-one and then refused him to marry, but she hurriedly took the decision to marry Hastings and left her jewels. Mr. Hardcastle does not like his wife's greedy manner. Meanwhile, Constance enters along with Hastings and tells Mr. Hardcastle that her dead father approved their marriage and now she expects him to understand the situation and permit her even if Mrs. Hardcastle is not ready. Mr. Hardcastle then asks Tony if he has refused to marry with constants; but Tony replies that he is not of the age of twenty-one, so his decision does not matter here. However, Mr. Hardcastle tells everyone that Tony is actually of twenty-one years old and he lies to everyone because he wanted Tony to be more mature before he owns his fortune. Tony is surprised to hear that he has actually come to the age and then tells everyone that he does not want to marry Constance; hence, she is free to marry the person of his choice and also retain her



fortune. Though Mrs. Hardcastle is disappointed with the final reconciliation, all other characters become happy and starts to prepare for the marriage of two couples. Mr. Hardcastle finally greets his daughter and says that she will be a good wife as she was always his wonderful daughter.

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## 5.5 CONCLUSION

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They play *She Stoops to Conquer* which is subtitled as *The Mistakes of a Night* is one of the finest blending of sentimental elements with wit and intelligence. It deals with the themes of youthful love, adventure and romance that engage the audience right from the beginning to the end who seem to enjoy every moment presented in the play. He presents two characters with opposite qualities and places them with the heroines who are beautiful, smart and charming. The relationships of the character are further complicated with the delineation of Tony Hardcastle who is mysterious, tricky and mischievous character. The play comments on the role of class and the struggle of characters in order to secure their place in the society. The social, cultural and economic conditions of the society are artistically presented to point out the views of contemporary period. The play brings to forth the contrast between city life and the country life, the contrast between aged persons and the young one, and the contrast between appearance and reality.

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## 5.6 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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1. Write in detail the development of the plot in the play *She Stoops to Conquer*.
2. Discuss the major themes reflected in the play *She Stoops to Conquer*.
3. Critically examine the play *She Stoops to Conquer* as a commentary on social structure.
4. Write a brief note on the critical reception of the play *She Stoops to Conquer*.

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## 5.7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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## OLIVER GOLDSMITH'S SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER-II

### Unit Structure

- 6.0 Objectives
- 6.1 Critical Summary
- 6.2 Analysis of the Plot
- 6.3 Analysis of Major Characters
- 6.4 Themes in the play She Stoops to Conquer
- 6.5 Conclusion
- 6.6 Check Your Progress
- 6.7 Bibliography

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### 6.0 OBJECTIVES

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After studying the unit, the students will be able to:

- Critically evaluate the development of the plot
- assess the development of characters
- comment on different themes demonstrated in the play
- discuss various symbols and point out its significance
- explore diverse techniques Goldsmith used to present his play

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### 6.1 CRITICAL SUMMARY

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The play opens at Hardcastle house where Mrs. Hardcastle is complaining to her husband that he has never taken her to see the new things in London. Mr. Hardcastle says that he likes old things and complains her that she has spoiled her son Tony. Meanwhile, Tony enters and Mrs. Hardcastle tries to stop him from going to Three Pigeons House but fails in her attempt. Kate enters in fashionable clothing which Mr. Hardcastle dislikes so he remarks; however, she reminds him their deal that she will wear the dresses of her choice in the morning and the dresses of his choice in the evening. Then Mr. Hardcastle tells her that Marlow, who is the son of his friend Sir Charles, is going to visit their house in order to see Kate and he probably marries her. He also says that Marlow is intelligent, handsome and modest person; hence, Kate decides to make a good impression on him during his visit. After the exit of Mr. Hardcastle,

Constance enters and learns that Marlow is going to visit them. She tells Kate that she knows Marlow because he is the best friend of her lover Hastings. She also tells her that Marlow is very shy to speak with the women belong to upper class; yet he speaks freely with the women belong to lower classes. She then says that Mrs. Hardcastle is still forcing her to marry Tony, so she has started pretending her love for Tony and showing her willingness to marry him. Tony visits to a bar called Three Pigeons House, where usually he spends his time singing and drinking with his friends belonged to lower class. The bar owner informs Tony that the two men are searching Hardcastle house. He identifies that the gentleman must be Marlow and plans to play a trick leading him to believe that he has reached the wrong place. He then directs Marlow and Hastings to Hardcastle house assuring that they will not reach his house tonight; so they decide to spend the night there helping Tony to lead them to visit one of the finest inns at the countryside.

Marlow arrives to the Hardcastle house where Mr. Hardcastle tries to engage him, but he ignores Mr. Hardcastle supposing him to be the innkeeper and ask him to show their rooms. While Hastings is alone, Constance enters and tells him that they are in Mr. Hardcastle's house. Both of them then decide not to inform Marlow about where they are as Marlow will never stay there and leave the place immediately. Then Hastings convinces Constance to run away with him but she refuses to go without her fortune. Marlow enters and tells that he is irritated because the innkeeper is not leaving him alone. Hastings informs Marlow that accidentally Constance and Kate have been in the same inn where they are lodged. Marlow becomes anxious, while Kate enters and begins to speak with Marlow, but he remains reserved, so Hastings and Constance exit from there leaving them alone. Marlow becomes so embarrassed that he has even not looked at the face of Kate. As he feels very nervous and starts speaking incomplete sentences, Kate tries to motivate him, but he exits living her alone. Hastings tries to make a good impression on Mrs. Hardcastle by appreciating her hairstyle and giving compliments to her taste of fashions. He also asks about Constance who is flirting with Tony; so Mr. Hardcastle tells him that they are engaged to marry. When Mrs. Hardcastle exits, Tony tells Hastings that he is not interested in Constance and intends to marry a country girl called Bet Bouncer.

Kate and Mr. Hardcastle share their experiences of Marlow with one another so that they can judge his character. Kate observes Marlow as incredibly shy whereas Mr. Hardcastle views him as a rude person. He thinks to reject Marlow but she convinces him to give Marlow another chance so that they can judge him thoroughly. In another room, Tony gives the jewel box which he has stolen from Mrs. Hardcastle's drawers to Hastings. As he finds Mrs. Hardcastle and Constance coming to the room, he asks Hastings to exit with the jewel box. Constance is trying to convince Mrs. Hardcastle to let her take jewels so that she can wear it, but Mrs. Hardcastle remarks that wearing a jewel has now become an old fashion. As Constance continuously forces Mrs. Hardcastle to give her jewel box, Tony advises Mrs. Hardcastle to tell Constance that her jewel box is missing. Constance becomes angry for misplacing the jewel box;

however, Tony tells her secretly that he has given the jewel box to Hastings who is now making an arrangement for their elopement. Mrs. Hardcastle re-enters informing Tony that she has really lost the jewel box but Tony makes fun of her, so she exits angrily. Kate enters in old fashioned clothing with her maid Pimple who reveals to her that Tony has tricked Marlow to believe Hardcastle house as an inn. She also informs Kate that Marlow has mistakenly considered her to be a barmaid so she decides to take advantage of his mistake in order to speak with him. Kate uses a lower class accent while speaking with Marlow, who seems to be lost in his thoughts of Miss Hardcastle. When he looks at her, he finds her more charming and beautiful girl and tries to seduce her. Meanwhile, Mr. Hardcastle enters which makes Marlow nervous and flee from the room. Mr. Hardcastle is annoyed with the behaviour of Marlow and decides to throw him away. However, Kate convinces him to give her one hour so that she can prove Marlow is a good person.

Constance tells Hastings that Sir Charles is going to visit the house tonight; hence, Hastings makes the plan to run away before the arrival of Sir Charles, otherwise Sir Charles will reveal his identity. Hastings further tells Constance that he has given her jewel box to Marlow in order to keep it safe. Marlow enters carrying the jewel box which he asks his servant to give the landlady so that it can remain safe. Hastings comes to Marlow only to realise that Mrs. Hardcastle has taken possession of the jewel box again. After Hastings exits, Mr. Hardcastle enters complaining to Marlow that his servant is drunk, but Marlow misinterprets what Mr. Hardcastle tells him, leading Mr. Hardcastle once again to experience his arrogance. Mr. Hardcastle becomes angry and says that he will complain to his friend Sir Charles about his son's arrogant behaviour. Marlow understands that he has mistaken something and asks Kate, who tells him that he is in Hardcastle house. However, she keeps her identity secret and tells Marlow that she is a relative of the Hardcastle family. Marlow becomes nervous for behaving badly with Mr. Hardcastle, and decides to get away as early as possible; but he is moved with Kate's despair on his departure. Constance tells Tony her plan of elopement while Mrs. Hardcastle enters; hence, she begins to pretend to flirt with Tony so that Mrs. Hardcastle may not suspect her future plan. Servant arrives with a letter for Tony that reveals the plan of Hastings to Mrs. Hardcastle, who then decides to send Constance to Aunt Pedigree's house. Hastings becomes disappointed as his plan has been disclosed and begins to blame Tony. Marlow appears there and begins to shout at Tony for deceiving and leading him to feel humiliated. Constance exits to Aunt Pedigree's house urging Hastings to wait for her. Tony assures Hastings that he will make everything right and asks him to meet at the garden after two hours.

Sir Charles and Mr. Hardcastle laughs at the follies of Marlow who has mistaken Hardcastle house for an inn. Mr. Hardcastle says that Marlow will marry Kate as he has seen Marlow holding Kate's hand. Marlow enters and asks Mr. Hardcastle to forgive him for his rude behaviour; but Mr. Hardcastle says that, as he is going to marry Kate, his mistakes do not matter. However, Marlow refuses to have the intention of marrying Kate and leaves the room. Kate enters and tells them that Marlow is in love

with her and she will prove it if they hide behind the screen. In the garden, Tony tells Hastings that instead of going to Aunt Pedigree's house, he has taken Mrs. Hardcastle and Constance to a circle and brought them back to the house. He also tells him that Mrs. Hardcastle believes that she is lost in a dangerous region. Hastings goes to Constance in order to convince her to run away from the house but she refuses to elope as she is tired from the journey. In fact, she suggests Hastings to tell the entire situation to Mr. Hardcastle who can help them to seek the permission of Mrs. Hardcastle to marry. In one of the rooms of the house, Mr. Hardcastle and Sir Charles listen to the discussion between Marlow and Kate. Kate now speaks in her own voice asking Marlow to stay there if he wishes; but Marlow tells her that he has no intention to marry a woman of lower class against the desires of his father. Kate tells him that she also belongs to the upper class, but she is a poor girl; and she is aware that Marlow will not marry her as he intends to marry a rich girl. Marlow stoops before her revealing his generous, kind and obedient nature. Sir Charles and Mr. Hardcastle come out of the screen and ask Marlow why he has not expressed to them his feelings for Kate. Initially, Marlow becomes confused but then understands that the girl to whom he supposes barmaid is actually Miss Kate Hardcastle. Mrs. Hardcastle enters, informing them of the elopement of Constance and Hastings. Sir Charles tells that Hastings is the honourable man and so Mr. Hardcastle expresses his approval for Constance's marriage with Hastings. Mrs. Hardcastle is happy as she can now keep the fortune of Constance. Mr. Hardcastle asks Tony whether he would marry Constance and he says that he does not have any intention of marrying Constance but his opinion doesn't matter as he is not twenty-one years old. Mr. Hardcastle tells Tony that he is already twenty-one years old but his mother kept it secret so that he can become more mature. Tony then tells everyone that he does not want to marry Constance and she is free to get married with the person of her choice and also keep her fortune. In the end of the play, everyone becomes happy except Mrs. Hardcastle expecting the marriage of two couples.

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## 6.2 ANALYSIS OF THE PLOT

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The opening of the play serves as a background to the later development of the play. The first act of the play begins with the projection of a couple – a wife complaining her husband that he has never taken her to see the fashionable city life. Mrs. Hardcastle's fascination for the city life reveals her obsession for the fashionable life whereas Mr. Hardcastle likes only old things. He thinks that the fashionable city life does not provide a worthwhile culture; rather it presents the unaffectionate and ruthless face in the disguise of affections. His attraction for the old things demonstrates that he does not intend to change anything in his life. As a result, in the later part of the play, Marlow seems to believe Hardcastle house for an inn. Mr. Hardcastle rebukes his wife for spoiling the life of their son Tony. In fact, it is she who provoked Tony from being educated believing that only money is necessary to live a satisfactory life. She gives the reason of Tony's sickness for her not allowing him to educate; but without education or any occupation, Tony becomes sick and drinks in the

company of his lower class friends which seems to be inappropriate for the social status he has. Furthermore, his disrespect for his elders including his mother and the pranks he plays makes him a vagabond who does not care for anything in his life.

