

Core Course VI - Restoration Literature

The general aim of this course is three fold. The first is to make the student get well-acquainted with the political-historical milieu of the period which may be considered to have exercised an impact on the literary production of the