On the other hand, Kate stands totally opposite to her brother as she has been exposed to the mannerisms of the upper class society and leads a fashionable life. Unlike her brother, she never argues with her father; rather she has made a deal with her father. Even though there are disagreements between Kate and Mr. Hardcastle on the choices of clothes and the values a man should possess, there is also a mutual understanding and respect between them which lacks between Tony and Mrs. Hardcastle. It is this mutual respect that allows Kate to express her opinion as well as decision about Marlow, when her father describes Marlow's qualities to her. She considers the bashful nature of Marlow as a sign of insecurity which will not end in their marriage; however, if he does possess the qualities like modesty and intelligence, then his reserved attitude can be changed. Constance sheds further light on the nature of Marlow that reveals another angle of his life. She tells that he is shy only with the women of his class and flirts with the women of lower class that shows his use of dignity to overcome the women of lower social stature.

Constance is the ward of Mrs. Hardcastle and requires her permission to marry; but Mrs. Hardcastle does not have true feelings for her. She desires Constance to marry with Tony so that she can acquire the fortune of Constance. It is very much striking that she ignores the disparity in the natures of Tony and Constance as Tony is rustic whereas Constance is cultured and intelligent. However, both Tony and Constance are aware about their feelings and do not want to marry one another. Constance is very much clear about her love for Hastings; hence, she just pretends to love Tony in order to keep away Mrs. Hardcastle from forcing her to think of Tony as her husband. On the other hand, Tony's views towards life are shaped in the company of people he spends much of the time at Three Pigeons House. All his friends belong to lower class reflecting that probably Tony has never been introduced in the elite society of his own class. Mr. Hardcastle does not like Tony's irresponsible behaviour and occasionally scolds him; so, when he learns that Marlow is searching Hardcastle house, he decides to take revenge on Mr. Hardcastle. Tony meets Marlow who is a gentleman and gets easily tricked as he fears of being mocked by the strangers that prevented him to take the help of strangers in asking the directions for Hardcastle house. Before exercising his plan, Tony makes sure about what his step-father told them about him; and once he confirms that he has been badly reputed, he manipulates all the available resources to lead the two gentlemen to believe that they are going to live in the inn instead of a house and that the innkeeper always presents to his guests as a honourable man.

Act II opens with Mr. Hardcastle who is instructing his servants how to behave in front of his city guests revealing his attempts to teach them all the city manners which he always hated. When Marlow and Hastings arrive in Hardcastle house, they seem to be impressed with the old



furniture and decorations used in the house. Marlow is not confident to speak with Kate even if he has travelled a lot and taken excellent education, so he becomes nervous and tells his situation to Hastings who stands in total opposition to Marlow in terms of development of character. Hastings is confident in engaging the women of his class effectively; however, he is worried that he will be mistaken in the Hardcastle family as, though he has taken the permission of Constance's father, his courtship remains secret with the death of her father; hence, he desires to elope with Constance.

Marlow's education and travelling experience do not come to rescue him from his fears of women belonged to his own class which is visible when he remains reserved in his meeting with Kate. He always wants to do not be judged by the people around him; hence, he becomes nervous with Kate, but he exercises his superiority when he mistakenly supposes Mr. Hardcastle to be an innkeeper. He treats Mr. Hardcastle with rudeness in all of their interactions: when Marlow talks about the inn business during election campaign, Mr. Hardcastle believe that he is talking about the parliamentary elections; when Marlow expects the bed to be freshly made, Mr. Hardcastle considers it his arrogance; and when Mr. Hardcastle presents the list of delicious menu, Marlow insists for the regular meal rejecting all the affections of his host. As a result, Mr. Hardcastle is disappointed with the behaviour of Marlow and his anger reaches to extreme point when he finds Marlow's servant very drunk. He expected to meet a sophisticated person which is also reflected in his attempt to teach his servants the manners to put on while attending his guests, but all his experiences leads him to decide to throw Marlow out.

The relationships between Hastings and Constance are based on mutual understanding and trust; hence, there is no jealousy in him when he finds Constance trying to stay tuned with Tony in front of Mrs. Hardcastle. Hastings convinces Constance to run away with him, but she does not want to leave behind her inheritance indicating her practical approach even when she fears of being discovered that she is engaged with another man. Furthermore, their decision to keep Marlow uninformed about his mistake confirms their maturity as well as willingness to commit for the life-long relations.

The third act of the play begins with Mr. Hardcastle who is wondering on the rude demands and arrogant behaviour of Marlow mirroring the influence of Tony's trick. He has planned to impress Marlow in a graceful way offering Marlow warm welcome and delicacies of a host. However, for Mr. Hardcastle, the mannerisms of Marlow seem to reflect the wicked influences of French on the aristocratic life of London youth changing them into impolite, supercilious, egoistic and rude. Further, the discussions between Kate and Mr. Hardcastle reveal that Kate experiences of Marlow who is suffering with shyness that has propelled from his little or no experiences of social life. She assesses the situation in which he has been trapped and decides to give another chance to Marlow so that she can judge him better; and therefore, when her father remarks that she has been moved with the handsome look of Marlow and ignoring his rude

behaviour, she reminds him her abilities leading her father to apologize and agreeing with her in case of giving Marlow another chance to prove his character.

Oliver Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer*-II

Tony's act of stealing the jewellery box is unexpected for Hastings; so he tells Tony that Constance is trying to convince Mrs. Hardcastle to give her the jewellery. However, Tony is so sure that his mother will not allow Constance to take the jewellery. The way he steals the jeweller with a secrete key of his mother's cupboard and his later explanations of his always taking money out for his enjoyment indicate his attempts to get out from the excessive control of his mother. Tony's understanding of his mother's obsession for the jewellery has been demonstrated when she tries to convince Constance that wearing a jewellery has become out of fashion. She gives the example of her relatives – who had not returned from London with the jewellery they took while going there – in order to support her argument. Tony takes the advantage of his mother's reluctance to give Constance her jewels and suggests her to deceive Constance telling that her inheritance has been missing which has been very much disturbing for Constance. Tony, however, could not see Constance annoyed and tells in aside that her property is safe in the hands of Hastings, and she can take the advantage of situation any time to run away from the house.

The development in the relationships between Kate and Marlow starts at this juncture as Kate determines to take the advantage of Marlow's mistake who supposes her the barmaid. She appears in simple dress in front of Marlow so that he can feel comfortable with her that will also provide her an opportunity to see his conducts. Marlow, who thinks that the clothings of a person demonstrate his social status, finds Kate as a barmaid and immediately starts flirting with her. He becomes more easy in his speech now as he supposes he is talking to the woman of lower social status who can be licentious.

Act IV starts with the attempts of Tony, Hastings and Constance to deceive Mrs. Hardcastle that everything is going on as usual. Hastings shows that he does not know Constance, while Tony demonstrates that he is flirting with Constance. However, their plan has been somewhat disturbed when Marlow unknowingly returns the jewel box to Mrs. Hardcastle in order to keep it safe. Mrs. Hardcastle also remains unaware about the fact that the jewel box was stolen by Tony as she supposes the servant who has returned her the box is thief. When Hastings learns that Marlow has returned the box to landlady again, he suppresses his feelings because he does not want to reveal the reality to Marlow otherwise he will feel embarrassing if he learns that he is in Hardcastle house. Hence, even though Marlow tells him that a barmaid is ready to sleep with him, Hastings advises him to do not exploit the honour of a woman. However, Marlow believes that the lower-class women will have a sex with him as long as he pays for it.

Mr. Hardcastle becomes disappointed when he finds excessively drunk Marlow's servant who may cause to lose his control over his own

servants. He is surprised to learn that Marlow himself instructed his servant to drink which leads him to conclude that Marlow is responsible for the bad behaviour of his servant. Looking at Marlow's arrogant behaviour finally Mr. Hardcastle gives up all his hospitality and begins to scold Marlow causing to realize him that Mr. Hardcastle is, in fact, a friend of his father Sir Charles. At this point, Kate glimpses Marlow's realization and decides to help in locating that he is in Hardcastle house; but she does not reveal her true identity as he will be shy again. However, she tries to present herself equal in his rank exposing him that she is distant relative of Mr. Hardcastle. She also demonstrates that she is offended with Marlow's attitude that she will have a sex with him only because she belongs to the lower class suggesting him that he cannot judge the people only through their class. As Marlow tells her that he is going to leave the house as early as possible because he feels humiliated with his mistakes, she attempts to distract him from his emotions presenting her misery that she will regret to part from him. He moves with the emotions of Kate uncovering his own character that though he treats inferior to the lower class people, he never exploits them for his own benefits. Kate takes this opportunity once again to disclose that she belongs to same social status as he is; but this time Marlow has been out of his awkwardness without realizing that he is speaking to the woman of his own class. At this point, instead of shyness, he starts thinking of his family's consent for the marriage; but before being overpowered by his emotions, he proposes Kate.

Constance is now aware that she will not get back her jewel because Mrs. Hardcastle will be more careful for its safety; so she decides to sacrifice her inheritance for the sake of love. While she flirts for the last time with Tony in order to keep her unaware about her plan to run away, a servant enters with a letter from Hastings to Tony expecting his help for the elopement. Despite of Constance's attempt to keep away Mrs. Hardcastle from the letter, Tony gives her it to read that discloses their plan of elopement. Tony's act of giving Mrs. Hardcastle the letter indicates her total control over her son's life. She becomes angry once she learns that she has been deceived by Tony, Constance and Hastings, and decides to send Constance to the house of Aunt Pedigree indicating her attempts to retain the family wealth in the house and ruining the plan of elopement. The disappointed Hastings and Constance start blaming Tony for ruining their plan; Marlow further joins them and expresses his anger on Tony for causing him embarrassment. Though Tony tricked Marlow to believe Hardcastle house as an inn, he has not intended any harm to Marlow; and he was genuinely helping Hastings and Constance in their elopement. However, it is he who assures the rest of three that he will plan to unite the lovers once again.

The final act of the play opens with Hastings who does not hope any help from Tony, who, as he thinks, is rustic, unintelligible and incapable, in escaping from the terrible situation he is trapped in. On the other hand, Mr. Hardcastle discovers that Marlow's behaviour is the result of Tony's trick and feels humiliated by Marlow. However, Sir Charles helps him to come out of his embarrassment by leading him to laugh at the entire

situation of misunderstandings. In fact, both the fathers become happy to see that their children are going to marry. Therefore, when the embarrassed Marlow enters to ask forgiveness from Mr. Hardcastle, he treats him in a friendly manner expecting his engagement with Kate; but again he has been driven to the disappointment as Marlow denies any emotions for Kate.

Tony once again tricks his mother leading her to believe that she has been lost forty miles away from the house in the unknown territory proving his abilities that he is no less smart than the cultured and educated Marlow and Hastings. It is interesting to note that Mrs. Hardcastle does not recognise the backyard of her house and supposes her husband as a stranger. The other angle of her character is revealed at this juncture because, though she has tried to control her son for the entire life, she is now ready to sacrifice everything and request the stranger to pardon her son. When she realizes that she has been deceived by Tony, she becomes angry over his bad treatment for her.

Kate asks her father and father-in-law to hide behind the screen so that she can prove the love of Marlow for her. She has now casted off pretending to be a barmaid and adopts her own tone because she knows that she has gradually transformed Marlow who is now confident and has gone beyond the prejudices of class. The two fathers are still unaware about the reality and still wonder why Marlow would have lied to them that he has no feelings for Kate. However, when Marlow realises that he has been deceived by Kate pretending to him that she is inferior to him, he becomes embarrassed, but his awkwardness has not overpowered him at this moment; rather he starts realising that whatever Kate does was only to gain his love. The further approval of Mr. Hardcastle and Sir Charles give him new confidence in his relationships with Kate.

When Mr. Hardcastle learns about the elopement of Constance with respectable man called Hastings, he becomes happy for her and discards the notion of his wife to retain the fortune of Constance in the house. Constance and Hastings return the house same night with the hope that Mr. Hardcastle will help them to convince his wife for their relationship. Mr. Hardcastle finds his wife's attempt to influence the situation and exposes the truth that Tony has already become of twenty-one years old and can take his own decisions further leading him to declare that he is not interested in marrying Constance. Thus, the play ends happily for all the characters except Mrs. Hardcastle who has now no control over her son as well as on the fortune of Constance.

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## 6.3 ANALYSIS OF MAJOR CHARACTERS

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### 6.3.1. Marlow:

Marlow is the protagonist of the play *She Stoops to Conquer*. He is a very smart, intelligent and handsome person belonging to the distinguished family; however, he is shy and has no confidence to speak with the women born in sophisticated upper class society. He always feels embarrassed and

remains reserved while speaking with them, but his awkwardness never obstructs him while he speaks with the women belonging to the lower class society. He has been deceived by Tony, Hastings and Kate for the greater part of the play and all his behaviour is the result of his mistakes

Marlow mistakenly supposes Mr. Hardcastle as an innkeeper and behaves rudely with him. Similarly, he makes mistakes in judging Kate who appears in front of him in a simple dress and considers her to be a barmaid. All his shyness has been shed off as soon as he notices a beautiful barmaid and starts speaking with her in his attempt to impress her. However, when he met her earlier, he had not even looked at her face for once and concluded that she is an unattractive and tall girl. He was neither eager to speak with her nor fascinated with her appearance when Hastings introduced her for the first time. His shyness may have resulted from his lifestyle as he has spent much of his time in the college or travelling that may not have provided him an opportunity to mix with the women of his own class.

Marlowe is also a generous and kind person, who intended to help his friend without any selfishness. He tells Hastings that he is going to visit the Hardcastle house so that he can help him meet his ladylove Constance. He is aware that Hastings will get an opportunity to enter the Hardcastle house only if he is in the company of Hastings. He is also a dutiful boy who obeyed his father Sir Charles and travelled to the countryside only to meet the daughter of Mr. Hardcastle. He is emotionally attached to his father and, hence, when Kate tells him that she also belongs to the upper class, he decides not to marry her against the desires of his family.

Marlow becomes humiliated and very angry when he realises that he has been tricked to believe Mr. Hardcastle house for the inn. He throws bitter words at Tony for deceiving him. However, he is still under the impression that he has not been emotionally attached to Miss Hardcastle; rather he is in love with the barmaid. His confusion has been cleared only when he comes out of his shyness. There is a kind of transformation in his character as he becomes comfortable with the lady of his own class in the end of the play.

### **6.3.2. Kate Hardcastle:**

Kate Hardcastle is the heroine of the play and the only child of Mr. Hardcastle. She is beautiful, intelligent and a smart girl, who lives at her will in the company of her father. She has been given complete freedom and has an affectionate relationship with her father. She learns from her father that Marlow is going to visit them and he can be her suitor. She also learns about the character of Marlow from her father and expresses her own views about him. When she first time meets Marlow, she finds him terribly shy and tries to motivate him in the conversation with her.

Kate learns from her maid that Marlow supposed her to be a barmaid and the Hardcastle house as an inn. She decides to take the opportunity of Marlow's mistake to find out his real character. Despite her father's advice to not change her clothing, as he has already rejected Marlow, she appears



in front of Marlow in the simple dress so that he can speak with her freely. Eventually, Marlow tries to impress her with his speech and even attempts to kiss her. When her father tells her that he is determined to let Marlow go, she requests her father to give Marlow another chance so that she can prove his character. Her attempts to prove Marlow's character show that she likes Marlow and does not want to lose him.

Kate is smart and resourceful girl who identifies that the shyness of Marlow can affect their relationships; hence, she decides to work on it by helping Marlow to come out of his reserved shell. She informs Marlow that she is a poor relative of Mr. Hardcastle and shows that she has been offended with Marlow's attitude towards her in order to clear his prejudices about the lower class women and let him realise that one cannot judge a person's character based on his class. When Marlow admits that he is in love with her, she makes sure that Marlow's nervousness will not come in their way of love. She then prepares herself for her final move where Marlow realises that she is the daughter of Mr. Hardcastle. Thus, the play ends with Kate successfully conquering her love interest.

### **6.3.3. Mr. Hardcastle:**

Mr. Hardcastle is a significant character in the development of the plot. He belongs to the upper class society but lives in the countryside and therefore he has developed his interest in everything which is old. He is conservative in his views and loves to lead the old fashionable life. He likes old books, old stories and old wine including his old wife. After the death of his first wife, he married and adopted Tony, the son of his second wife. Though his second wife complains to him that he has never taken her to see the fashionable life of the city, they seem to be a happy couple. Though he finds his step-son to be rude and disrespectful to the elders, he tolerates his excessive behaviour and follies.

Mr. Hardcastle is a very respectful person, having a sense of dignity and morality. When he learns that the son of his best friend Sir Charles is going to visit his house in order to meet his daughter, he prepares for Marlow's warm welcome and starts instructing his servants how to behave in front of his guests. However, he soon realises that Marlow is treating him as an inferior person and starts wondering how the young generation in the city has been influenced by the French fashion that has spoiled them by converting them into impolite, rude and arrogant.

Mr. Hardcastle has a particular affection for his daughter Kate; and there is a mutual understanding and respect between them. He has given freedom to his daughter because he believes in her abilities and confident that she will frankly tell him everything in her life. He informs her that the son of Sir Charles Marlow is going to visit them so that he can meet her. He freely tells his intentions to her that he looks at Young Marlow as the Suitor of his daughter and future husband. However, when he finds Marlow as rude and arrogant, he rejects him as the future husband of his daughter and plans to throw him out of the house. Yet Kate convinces him that Marlow is a modest and dignified person, so he grants her a second



chance to prove the character of Marlow. He loses his patients only when he finds that Marlow has ordered his servant to behave badly leading him to scold Marlow for such indecency.

Mr. Hardcastle is a kind-hearted gentleman who finally excuses Marlow as he learns that Marlow has been tricked by his step-son Tony to believe him as an innkeeper. He forgives Marlow and accepts him as his son-in-law. He also helps Constance to find her inheritance, disclosing his wife's deception leading the couples to end happily.

#### **6.3.4. Mrs. Hardcastle:**

Mrs. Dorothy Hardcastle is a second wife of Mr. Hardcastle. She has a son called Tony from her first husband. She expects herself to be a fashionable lady and attempts to imitate French fashions she reads in the magazines. She is obsessed with the fashionable life of London and always desires to visit it. She complains to her husband that he has never taken her to see the city life.

Mrs. Hardcastle has spoiled her son Tony by pampering and preventing him from the education, who has now been illiterate and wastes his time in rustic fellows of the country. She aims to marry Tony with Constance Neville so that she can keep the fortune of Constance in the family only. She continuously forces Constance to love Tony; but she fails to realise that she has been deceived by Constance who just pretends to flirt with Tony for the sake of her jewels.

Though Mrs. Hardcastle tries to control Tony, she becomes the victim of Tony's tricks. Tony advises her to tell Constance that her jewel box has been misplaced which he has stolen from her drawers; and when she finds the theft of the jewel box, he plays jokes causing her annoyance. However, she learns the secret plot of Tony, Hastings and Constance through the letter of Hastings and decides to send Constance to the house of Aunt Pedigree. Yet, she has again been the victim of Tony's prank and supposes that she has been lost in the unknown territory forty miles away from her own house. In the end of the play, she becomes happy that she has retained the jewels of Constance as Constance eloped with Hastings without the permission of Tony; but Mr. Hardcastle exposes the reality to Tony leading her to be disappointed as she realizes that now she has neither control over her son nor on the jewels of Constance.

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### **6.4 THEMES IN THE PLAY SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER**

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#### **6.4.1. Mistakes and deception:**

Mistakes and deception have become a significant theme in the play *She Stoops to Conquer*. At the centre of the deception is the protagonist of the play Marlow who is tricked to believe in Tony and supposes that he has been living in the inn instead of the house of Mr. Hardcastle. Since the appearance of Marlow on the stage, he has been deceived for the greater part of the play. Tony pranks on him and leads him to think that he has

taken the wrong way to Hardcastle house. Tony further describes the house in such a way that Marlow begins to think it as one of the finest inns in the countryside converted from the old house. Tony's description of his father as an innkeeper affects Marlow in such a way that he begins to treat Mr. Hardcastle in a very rude manner. As a result, Mr. Hardcastle, who has been described the character of Marlow as a very decent and honest person, begins to think that Marlow has been spoilt with the influences of French fashion confirming his belief that only pretentious people live in the city. He even rejects Marlow as the suitor of his daughter only because of his false belief. The misunderstanding between Mr. Hardcastle and Marlow reaches to the extreme point when he finds the servant of Marlow has been excessively drunk that can spoil the behaviour of his own servants leading them to be confused once again on what they are expecting as a response from another. Marlow mistakes that Mr. Hardcastle is expecting his servant to drink excessively so that Mr. Hardcastle can make a profit. He calls his servant to show how much he has been drunk that annoys Mr. Hardcastle who thinks that Marlow has purposefully asked his servant to act badly which is not a good example for his own servants, who are, as he instructed, behaving in a modest way. He is already under the impression that French fashion has influenced the youth of London causing them to be impolite, arrogant and condescending which is the result of his earlier interactions with Marlow. Thus, Tony's prank not only works on Marlow but Mr. Hardcastle also becomes a victim of his joke.

Hastings' deception of Marlow gives another angle to the development of play. Constance tells Hastings that they are in the Hardcastle house, but Hastings thinks that they will not tell the fact to Marlow as knowing the reality he will get away from the house. Therefore, both Constance and Hastings decide to use Marlow's mistakes for their own benefit in eloping from the place. Furthermore, they also agree that Marlow will not stop there when he learns that he is in the Hardcastle house which will also effect on his meeting with Kate. Hence, the deception is aimed at the benefit of Marlow as well as Hastings. Constance deception of Mrs. Hardcastle is also notable here as she does not want to be controlled by her guardian. She deceives Mrs. Hardcastle pretending that she is flirting with Tony only to show her that her persuasion has worked and that she is ready to marry with Tony. Mrs. Hardcastle is also under the impression that she has been deceiving Constance by tricking her to marry Tony so that she can keep the inheritance of Constance in the family only.

Tony also deceives his mother pretending that he is in love with Constance so that he can help Hastings in his preparations to run away with Constance. He has stolen the jewel box from his mother's drawers and then deceived her to tell lie to Constance that her jewel box has been missing. Believing in him, she lied that the jewel box has been misplaced but later discovers that the jewel box actually has been stolen from the drawers. When Mrs. Hardcastle discovers the affair between Hastings and Constance, she decides to send Constance to Aunt Pedigree's house. Tony promises to Hastings that he will make all the things right and then tricks his mother to believe that they are in the unknown territory forty miles

away from the house. Mrs. Hardcastle also deceived Tony by not disclosing him that he has come to the age so that she can keep control over his life. However, when Mr. Hardcastle finds that his wife's deception is harmful to the wellbeing of Constance, he tells Tony that he has already been of the age and can take his own decisions.

In the end of the play, all mistakes have been cleared in order to reveal the deceptions of each character leading them to finally resolve the relationships between them. Kate's masquerading as a lower class woman led her to find the real character of Marlow which would have been impossible if she had not deceived Marlow. Thus the play ends in the happy union of two couples viz. Kate and Marlow, and Constance and Hastings.

#### **6.4.2. Social structure and class divide:**

Social structure and class divide is another significant theme reflected in the play *She is Stoops to Conquer* that reveals the picture of 18<sup>th</sup> century British society. The then British society was divided strictly in the social classes of upper and lower social stature which has been further complicated with the mass movement of the people from the country to the urban areas. The elite class people residing in urban areas regard themselves as superior, more cultured and sophisticated than the rich aristocrats living in the country who reflect the rustic life as well as little education and limited behavioural codes of conduct. Goldsmith presents this class conflict artistically in the play through the mistakes of Marlow and his interactions with the Hardcastle family.

Marlow's mistake to believe Hardcastle house as an inn leads him to exercise his superior power over Mr. Hardcastle supposing him to be the innkeeper. He insults Mr. Hardcastle at every situation, interrupts his war stories supposing his stories are his attempts to show his dignity, orders him to freshly make his bed and serve the food as per his demands, rejecting all the hospitality Mr. Hardcastle intended to serve and demonstrating his rude behaviour with the lower class people. Every time, Marlow tries to show that he is smart and intelligent than Mr. Hardcastle only because of his class. This class consciousness is also in the mind of Mr. Hardcastle who, in his attempt to impress sophisticated Marlow, instructs his servants to behave modestly. The interaction between Diggory and Mr. Hardcastle at the time of Mr. Hardcastle's bombarding lessons reveals that there are close connections between master and servant at the countryside which is not possible at urban areas.

The character of Kate represents the mixture of upper and lower class as she is comfortable in all the situations. In terms of the fashion, she wears fashionable dresses of her choice during the day indicating her upper class behaviour, whereas she follows the orders of her father and puts on simple dresses of lower classes during the evening reflecting her adjustments at any situation. Furthermore, she treats her maid Pimple in a respectable manner showing her attitude towards the lower classes. As a result, she does not mind when she learns that Marlow has mistaken her to be a

barmaid; rather, she decides to take this opportunity to know Marlow. Keeping in mind the demands of the situation, she performed the roles of barmaid and a housekeeper before revealing her true class that leads her finally to win the man she started loving.

Oliver Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer*-II

The character of Tony is the bridge between upper and lower class as he is born in sophisticated and rich family at countryside, but leads a life of uneducated, rustic fellow with most of the men who belong to the lower classes. Unlike Marlow, he does not respect his elders; rather, he wants to free from the controls of his mother. Hence, he stands totally opposite to Marlow and Hastings who represented sophisticated upper class; but he is intelligent and a man of actions who knows how to manipulate the situation. However, he has not harmed anyone with his pranks, but all his jokes provoke the audience to laugh. Thus, class divide and social structure of contemporary society is visible through the delineation of the characters in the play.

### **6.4.3. Courtship and love:**

Courtship and love is the central theme of the play *She Stoops to Conquer* where the course of love of the couple's overcome all the obstacles in order to end in a happy union. The play projects the obstacles in the love that has been aroused out of individuals' psychology as well as the invaluable constraints that affect the development of romantic relationships. The main obstacle to the development of love relationships between the central couple is the shyness of its protagonist Marlow. Both Kate and Marlow belong to the upper class family and are well educated, cultured and sophisticated. Mr. Hardcastle, who is the father of Kate, promised her that he will not force her to marry anyone against her wishes; but he anticipates that the visit of Marlow will turn in the marriage knot of their children. Similarly, Sir Charles has also sent his son Marlow to meet Kate with the hope that he will like her, but he has also not forced him to marry her. Thus, both the fathers have permitted their children to fall in love with one another. The real obstacle that comes in the way of Kate and Marlow's love relations is the fear of Marlow to speak with the women of his own class. He remains reserved and never dares to propose to the lady of upper class only because he fears that he will be rejected and humiliated. This fear of rejection leads him to realise that he will not have long lasting relationships with any woman; and, as he confesses to Hastings, he can only dream of a marriage. Rather he sought another way in the form of temporary relationships by seducing lower class women who are ready to sleep with him for money.

In the beginning of the play, Marlow is so shy and self-conscious that he even avoided looking at Kate in his first meeting. He just assumes that she is an attractive and tall girl, and, therefore, rejects her before knowing her. Although Kate finds him a handsome person, she is also shocked with his reserved attitude. She tries to motivate him by completing his unfinished sentences and touching to the new topics for the discussion, but he becomes so nervous that he leaves her immediately. When she learns that Marlow has mistaken her to be a barmaid, she determines to present

herself in the form of a barmaid so that she can know more about the character of Marlow. Once Marlow finds her in a simple dress of a lower class woman, he tries to impress her and even attempts to kiss. When Marlow realises that he is in the Hardcastle house, she pretends to be the housekeeper in the house, and reveals to him that she is not a type of woman who can sleep with him for the sake of money. As Marlow learns that she is a respectable girl with her own values, he begins to give her that respect revealing his true character. Finally, he woos her before she exposes her real identity, gradually coming out of his shell and developing a romantic relationship with Kate.

The course of love between Hastings and Constance faces the obstacle in the form of Mrs. Hardcastle who tries to convince Constance to marry Tony in order to keep her jewels in the family. Though Hastings has taken the permission of Constance's father, he dies before their marriage that has transformed the guardianship of Constance to Mrs. Hardcastle. Constance is not ready to leave behind her inheritance and, therefore, she tells Hastings that she will convince Mrs. Hardcastle to give her the jewels and then run away from the house. Although she elopes with Hastings without her fortune, Mr. Hardcastle later helps her to sick her jewels, turning their course of love to be successful in the end of the play. Thus, courtship and love have become significant theme in the play *She Stoops to Conquer*.

#### **6.4.4. The upbringing of children:**

The upbringing of children is another prominent theme in the play *She Stoops to Conquer*. The relationships between Mrs. Hardcastle and Tony demonstrate the consequences of smothering and pampering the children. As Mr. Hardcastle points out, Tony is a healthy child, but his mother treats him to be a sick person who always needed her help and care. As a result of her excessive care, she has not educated him resulting in his dependence on her for the rest of his life. Consequently, instead of being sophisticated, cultured and educated, he becomes rustic, who spends most of his time in the company of lower class men in the bar. He realizes this control of his mother over him and attempts to escape from it through various pranks and by going to the Three Pigeons House. It is very much clear from the beginning that once he has become of the age, he is not going to listen to his mother. He has already made his decision that he is going to marry Bet Bouncer who seems to be a girl belonging to lower classes which she may not approve of. As his mother said, he is determined to spend his life on the inheritance he is going to receive, indicating that he has no abilities to do anything on his own.

The relationships between Sir Charles and Marlow are also indicative of neglected parenting. Marlow has not been able to socialize himself with the women of his own class which is the result of his living alone in the colleges or by travelling to distant places. Consequently, he never feels comfortable with the upper class women as he feels humiliation and fear of being rejected. This fear has made him crippled in forming successful relationships with the ladies of his own class leading him to not think for

the lifelong relationships with them. He just visited Hardcastle house only to satisfy his father as he feels obeying his father is his duty.

Oliver Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer*-II

On the other hand, the relationship between Kate and Mr. Hardcastle is based on mutual understanding and trust. As a father, Mr. Hardcastle always respected her feelings and set her free to act on her own. Therefore, she has been confident and can make her own decisions because she knows that her father is going to support her every decision. It is clearly visible when he informs her about the prospective visit of Marlow as a suitor of her, but at the same time assures her that he is not going to force her to marry him. Thus, parenting and upbringing of the children has emerged as a dominant theme in the play.

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## 6.5 CONCLUSION

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The play *She Stoops to Conquer* is a comedy of manners where, with the series of misunderstandings and deceptions, laughter is created to throw light on the social structure and class consciousness of the eighteenth century British England along with the contrasts between country and urban life, and the appearance and reality. Each character seems to deceive or be mistaken of others that leads them to judge and comprehend the situation created. The series of mistakes leads finally the central character to understand his own nature and come out of his shell which has been possible only because Kate stoops to conquer him.

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## 6.6 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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1. Critically comment on the development of the plot in the play *She Stoops to Conquer*.
2. Discuss the theme of appearance versus reality reflected in the play *She Stoops to Conquer*.
3. The play *She Stoops to Conquer* is a commentary on the social structure and class divide during eighteenth century British England: Elucidate.
4. Write a brief note on the theme of mistakes and deceptions in the play *She Stoops to Conquer*.
5. Sketch the character of Marlow.
6. Write a note on the theme of love and courtship reflected in the play *She Stoops to Conquer*.
7. Draw the character sketch of Miss Kate Hardcastle.



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## SELECTED VERSE FROM THE PURITAN ERA AND THE 18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY RESTORATION PERIOD - I

### Unit Structure

- 7.0 Objectives
- 7.1 Introduction to Puritan Age
- 7.2 Introduction to John Milton's Paradise Lost
- 7.3 Paradise Lost: Its Style
- 7.4 Check Your Progress
- 7.5 Bibliography

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### 7.0 OBJECTIVES

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This Unit intends to make the learners to understand:

- why Paradise Lost stands as one of the best epics ever written
- The aim of the poem, Paradise Lost Book I
- The relevance of the poem in the present century.

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### 7.1 INTRODUCTION TO PURITAN AGE

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In a secular age, the epic, Paradise Lost not only remains as a work of unparalleled imaginative genius that shapes English literature even now but is also a source of a powerful meditation on rebellion, longing and desire for redemption. To understand the book in better manner, it will be worthwhile to have an insight into the Puritan era that shaped Milton as a poet.

The Puritan age is named after the rise of the Puritan movement in England in the 17th century. Puritans, were a group of English-speaking Protestants who were dissatisfied with the religious reformation movement carried out during the reign of queen Elizabeth. They wanted a complete purification of Church of England and removal of practices such as hierarchical leadership, clerical vestments and various rituals of the church, which were associated with Rome. They stood for what they believed was pure Christianity (hence, the name Puritan). The Puritans emerged as a strong political force during the English Civil War (1642-1651), the Puritans as a group are often denounced as narrow-minded and repressive, yet in reality they also aimed for religious and civil liberty. The Puritans emphasized preaching that drew on images from scripture and

from everyday experience. Still, because of the importance of preaching, the Puritans placed a premium on a learned ministry. The moral and religious earnestness that was characteristic of Puritans was combined with the doctrine of predestination inherited from Calvinism to produce a covenant theology, a sense of themselves as the elect and chosen by God to live godly lives both as individuals and as a community. This age is often called an age of great persecution with the phrase “no bishop, no king.” According to WH Hudson, ‘The Puritan’s had strict rules regarding life and conduct’ and ‘an uncompromising spirit’, which sought to ‘Confine literature within the circumscribed field of its own particular interests’. Literature of the Puritan Age was characterized by a spirit of somberness and pensiveness. In keeping with the religious ideals and political standards of the Puritans; religious verse, theological tracts and political treatises replaced romantic poetry. According to John Richard Greene, a great ‘moral change’ came over the people and England became the people of a book and that book was the Bible. With the outbreak of the Civil War, theatres were closed down. In 1642, under the influence of the Puritans, the English Parliament issued an ordinance suppressing all stage plays in the theatres. The strict religious views of the Puritans spread to encompass many social activities within England. Therefore, this time period saw very little theatrical activity in England as the Puritan considered theatre as immoral and depraved and they brought the curtains down on a glorious age of Drama. The impact of Puritan age has been extremely strong on Britain and it still remains.

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## 7.2 INTRODUCTION TO JOHN MILTON’S PARADISE LOST

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The twelve-book poem is a retelling of the story of Genesis, beginning with the story of the archangel Lucifer's rebellion in Heaven, his defeat at the hands of God, and his imprisonment (along with his fellow fallen angels) in Hell, where he becomes the fiery prince of demons, Satan.

Paradise Lost was written between 1660-65 in a politically disturbed world of 17th century England but set in Biblical times. Written in blank verse, the greatest epic poem in the English language Paradise Lost Book I is an equivalent of the unrhymed forms of Homer’s and Virgil’s classical epics. John Milton is one of the most quoted poets from Puritan Era. Known for his ‘grand style’, he went on to become “the God gifted organ-voice of England”. Milton, a name to resound for ages to come. A devout Puritan who mirrored the most dominant facet of his personality as ‘Man of letters’ in Paradise Lost Book I. Written in the last phase of his life Paradise Lost fulfilled his lifelong dream of creating an incomparable magnificent piece of unprecedented poetry that would remain unequalled for times to come and make him immortal in the world of English Literature. For the world Milton meant to display his belief in the infallible love of God and his invincible trust in His ways: That, to the height of this great argument, I may assert Eternal Providence, and justify the ways of God to men”. Milton (9December1608-8November 1674) was an English poet and intellectual who served as a civil servant for the

council of commonwealth of England and later under Oliver Cromwell. His writings ran from being an English poet, pamphleteer, and historian. While studying at Cambridge, Milton was strongly drawn to the sensual poetry of Ovid and the Roman lyrical poets. He was an outspoken defender of religious and civil rights. He had fluent command over Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and Old English. Milton is considered as the most learned poet of England. Milton's life was divided between a political activist and life of poetry and arts. His political life suffered a lot of set back and in 1651 his eyesight failed him completely. As soon as Charles II re-assumed his power as a king, his restoration government swiftly executed almost all the commonwealth's leading dignitaries. Thanks, to the intercession of Andrew Marvell, who had been elected to a seat in parliament, spoke on Milton's behalf and thus Milton was spared from a certain execution. Milton would spend his remaining years, despite being old, blind, impoverished, and completely forgotten, composing one of the greatest epics ever written which became the best seller during his life time. He died in 1674.

**LINES 105-124:** "And shook his throne...what though the field be lost?" Vaunting revolutionary rhetoric. This is the first speech that Satan has with Beelzebub, who is his nearest angel and is bewildered at the physical change Beelzebub has undergone because of this fall. Although they were able to shake the heavenly seat of God but they lost because God has thunder. They did not know about the technology of thunder and that is could not win. Here Satan is trying to convince his followers that they are stronger than God and now they know all about His power. Although they have changed physically but their minds can never be ruled by an unjust God. Satan is not going to appeal or repent or ask forgiveness from God but instead in his mind the hatred is fixed, because his merit or greatness was injured as to God choose him next-in-power rather than him as His heir. The battle that Satan raged against God was dubious as it was clash of power but unsure which side will win. Glorifying himself Satan speaks that one moment of defeat is not a big loss, his soul is undefeated and mind steadfast in hatred, he has unyielding will which has courage never to submit or even be repent.

Over here Satan totally rejects total submission and repentance to God which each Christian is required for the confession so he is granted forgiveness for his sins. Instead, he has will power never to bow with suppliant knee. He endorses his desires to gain back what he has lost through a study in revenge by finding means and ways to win a victory over God. Now onwards his plans will be dominated by unconquerable, uncompromising and conniving mind that has unquenchable thirst to destroy God completely, "To wage by force or guile eternal war...Irreconcilable, to our grand Foe..."(I.120-122) Satan tries to convince Beelzebub that his calculations henceforth will never go wrong against this so-called tyrant, misuser of thunder (power)who rules in heaven."What though the field be lost? All is not lost;" (I. 105) Though the fallen angels corrupt their "heavenly Essences" with disobedience and revolt, they still have a keen understanding of the powers of perception. The tone of the entire speech is defiance and confidence; he will never

stop the eternal war of opposing Heaven by use of either force or guile. The first speech of Satan, still addressed as apostate angel, cherub by his follower's say that by fate the strength of God has thrown him out of heaven but the heavenly substance he has been granted cannot fail. Implied is the fact that Satan's imperial substance cannot fail either. The most striking and perplexing element of Paradise Lost Book I is the fissure opened between Milton's presence as guide and coordinator in the narrative and our perception of the characters as self-determined figures, his third-person interjection between Satan's first speech and Beelzebub's reply: "So spake the apostate angel, though in pain, /vaunting aloud, but racked with deep despair"(I.125) Like a true hero, Satan refers to conquest and courage, a response to the tyranny that he and his cohorts have received from the hand of God. It is this attitude of adventurous righteousness is sufficient to show the fallen Archangel to be the hero of the work. Satan, the most attractive character is shown to have a strong sense of a variable inner life that is liveliest with being self-bigoted, self-raised not created, given God's apparent reticence about the nature of things. Here Satan's pride is intellectually justified with all grandeur, bravery and strength.

**LINES 242-270:** "In this the region, this the soil, the clime...regained in Heaven, or what more lost in Hell".

These lines have been taken from the third speech of Satan in Paradise Lost Book I. Bidding farewell tranquil and peaceful fields of happiness in heaven Satan is asked that is this the place that we have exchanged with the beautiful serene heaven? Should we live in this darkness away from the celestial heavenly light? Then reconciling and accepting the fate of their fall Satan's ego concludes to the fact that, yes! they have forever left behind the peaceful and tranquil place known as Heaven for this place of damnation and suffering because "Farthest from him is best" ...(I.260) Moreover, they are not less equal in reason to God, "Whom reason hath equaled" ...(I.225) he became supreme because, "Force hath made supreme above his equals" ...(I.226-227) In using the farewell, Satan shows no remorse of leaving "happy fields where joy forever dwells" (I.228) He welcomes himself as the new ruler of the Hell, "Hail horrors, hail infernal world, and thou profoundest hell".(I.209-211) In the following lines Satan like a true hero speaks of psychologically of "mind over matter" and states that as long as you possess an unconquerable mind accompanied by a strong will, you can make whatever you would like of the situation and place you find yourself in. "Here at least we shall be free" (I.222) says the speaker, since they are not under the supremacy of God, they are under the democratic rule of Satan. The fallen angel goes on to question whether to fight for the riches of heaven was greater than consequence of losing? Satan rises to this occasion and reminds them that it is better to rule in Hell than to serve in heaven. Milton brings in sharp contrast between the aristocratic and democratic type of governments, and displays a degree of heroic stoicism in defeat. His use of military images that can be compared to a defeated general reviewing his options while refusing to disclose any notion of final submission or despair to his troops. This speech is a characteristic stubborn tenacity that has evolved into

composure and authority. "The mind is its own place, and in itself Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven... Here at least We shall be free; Here we may reign secure, and in my choice... To reign is worth ambition though in hell. It is better to rule in Hell, then to serve in heaven." (I.212-221) God can use thunder to expel us from peaceful world of heaven but here in Hell we remain equal to God in power. We will rule this world as per our ambitions along with all our loyal friends, re-assemble armies, build our courage instead of lying prostrate on the lake of fire and fearing the heaven. We, with our wisdom and reason will make this region a world of everlasting happiness and not with remorse. Freedom in heaven had no room to commit mistakes, in Hell freedom will have the sunlight of spirit and dignity, for to live in freedom is to have an independent will. Satan has now entered a new universe from contempt to decision. Satan, a tragic hero, one whose catastrophic fall is implicated in his gorgeous merits... "to which the Hell I suffer seems a Heaven". (Paradise Lost, Book IV, [ The Argument])

**LINES 315-356:** "Of Hell resounded: 'Princes, Potentates...Forthwith, from squadron and each band.'" This is Satan's fourth speech that has a deliberately proactive tone and is intended to incite the fallen angels into action. Despite the circumstances, he does not address them as though they are defeated, but as if they still have the power, calling them "Princes, Potentates, Warriors" (I.315) He tries to prompt by rebuking them mingling promises, mockery and menace and says that if they do not rise from their prostration, he says, then heaven will be lost forever. Pouring out his contempt he asks whether they are deliberately wailing and mourning there to enjoy a rest in Hell after an excruciating war or show their utter surrender. He also asks them if in their "abject posture" or their unpleasant and degrading condition, they have switched allegiance and now worship God. In any case God, the "swift pursuers from Heaven" (I.325) may take further advantage of them if they do not rally against God. The resounding line, "awake, arise, or be forever fall'd" (I.330) sums up the attempt to move the fallen angels, by a mixture of hope, shame, and fear. Satan's persuasive power is displayed in the suffering, pride, and resolves to retaliate against God. He looks at his huge army fallen and groveling in the lake of fire like locusts in the cloud or autumn leaves thickly strewn on the streams of Vallombrosa and he exhorts the angels to get up from their mourning state. This entire speech adds to the lingering trace of sweetness to the character of Satan as his eyes swells with pride and tears. As soon as the fallen angels hear the voice of their supreme commander they rise immediately and gather around him on the land despite their terrible injuries: "Yet to this Generals Voice they soon obeyd" (I.337) They are great in numbers and "fill all the plains and are awesome to behold in even their defeated state: "Godlike shapes and forms/Excelling humans, Princely Dignities/And powers that earst in Heaven sat on Thrones" (I.360) as their names have been erased forever from 'Books of Life' by God. Here they sit to council at Pandemonium anointing Satan to destroy Man, who has been created in 'God's own image'.



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## 7.3 PARADISE LOST: ITS STYLE

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The grand style of Milton propelled the invention of free verse at the beginning of the twentieth century. *Paradise Lost*, like Dante's *Divine Comedy*, is notable because it draws together a number of thoughts on spirituality and the afterlife which, though not strictly biblical, have become commonplaces for most regions across the world. Compared to epics like *Ramayana*, *Paradise lost* is retelling of the story of man's fall whereas *Ramayana* explores the goals of human life.

In Milton one finds unique expression in the use of epic similes beautifully rendering the multiple circles of Hell and stages of Heaven, of Satan's physical form as a prince of the devils. Milton, a Puritan reading of the Book of Genesis presents intriguing views on predestination and the existence of evil in the world. *Paradise Lost Book I* borrow the Shakespearian techniques of soliloquy and interior monologue, of psychological drama, and applies them to the ancient figures of the Old Testament. The epic is fascinating for its rhetorical and poetical technique as it uses the flash back technique as it begins in medias res in the burning lake of hell. What makes *Paradise Lost Book I* so influential and enduringly popular can be assessed in one sentence, "The characteristic quality of his poem is sublimity", which Milton's uses in the empathetic depiction of Satan and made subsequent observations that 'villainy' is often more dramatically interesting than 'virtue'. William Blake, a great admirer of Milton and illustrator of the epic poem, said of Milton that "he was a true Poet, and of the Devil's party without knowing it."

Here, in Milton, we find the character of Satan lamenting his own imprisonment in Hell, and yet still daring and dreaming wildly of his own possible victory, refusing, to the bitter end, to ever give in or surrender. We find a villain who is not simply one of Homer or Virgil's larger than life and unbelievable cut out hoarding, but a character with immense depth and personality that we not only listen to him but are beguiled and mesmerized by his words and plight tempted to be on his side if judgement comes. Milton revitalizes all important characters of the Bible — from Adam and Eve to Moloch and Beelzebub, from God and Christ to Gabriel and Uriel—with the same vitality through his masterful sense of drama and character. While not altering the substance of Genesis, Milton's style would remind contemporary readers of Henry V addressing his troops, Mark Antony stirring the passions of the crowd, even Richard III giving expression to his personal image of the political future, all exert the same command of the relation between circumstance, rhetoric and emotive effect. Milton's Satan is a literary presence in his own right, an embodiment of linguistic energy. In his first speech he is inspired yet speculative but by the second the language is precise, relentless, certain: 'The mind is its own place ... We shall be free... We may reign secure'. The arrogant symmetry of line (I. 263) has turned it into an idiom, a cliché of stubborn resistance: 'Better to reign in hell, than serve in heaven'. The question raised here is why Milton chose to begin his Christian epic with a heroic presentation of Satan. May be Milton wanted to build a Jerusalem

in the green wet lands of England. He had approved the killing of a king, who was regarded as God's representative on earth. This man had fallen from grace was the fall of a century and what does he do? He went on to write an epic poem which begins with war in Heaven and Satan and the other rebel angels falling into Hell. As for the cultural difference this epic was written for a very particular kind of public reading: deeply religious, with some training in logic and rhetoric, and an interest in theological questions, a passionate interest in arguing, as to why people are tempted by Satan and how they go wrong in different directions. Significantly, the central role of lust, seduction and ambition is evident in the action of the fall of Satan who laments, "there is neither joy nor love, but fierce desire..." (Paradise Lost, Book IV [The Argument])

Still, it is the character of Satan who would, despite Milton's intentions, become his most enduring creation and exert the greatest literary influence. In Paradise Lost Book I Milton initiates a tension, a dynamic that will attend the entire poem, between the reader's purely literary response and our knowledge that the characters and their actions are ultimate, a foundation for all Christian perceptions of the human condition. The mood of admiration that Satan's speeches create will face apparently insurmountable tasks and challenges and his struggles against the complex balance of fate and circumstance will cause us to admire, to identify with him. Milton in Paradise Lost Book I invoked the heroic, cast Satan and his followers as tragic, defeated soldiers, and at the same time reminded the Christian reader that it is dangerous to sympathize with these particular figures. Throughout the Paradise Lost Book, I we encounter an uncertainty that is unmatched in English literature: has the author unleashed feelings, inclinations within himself that he can only partially control, or is he in full control and cautiously manipulating the reader's state of perplexity?

The answer can be found in unrhymed iambic pentameter, which Milton called "blank verse," a form that had fallen out of favor since the time of Shakespeare and the Jacobean playwrights such as Ben Jonson be used to write Paradise Lost.

Milton's choice of style for his late epics is curious, especially considering his earlier admiration for and imitation of Petrarch, Dante, and Ovid. Yet, as an old man, Milton turned towards a densely philosophical style of writing, influenced by the dialogues of Plato and to the Book of Revelations, which the aged Milton prized as the highest achievement in all of literature. Milton's late, 'grand style' which found its full expression in Paradise Lost and its sequel Paradise Regained, is clearly influenced by the language of the Holy Bible(KJV), and particularly Revelations and the Psalms, both of which Milton could read, before his blindness, in the original. The epic shape of his late poems, and their concern with a concept as grand as the existence of good and evil, is clearly also influenced by his extensive reading of idealist philosophy. C.S. Lewis opines that Milton used unfamiliar words and constructions, including archaisms. The use of proper names is for the sound as the names are splendid, remote, voluptuous or celebrated things. The sense -experience

is through use of words like light, darkness, storm, flowers, etc. with an air of austerity. The allegorical language consists of words from Latin, Greek, and French. Omission of article is found in lines: "to pass rhene" (I.352-353), the pronoun: "as whom the fable name" (I.197) of verb: "cruel his eyes (I.604) and of preposition: "fallen such a pernicious high" (I.282) The syntax and word order is highly organized, and to some extent on the pattern of Latin poetry. Repetitions of words and inversion of adjectives: "dungeon horrible (I.61) "shapes immense" (I.790) all constitute to word-compression which is a rare gift Milton's style and subject matter that would have an immense influence on succeeding generations of poets. Among his immediate contemporaries, Lady Hutchinson would publish an epic on the subject of good and evil explicitly modeled on Milton entitled *Order and Disorder* in 1679; and the noted poet John Dryden would publish a libretto, *The State of Innocence and the Fall of Man*, in 1677. *Paradise Lost* and its immediate successors would themselves become some of the most widely read works of English literature well into the Romantic period, and Milton's influence on the Romantics, particularly on Percy and Mary Shelley and John Keats, is notable even more than a hundred years after his death. Keats regarded Milton's style as a "beautiful and grand curiosity," echoing the reaction that many readers would have as the excitement over Milton's poetry distilled into serious contemplation which had the tendency to create his world. The Victorians of the late nineteenth century, particularly George Eliot and Thomas Hardy, would continue to hold Milton in high esteem; but by the early twentieth century a critical backlash against Milton moved into full swing. Ezra Pound and T.S. Eliot, two of the most prominent poets of modernism, would point out that despite his undeniable gifts, Milton would sometimes write sentences so convoluted as to be indecipherable. A famous example, *Paradise Lost* Book I, in a long speech from Satan where either an adjective or a verb is pushed to the end of nearly every line: until bumping into the question mark. However, if one can forgive Milton his occasionally incomprehensible syntax, there is little doubt that he is a remarkable poet whose legacy has affected not only poetry, but the English language itself. Words which Milton coined in his epics that have found their way into the language include: dreary, pandemonium, acclaim, rebuff, self-esteem, unaided, impassive, enslaved, jubilant, serried, solaced, and satanic. Generally agreed to be the greatest epic, even the greatest work of literature written in the English language, it is rather strange to find a benign strain of criticism which denies the very Englishness of this epic.

From as early as the eighteenth century when Samuel Johnson concluded that Milton 'wrote no language', to the twentieth century when T.S. Eliot claimed that Milton 'did damage to the English language' and F.R. Leavis asserted that 'Milton had renounced the English language', the language of *Paradise Lost* has been embroiled in controversy.

Although one can safely conclude that Milton did write in the English tongue (to be more precise, the early modern English of the Renaissance), different languages resonate throughout this epic. Biographers postulate that Milton knew as many as ten languages, among them Latin, Greek, Italian, Dutch and even Hebrew. Given this range of linguistic knowledge,

it is hardly surprising to find a high level of awareness regarding the etymology (i.e., the linguistic origins) of the words he used. But before we consider how he manipulated the senses in which he used his words, we must make a foray into biblical realms in order to understand how Milton viewed language.

And shook his throne. What though the field be lost?

All is not lost; the unconquerable Will,

And study of revenge, immortal hate,

And courage never to submit or yield:

And what is else not to be overcome?

The language of Prometheus in defying Joe and in asserting unconquerable will is rather asserting. What evidence did Milton have with regarding Prometheus in mind in other passages of *Paradise Lost*, i.e., the use of the word study is to signify endeavor or desire. But was this ever necessary. Some few do read this line as not to be overcome, as if what is this – but this. Though, the majority explain it as meaning, if anything else is capable of being overcome that is not lost. “That Glory never shall his wrath or might/Extort from me. To bow and sue for grace/With suppliant knee, and deifie his power,/Who from the terrour of this Arm so late/Doubted his Empire, that were low indeed,/That were an ignominy and shame beneath/This downfall; since by Fate the strength of Gods/And this Empyrean substance cannot fail,/Since through experience of this great event/In Arms not worse, in foresight much advanc’t,/We may with more successful hope resolve/To wage by force or guile eternal Warr/Irreconcilable, to our grand Foe,/Who now triumphs, and in th’ excess of joy/Sole reigning holds the Tyranny of Heav’n.”

*Paradise Lost* Book I is concerned with the destruction of ego-centrality, ego-idolatry, the will to power, the will to be highest, and the will to dominate. Satan appeals to a complete icy inversion of the heart’s logic by seeing some hope in defeat. And, now that he has gained enough hate to muster the courage and force an eternal war, and the experience to predict how his enemy might counter in the future, we see the both shame and irreversible sense of ego driven strength within the same passages. He tells his troops to find themselves their unconquerable wills, and the desire for revenge which in itself is an act of humility yet the will of being to retaliate. In many ways Satan here is the reflection of man, for beneath layers of humbling there will also remain the will to win and if not a victory in the moment, the desire to win in the future.

Another device that Milton uses for impact and grandeur is that he inverts the arrangement of the identification of the voice and the spoken words themselves, thus absorbing Satan’s voice to assert a metrical alignment that parallels the semantic and tangible fulfilment. In both the Bible and *Paradise Lost* Book I, the coordinating conjunction 'and' asserts the success of this speech act, as Satan only has to say the words for their

substance to be realized. Milton's language is the *Felix culpa* (or fortunate fall both of Satan and man, an idea that celebrates the fall as the occasioning of Christ's sacrifice) is a concept which extends to language. That is to say, the fall is actually a blessing in disguise as it enabled the existence of multiple languages and sanctioned each language's own complexities and ambiguities -the very features of language which are most prominently at play in poetry. Raphael and Milton narrate 'what surmounts the reach 'Of human sense' and they do so 'By likening spiritual to corporeal forms' (V.571, 573), making the 'unspeakable' (V.156) writeable through poetic means, which have been sanctified by God in order to allow man to come closer to comprehending the divine ineffable.

More recently, there has been renewed interest in the poet's greatest work following the publication of Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* trilogy, which is heavily based on *Paradise Lost*.

James Thomson's *The Seasons* (1730), William Cowper's *The Task* (1785) and William Wordsworth's *Tintern Abbey* (1798) and *The Prelude* (1850) would not be the poems that they are had they not had the influence of Miltonic style.

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## 7.4 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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- 1) Write a short note on the grand style of Milton in *Paradise Lost* Book I?
- 2) Is Satan the real hero of the entire epic *Paradise Lost*?
- 3) Discuss Puritanism and its impact on England of 17th Century.
- 4) Write critical appreciation on any of the lines prescribed in the course on *Paradise Lost* Book I by John Milton.

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## SELECTED VERSE FROM THE PURITAN ERA AND THE 18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY RESTORATION PERIOD - II

### Unit Structure

#### 8.0 Objectives

##### 8.1 Historical Background to 18<sup>th</sup> Century England

##### 8.2 Alexander Pope and his *Rape of the Lock*

##### 8.3 Dryden and his *The Fire of London*

##### 8.4 Check Your Progress

##### 8.5 Bibliography

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### 8.0 OBJECTIVES

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This Unit aims at making the learners familiar with:

- Historical background to 18<sup>th</sup> century England
- Alexander Pope and his *Rape of the Lock*
- The genre of mock Epic
- John Dryden and his *The Fire of London*

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### 8.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO 18<sup>th</sup> CENTURY ENGLAND

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Alexander Pope (1688-1744) is considered as the greatest poet of the Classical period. He is 'prince of classicism' as Prof. Etton calls him. He was an invalid, of small stature and delicate constitution, but highly intellectual, extremely ambitious and capable of tremendous industry. These qualities brought him to the front rank of men of letters, and during his lifetime he was looked upon as a model poet.

It was poet Oliver Goldsmith who first designated the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, as the Augustan Age. It has also been called the age of Pope. The Augustan age includes the age of Dryden and Pope. The restoration of Stuart monarchy in 1660 marked the beginning of the Augustan age. Eighteenth century in England was an age equal to the age of Augustus Caesar, when the Roman society had reached the peak of its glory. The name Augustan Age was chosen by writers who saw in Pope, Addison, Swift, Johnson and Burke the modern parallels to Horace, Virgil and Cicero, and all that

brilliant company who made Roman literature famous in the day of Augustus. England at that time was looked upon as barbarous, and the classics of Greece and Rome were regarded as models which men of taste were to follow. This period, in the first place, is called the classical age, because reason dominated emotion; social conventions became more important than individual convictions; form became more important than content. The term "classic" is applied to designate writing of the finest quality. According to Goethe, "Everything that is good in literature is classical." Every national literature has at least one period in which an unusual number of exceptional writers produce books of outstanding quality, and this is called the classical period of a nation's literature. The age of Queen Anne is often called the classical age of England. Addison, Swift, Richardson, Fielding, Goldsmith, Dr. Johnson, Burke, Gibbon and Pope are the great luminaries of the age

This movement in the decorative and visual arts, literature, theatre, music, and architecture drew inspiration from the art and culture of classical antiquity. The literary thinkers could use the past as a guide for the present because they assumed that human nature was constant essentially the same regardless of time and place. Art, they believed, should express this essential nature. An individual character was valuable for what he or she revealed of universal human nature. They returned to the ideologies set in place by Greeks and Romans during the classic period. The classical poetry merged the new and the old together to produce poetry that exalted the human condition without the frills that defined the Renaissance. The poets used logic and sparse language to build bodies of work that define this school, including John Dryden, Oliver Goldsmith, and Alexander Pope. They meant to re-envision a focus on human nature, meter and rhyme as rigid. Instead, the content of the poems focused on topics in the public sphere and not on notions of the speaker's personal life. The period is also called the age of reason and good sense, because it was based on the good sense ideal of the French critic Boileau. It was an age of enlightenment when a literature which had been lucid and clear began to diffuse knowledge among a growing public. The supremacy of reason was scarcely challenged. There reigned a common belief in the advancement of human mind. The most popular style of poetry was satire, though its form and language were logical and restrained, with a dash of wit. The dictionary tells us that satire is a way of criticizing a person, an idea or an institution in which humour is used to show their faults or weaknesses. The word is derived from Latin 'satura' or 'satira' meaning medley or a mix. When applied to writing it was primarily associated with verse of some length that attacked individuals, institutions, social groups or classes or ideas. The main intention or function of such an exercise was to expose faults, vices, evil tendencies and limitations. It uses a wide range of language and devices in order to ridicule the subject chosen. Among the other forms of literature, the most famous were the essay, both in verse and prose. While drama declined and almost disappeared during the latter part of the period, Novel made its beginnings. The literature of the age was mostly comic and satiric. An important failure of the age was to produce tragedy.

The classical poets brought back heroic, rhymed couplets by including allusions to the Bible and other major writings. Under the influence of empirical philosophy and experimental science, writers of the age narrowed both their vision of man and view of life. The affairs of men, their politics, their morals, and manners became the chief concern.

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## 8.2 ALEXANDER POPE AND HIS *THE RAPE OF THE LOCK*

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### 8.2.1. Alexander Pope:

Alexander Pope (born May 21, 1688, London, England—died May 30, 1744, Twickenham, near London), is a well-known poet and satirist of the English classical period, best known for his poems *An Essay on Criticism* (1711), *The Rape of the Lock* (1712–14), *The Dunciad* (1728), and *An Essay on Man* (1733–34). He is one of the most epigrammatic of all English authors.

### 8.2.2. The Rape of the Lock:

*The Rape of the Lock* is a mock-heroic narrative poem written by Alexander Pope. One of the most commonly cited examples of high burlesque, it was first published anonymously in Lintott's *Miscellaneous Poems and Translations* (May 1712) in two cantos (334 lines); a revised edition followed in March 1714 as a five-canto version (794 lines) accompanied by six engravings. The poem of *The Rape of the Lock* satirizes a minor incident of life, by comparing it to the epic world of the gods, and is based on an event recounted to Alexander Pope by his friend John Caryll. Arabella Fermor and her suitor, Lord Petre, were each a member of aristocratic recusant Catholic families. Petre had cut off a lock of Arabella's hair without permission, and the consequent argument had created a breach between the two families. The central figure is a pretty young girl, and other characters are a rash youth, a foolish dandy and a few frivolous women. The place of deep and genuine passions found in the ancient epics is given to a succession of mock passion.

Canto II lines from 1-54 focuses on three major episodes. Belinda's river cruise, the Baron's alter of love, and Ariel's instructions to his troops.

The first episode is all about raising the Baron's attention to Belinda's beauty. It is obvious that Belinda is a beautiful woman in the poem, surrounded by gentlemen, but it is also clear that she does not intend to choose a partner as this immense attention might fade in case of doing so: "Favours to none, to all she smiles extends; / Off she rejects, but never once offends." (Canto II 11-12). Rivaling with the sun in her beauty and radiance, Belinda sets off for Hampton Court Palace, traveling by boat on the river Thames. A group of fashionable ladies and gentlemen accompanies her, but "every eye was fixed on her alone" (Canto II.6). Her "lovely looks" and "quick" eyes command the attention and adoration of those who see her (Canto II.9, 10). Belinda's glittering raiment includes a "sparkling cross," which she wears on her "white breast," inspiring the

worship of her admirers (Canto II.7). Her most striking attribute is the “two locks which graceful hung” in ringlets on her “ivory neck” (Canto II.20, 22). Pope describes these curls as labyrinths of love intended for the “destruction of mankind,” imprisoning any hearts that get caught in their snares (Canto II.19).

One of her devotees, the Baron, greatly admires her ringlets and has resolved to steal them for himself, “by force [...] or by fraud” (Canto II.32). On this particular morning he rose early to build an altar to love at which to pray for success in this venture. He created a pyre and on it sacrificed “all the trophies of his former loves” (Canto II.40). Fanning the flames with “three amorous sighs,” he burned “three garters, half a pair of gloves” and “tender billet-doux” (Canto II.42, 39, 41). The powers heard his prayer and chose to grant half of it. As the boat makes its way to Hampton Court, Belinda and her companions enjoy a lighthearted journey. Ariel, who is the guarding angel, however, is anxious, remembering the foretold “impending woe” (Canto II.54)

Canto II opens with Belinda traveling down the river Thames. This is the main river that runs through London. People in the 18th century used to hire boats—kind of like a water taxi—to take them to destinations up and down the river. Belinda's on her way to a party at Hampton Court, a few miles upriver from her house.

The boat is full of her equally well-dressed and good-looking friends, male and female, but Belinda outshines them all. To onlookers she is as magnificent as Queen Cleopatra was when she traveled in her barge. She's wearing a jeweled cross necklace as part of her ensemble, and she's making a lot of small talk as she is flirtatious, superficially nice to everyone and she looks so good that everyone forgives her if she accidentally hurts someone's feelings. Belinda totally belongs to one those schools where etiquette and artificial mannerism is taught to get along socially.

We are back to the sun again in these first few lines of Canto II. Remember how "Sol" (the sun) was so shy about peeping through Belinda's window curtains at the beginning of Canto I, because Belinda's very eyes would rival his beams for beauty? Here Pope continues the metaphor that relates Belinda and the sun, taking it to the absolute contrast in the first four lines, where she is "the rival of his Beams" (Canto II-3) as they are in competition to outshine each other.

The jeweled cross around her neck in (Canto II - 7-8) the one "Which Jews might kiss, and Infidels adore"? Pope is gently poking fun at religious prejudices here, telling us that Belinda is so beautiful at this moment, that even a Jewish person or an ‘infidel’ (those who do not follow Christianity) would kiss the very Christian cross she wears on her bosom of how darn good she looks.

Finally, Pope introduces us to the locks themselves, the main subject of the poem's title, which he describes as hanging, perfectly curled and shiny (brushed a thousand times) down the back of Belinda's neck. In religious

traditions a woman's hair represents beauty and perhaps dangerous sexuality and cutting or shaving it off is surrendering worldly gifts. It is also called the crowning glory as St Paul writes in 1Corinth 11:14-15 (Holy Bible) "Doth not nature itself teach you, that if a man has long hair, it is shame unto him? But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her. Pope further emphasizes Belinda's beauty by describing her hair as a labyrinth of love, which ignites desires in the Baron to cut the girl's lock. "Pope recognizes the inherent sexual significance of hair and effectively exploits it in the poem" (Jeffrey M., 1969. page 71.). This element undoubtedly serves as the source of the whole sexual intercourse. After this meeting, the Baron decides to build an altar to honour Belinda's beauty: "Th' advent'rous baron the bright locks admir'd; / He saw, he wish'd, and to the prize aspir'd. (...) / But chiefly love-to love and altar built, / Of twelve vast French romances, neatly gilt" (Canto II 30-31; 37-38). Hair as a symbolized as initiation, marriage, high esteem and mourning ritual in *Rape of the Lock* Belinda's lock is symbolized as absurdity of the importance afforded to female beauty in society. But when Baron snipped the lock, Belinda's reputation is lost as she exclaims, "methinks already I your tears survey/Already hear the horrid things they say" (Canto IV) Belinda's lock is the symbol of her -virginity and the rape of it can therefore be regarded as the loss of her innocence. In Pope's era religion, was a regulative policy as, women and men, were not allowed to have open intercourse and secret relationships. This resulted in the suppression of their natural instincts considered that this could had led to the loss of one's reputation. Belinda's Chastity, beauty and virtue is compromised. The lock's final ascension into the heavens is an underlined idea that lock is too precious to remain on earth and no mortal deserves to be so blest as to possess it, proves and preserves her being chaste and pure. The last five lines are about the lock, precisely it is about the apotheosis of the lock, which is the most beautiful description of Belinda's beauty, which is timeless, as Pope writes.

"For, after all the Murders of your Eye,

When, after Millions slain, yourself shall die;/When those fair Suns shall sett, as sett they must, /And all those tresses shall be laid in Dust;/This Lock, the Muse shall consecrate to Fame, /And 'midst the Stars inscribe Belinda's Name!"

In conclusion, the poem is about a sexual intercourse concealed behind a cut of a lock. This intercourse is about stealing Belinda's treasure, her virginity by cutting her hair. Belinda's untouchability attracts the Baron to steal her treasure, and after losing the lock Belinda has the fear to be worthless. The word rape is an exaggeration, because Pope wants to make fun of the eighteenth-century aristocrat's behaviour, because in this era aristocratic people usually sensationalize their problems. The intercourse has preparation and after the actual act happens Belinda feels shame. In the end of the story, they form a love affair and they forget about the lost lock as memory or the virginity, which "flies" to the sky, and does not make Belinda unforgettable or worthless. Another symbol Pope uses is the 'queen of spleen' that represents melancholy, hysteria and other emotional

turbulences that exclusively maladies of the moods present in women. we also meet the Baron, the male protagonist of the story, who Pope tells us has been plotting and planning to steal those locks for a long time.

In fact, (Conto.II.35-44) he has spent the early morning of this very day praying for the opportunity to steal the shiny lock and hence his prayers have been halfway granted. Belinda's doom is sealed.

These locks of hair that are hanging down Belinda's neck are accidental. She's actually "Nourish'd" (II.20) them, knowing full well that a few strategic curls can be very attractive. Pope gives two metaphors (II.23-24) the locks that are the crowning glories resting on her "iv'ryneck" like "slender Chains" with the power to enslave their beholder; in lines 25-28 they are tools for catching admirers, much like "Sprindges" (i.e., snares) or fishing line might catch a bird or a fish.

If love was a battlefield in the first Canto, here at the beginning of the second Canto love is a little more like a hunting trip, where Belinda is set out to catch herself a rich boyfriend. She is literally planning on tying up an extremely rich man with her beauty which is preserved like an art form "nature to its advantage dressed". The vanities and idleness of the 18<sup>th</sup> century high society is mocked in the lock being stolen or cut is equal to a rape being committed. Pope transforms numerous striking and loaded moral implications in the cosmetics and jewelry which are substitute of religious sacrifices, armor and weapons.

The verse form of the *Rape of the lock* is written in heroic couplet which consists of rhymed pairs of iambic pentameters lines (lines of ten syllables each, alternating stressed and unstressed syllables)

There is no finer gem than this poem in all the lighter treasure of English fancy. Technical innovations like density of allusions, metaphors and mimicking to maintain what J.S. Cunningham calls a continuous doubleness of apprehension by which the poet combined the flirtation with sublime, bathetic with poignant and trivial with significant. Pope is a master of the type of humor, which emerges from presenting small things in a grand form for instance, consider these lines: "Slight is the subject, but not so the Praise/If She inspires and He approved my Lays. (ContoI.11.5-6) Pope makes the serious use of what is basically Homer's style. The idiom that Pope used are brilliant and more labored into the texture of the verse. Pope also uses many periphrases as uncommon appellations. For instance, for scissors with which Lord Peter performs the rape, two-edgd Weapon, little Engine, glittering forex, fatal Engine, Sheers and meeting points. The epic methods of heightening the effects are used not for ridiculing them but to produce the desired ends. Through them he emphasizes the artificiality of the milieu, which he represents strongly satirical effect to show topsy turvy values in Belinda's world. Belinda's behaviour fully matches her retinue though everything she says or does is a plain coquetry. Pope has made her perform on the Thames barge, in the most natural and fascinating manner. She executes a tour de force of flirtation to borrow an expression. Pope presents her thus: "Fair



Nymphs, and well-drest Youths around her shone, /But every Eye was fixed on her alone.../Favours to none, to all she Smiles extends, /Oft she rejects, but never once offends, /Bright as the sun, her Eyes the Gazers strikes, /And, like the Sun, they shine on all alike."Belinda skillfully maintains the style that suits her charms without losing her grace. She keeps her chastity intact even when she offers temptations and she rejects the advances of some young men. Belinda's motive is, living in the present and enjoying her status as a maiden of infinite beauty. She shuns the dull glories of a virtuous housewife. Her motives are threefold: Vanity, the desire of conquest and self-love. With a characteristic inconsistency in her behaviour she says: Oh had I rather un-admired remain'd/in some lone isle". Belinda has taken all pains with her charms and has got her tresses curled to seize and enslave the hearts of men before she comes to the Hampton Court. She plays her cards against the two dashing, adventurous Knights for the fame in the game of Ombre. Here Pope renders that Belinda's ruling passion is unmistakably pride, which asserts in her personality in the dual sense of self-conceit and self-love.

It is relevant to note that Pope's poem contains a large number of mock-heroic images which intensify the effect of the fundamental irony, for example consider the comparison of Belinda to the sun at the beginning of Canto II: "Not with more Glories, in the Etherial plain, /The sun first rises over the purpled Main, /Than issuing forth, the Rival of his beams/Launch'd on the Bosom of the silver Themes". In a mock-heroic poem the subject of the poem is compared to something great and made ridiculous by comparison, "Belinda smil'd, and all the World was gay". There is an element of incongruity and the heroic idiom of the poem has its measure of appropriateness as well as inappropriateness, which establishes its claim as a mock-heroic masterpiece.

Briefly, *The Rape of the Lock* is not a poem against anybody. Pope only wished to laugh the quarrel out of the court and does not want to give serious offence to anybody. In short, his purpose is to conciliate everybody by means of mirth to use the expression of Ian Jack.

Pat Rogers rightly comments in his book, *Introduction to Pope*, that "Pope was a representative writer of his time, to a far greater degree than Swift, Richardson and even Defoe. An outsider in the social sense, he was nonetheless able to infuse his best work with a sharp contemporary tang. Furthermore, he did not disdain the superficial polish of Augustan vers de societe."

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## 8.3 DRYDEN AND HIS *THE FIRE OF LONDON*

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### 8.3.1. Restoration Period:

In the history of English literature, the period dating from 1660 to 1700 is called the Age of Dryden. Also called the Restoration Period, this was an era of change in political and social as well as in literary fields. In politics the period saw the reign of three rulers, two dynasties and a revolution. The social life of this period was influenced much by the French manners.

The life of the people of England was greatly affected by the Great Plague of 1665 and the Great Fire of 1666. The city ravaged by the violent outbreak was later devastated by fire. The entire city was re-built. There was also a change in literary tastes during this time owing to the French influence. Literature appealed more to the head than to the heart and reason and good sense replaced emotion and imagination. The year 1660 was a landmark in the history of England. The Stuart Dynasty which had been removed from throne and exiled to France following the beheading of Charles I was restored in the form of his son Charles II. Charles II was born and brought up in France. So, he brought back with him French manners and language. His court was notorious for its licentiousness and deceit. The Puritan Age which preceded the Restoration period was known for its moderateness in morality and earnestness in religion. But with the fall of the Puritans, the moral ideals were discarded and there was an apparent lowering of the general moral tone. The theatres which had been closed because of the extreme moral sense of the Puritans were reopened. This era had a great impact on English literature, as it was during this time that some of England's finest authors were born.

The Age of Dryden was a time of classical English literature, spanning from 1660 to 1700. Its name is derived from John Dryden, who is considered the most important poet during this time. The basis for his work is Roman and Ancient Greek literary tradition. He was influenced by Petrarch and Horace, and his poems are about moral struggles and self-restraint. The Age of Dryden is characterized by trends to be more intellectual than emotional in literature. He was interested in the lessons of history and gleaned meaning from what he saw. His writings tended to be laced with satire, irony, and wit. John Dryden is often called the father of English drama. He contributed to many genres during his lifetime, including poetry, lyric verse, satire, translations, and criticism. John Dryden was a major figure in the literary world of the 17th century. He is credited with being one of the most influential poets from that time period. Besides his contributions to poetry, he also played an important role in the development of the drama of England.

### **8.3.2. John Dryden**

John Dryden was a poet who became the first Poet Laureate of England. He was born on 27 August 1631 and died on 1 May 1700.

### **8.3.3. *The Fire of London*:**

*The Fire of London* is written by John Dryden and published in 1667. It commemorates the year 1666, which despite the poem's name 'year of wonders' was one of great tragedy, involving both the Plague and the Great Fire of London. Samuel Johnson wrote that Dryden used the phrase '*annus mirabilis*' because it was a wonder that things were not worse.

The Great Fire of 1666 ripped a fiery path through London stretching at least 40 miles long, destroying more than 15,000 homes, nearly 100 churches and an unknown quantity of businesses. The cause behind such devastation was easily to determine: all those buildings were constructed

of wood and many were lined with tar paper to keep out the famous London rain. Add to this mix the fact that most streets were very narrow and the distance between neighbors close enough to reach out and touch and the fact that London had no organized fire brigade at the time points to such a destructive event as a matter of when and not a matter if. The task of rebuilding London the day after the fire was finally extinguished looked hopeless, but over the years new buildings of brick or stone replaced the space where wood and tar had once stood a stack of kindling next to a fireplace. The Great London Fire of 1666 also directly inspired the most famous architect of his day, Christopher Wren, to commence work on St. Paul's Cathedral. That magnificent church was not the only phoenix to rise from the ashes of the Great London Fire of 1666. Another inspirational creation owing a debt of genesis of the death rattle of inferno was John Dryden's epic poetic call to the patriotic spirit of Londoners, *Annus Mirabilis*, Where others views the destruction wrought by the fire as yet more evidence—along with the waste being laid across the city by the Black Plague—as proof that God was punishing the city, Dryden saw in the massive damage caused by the fire the opportunity to cleanse and purify London of its flaws and erect in its wake a much greater metropolis. The fire, as Dryden outlines its path across the city in his poem, could be transformed into a redemptive act of God rather than a punishment from God to provide the opportunity for the salvation of an entire city. Ultimately, this poem makes its greatest appeal to the patriotic fire still burning among the dying embers of the flames with the suggestion that what appeared to be pure havoc transform into the moment at which England took its rightful and deserved place as the greatest city in the greatest country destined to lead the world into the future. The overall tone of John Dryden is patriotic. It is a great tribute to the city of London and its people. Those who subscribe to such beliefs will confidently assert that one of Nostradamus' many intricately abstruse quatrains foretells the coming of the Great London Fire of 1666. As far as city-wide conflagrations go, the 1666 blaze that made its way across much of London makes the Great Chicago Fire look like a smoldering waste basket by contrast. On the other hand, certain distinct similarities exist between the two great metropolitan wildfires, not the least of which is that both cities rose from the ashes significantly more modern than they had been before which directly led to both Chicago and London taking a more prominent place in their respective societies.

Dryden wrote this poem in response to the eventful year of 1666. In England, the year marked a great deal of destruction and change, but the nation came out on the other side richer and more victorious than ever before. Dryden relates the events of the year in grand poetical manner, painting a picture of divine fate throughout the many interactions. The year held three great obstacles for the British: war with the Dutch, the plague, and the great fire in London. Each of these events proved a unique challenge for the nation under the leadership of Charles II. Whether in military pursuits or defense against natural disaster, the people were forced to look to their monarch for a sort of supernatural deliverance. In Dryden's analysis, he credits God's blessing with the endurance of his

country through these various trials. In a puritanical sense, Dryden views the suffering of his nation as a blessing. He believes that God is chastising the nation as a test because it will be blessed on the other side of these trials. This view of God causing suffering in order to test his people is later picked up by John Calvin. He believed that God is the origin of suffering and evil, but that He is still a good God amidst this because He transcends human perspective of suffering. If God is a perfect god, then He is allowed to test his creation however He sees fit. In England in 1666, Dryden simplifies this belief to an acceptance of pain. He is hopeful despite present suffering because he believes patient endurance will be rewarded with divine blessings. The poem contains over 1200 lines of verse divided into 304 quatrains. Each line is ten syllables long, with an 'abab' rhyming scheme, a pattern known as a decasyllabic quatrain.

Dryden's poem narrates the events of the Great Fire of London, from its beginning at night in the bakery on Pudding Lane, to its final extinguishment after King Charles II ordered houses to be torn down or blown up with gunpowder to create 'fire breaks' which prevent the flames from spreading.

In the extract above Dryden describes the streets on the first night of the fire being '*thronged and busy as by day*' as people rush to attempt to put out the flames with buckets of water fetched from local churches. Despite the tragic subject matter, Dryden remains optimistic. After the fire is spent, he imagines a new city of London rising from the ashes '*with silver paved, and all divine with gold*' which is to last until the 'death of time'.

The great fire of London raged from Sunday 2 September to Wednesday 5 September 1666, and destroyed the homes of up to 70,000 inhabitants of the city. The death toll traditionally was thought to be small, with only six deaths recorded. This may, however, be a consequence of the social hierarchy of the time, and deaths of poor Londoners may have gone unnoticed and unrecorded.

This poem has a rhyme scheme is abab cdcd cece dbdb baba bfbf fcfc gggg and it is written in iambic pentameter. The stanza type is tercets in blank verse form. The poet used lexical repetitions to emphasize a significant image; 'her', 'and' are repeated. The poet used anaphora at the beginnings of some neighboring lines. The same word the is repeated. The poet used the same word the at the beginnings of some neighboring stanzas. The figure of speech is a kind of anaphora. "*London After the Great Fire, 1666*" compares the city of London to a phoenix. A phoenix is a legendary bird from mythology that perpetuates a cycle of death by fire. When the bird gets old, it bursts into flame and then rises from its ashes as London rises again.

In John Dryden's poem, the fire is described as beautiful and constructive through the use of religious imagery, this is clearly reiterated in the final line of the first stanza, saying it is now "*silver paved and all divine with gold*", the use of 'silver' and 'gold' implies almost royalty and could be the smelted. In John Dryden's poem, the fire is described as beautiful and

constructive through the use of religious imagery, 'mould'; this is to say, the fire has created valuable elements out of 'mould'. The flames work to wreak havoc, described with vivid imagery and the use of alliteration in the stanza 249: "*No help avails: for, Hydra-like, the fire /lifts up his hundred heads to aim his way*".

The word 'divine' is an introduction to the religious imagery used, implying the fire may have been God's plan. This idea can be seen to continue when the East and West bring 'incense' and 'gold' reminding us of the three Wise Men in the Holy Bible. The question as to what or who they bring it to could be the river Thames, who – as 'she' is personified – undergoes transformation as well: now a 'shepherdesses', as the shepherds who led the sheep towards the '*northern star*' – which here could be the fire – possibly implying the Thames has now become Jerusalem with Christ reborn with the fire as the leading light. She then turns into something else "*like a maiden queen*" – maybe the Virgin Mary? – these two similes illustrating a visible evolution of the river into something more beautiful thanks to the fire. The tone is awe-struck in the poem and almost simulating a religious enhancement and repeat of scenes from the bible, here the 'churches' are on fire, being burnt down, symbolizing a loss of hope and possibly of faith, a prophecy of the final days of earth using apocalyptic image. "*At length the crackling noise and dreadful blaze/Call'd up some waking lover to the sight;/And long it was ere he the rest could raise, /Whose heavy eyelids yet were full of night. /The next to danger, hot pursued by fate, /Half cloth'd, half naked, hastily retire:/And frighted mothers strike their breasts, too late, /For helpless infants left amidst the fire*". Moreover, its rhythm and pace are fast when describing the fire moves to engulf the entire world. Dryden describes its beauty with a resigned acceptance and agrees that the fire is something completely out of their hands, operates on a different, more powerful clock. Dryden extracts use descriptive words to show the fire is beautiful at some points but the poet admires the Thames as a result of the fire: "*New deified she from her fires does rise*", the verb 'deified' gives the river a goddess-like quality, as a reflection from the fire. This element of inherited beauty from the fire is continued when the wind longs to meet "*his mistress['] face again*," the 'fire' has made the river into a deity. The poet uses gratifying words to describe the fire, or what has arisen due to the fire. It can be argued the poet does describe the fire as destructive. Dryden argues his fire flushes out the crime and evil, working as a cleanser to make the city better than before. The fire is destructive, causing there to be a 'flood' however, it could be alluding to the flood God incited to wash out evil in the world, like with the Ark of Noah. Dryden could be saying right now the fire is destructive, but it is to ensure beauty in the future, just like the river "*shakes the rubbish from her mounting brow*", as the water level rises there is destruction, as the rubbish may be a metaphor for housing or evil humans but it is portrayed as something that must be disposed of. The principal differences are presented graphically in the form and structure: the poem has even sized stanzas – an aesthetically pleasing view which may imply the fire has succeeded in completely transforming London into a better place. The fire in Dryden's account begins as the nemesis of



Monarchy but then turns into its own alchemical furnace. He distinguishes his earthly and cynical cataclysm from the apocalypse.

Selected Verse from The  
Puritan Era and The 18<sup>th</sup>  
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Examining the origins of the fire, Dryden writes: “*As when some dire usurper Heav'n provides/To scourge his country with a lawless sway, /His birth perhaps some petty village hides, /And sets his cradle out of fortune's way...*”

The lawless sway is an unlikely characterization of the Protectorate, and he is certainly not attributing low birth or mean fortune on the people or the geography plagued by the flames. The fire even though it stands for rebellion is kept away from the political discourse surrounding Charles I and thus its origins are attributed to the country.

*Till fully ripe his swelling fate breaks out,*

*And hurries him to mighty mischiefs on: /*

*His Prince, surpris'd at first, no ill could doubt, /And wants the pow'r to meet it when 'tis known/Such was the rise of this prodigious Fire, /Which in mean buildings first obscurely bred, /From thence did soon to open streets aspire,*

*And straight to palaces and temples spread”.*

Dryden makes an impersonal attempt at public political poetry. The use of personification and antithesis, both uniquely favorite devices of Augustan poets add a further formalizing tonality in the bounds of the strict rhythm and rhyme. Dryden attempts at trying to imitate a heroic stanza with the use of clever placement of words (swelling fate, mighty mischiefs) is at points a shallow commentary on the royalty and its disinterest in the matters concerning the mass. The allusion works analogically rather than verbally, the fire resembling a rising of the spirit, an uprising from obscurity, to surprise a prince in a series of biblical events sanctioned by the heavens. The not uncommon phrases palaces and churches are almost self-conscious from an emotional and a linguistic point of view.

*“The diligence of trades and noiseful gain,*

*And luxury, more late, a sleep were laid:*

*All was the night's, and in her silent reign*

*No sound the rest of nature did invade.*

*In this deep quiet, from what source unknown, /Those seeds of fire their fatal birth discloses;/And first, few scatt'ring sparks about were blown, /Big with the flames that to our ruin rose”.*

His description of the ‘Fire’ is painted by resolute meditation, out of a mind better formed to reason than to feel. The conflagration of a city, with all its tumults of concomitant distress, is one of the most dreadful spectacles which this world can offer to human eyes; yet it seems to raise little to emotion in the breast of the poet; he watches the flame coolly from street to street, with now a reflection and now a simile, till at last he meets



the King, for whom he makes a speech, rather tedious in a time so busy, and then follows again the progress of the fire. The expression *All was the night's* is taken from Seneca, who remarks on Vergil, in his letter to Lucilius.

His prediction of the improvements which shall be made in the new city is elegant and poetical, and, with an event which poets cannot always boast, has been happily verified. The poem concludes with a simile. Dryden also personifies the city as a woman, first as a "rude and low" shepherdess prior to the fire to "a maiden queen" after, who is now desirable to all. Thus, Dryden employs similes, comparison of two unlike things where one thing is said to be like or as the other, in order to characterize to London before the fire. Dryden also personifies various rivers describing Thames as "proud" of its beautiful mistress, London, while all the other famous rivers in Europe will find that the "glory of their towns" will be diminished and no one will visit them anymore. London will grow so beautiful that she will draw all visitors there; people will come and never want to leave. London itself is personified as a strong woman who labors diligently. Shaking off the "rubbish" of the destruction and who stands ready to rebuild in silver and gold. London is given goddess-like qualities as she is "more great than human now" and deserves to be "deified". The poem ends also with imagery of a "venturous merchant" who lands on London's soil and is so charmed that he can "depart no more". The poem's tone of strength propels a theme of perseverance using personification and similes to convey the power of London, standing as a burnt city explaining the process by which she must ensure her survival and rebirth, "*she from her fire does rise*"

Dryden, when he wrote this poem, seems not yet fully to have formed his versification, or settled his system of propriety. From this time, he addicted himself almost wholly to the stage, 'to which,' says he, 'my genius never much inclined me,' merely as the most profitable market for poetry. By writing tragedies in rhyme, he continued to improve his diction and his numbers.

If this poem be considered as a poem political and controversial, it will be found to comprise all the excellences of which the subject is susceptible; acrimony of censure, elegance of praise, artful delineation of characters, variety and vigour of sentiment, happy turns of language, and pleasing harmony of numbers; and all these raised to such a height as can scarcely be found in any other English composition.

It is not, however, without faults; some lines are inelegant or improper, and too many are irreverently licentious. The original structure of the poem was defective; allegories drawn to great length will always break; king Charles could not run continually parallel with David (Holy Bible). The subject had likewise another inconvenience; it admitted little imagery or description, and a long poem of mere sentiments easily become tedious; though all the parts are forcible, and every line kindles a new rapture, the reader, if not relieved by the interposition of something that soothes the fancy, grows weary of admiration, and defers the rest. But as Dryden

wrote *On The Function of Poetry*, “that the poet is neither a teacher nor a bare imitator ...but a creator, one who, with life or nature as his raw material, creates new things together resembling the original”. It comes very true as far as this poem is concerned, the paintings on the great fire of London done by many painters have been inspired by this poem.

Selected Verse from The  
Puritan Era and The 18<sup>th</sup>  
Century Restoration  
Period - II

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## 8.4 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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1. What are the qualities of Belinda's character? Illustrate your answer.
2. Trace Pope as a social satirist with special reference to Canto II lines 1-54.
3. Critically examine the age of Dryden.
4. Write a critical analysis of the poem.
5. Write a short note on the poetical style of Dryden with special reference to the poem.

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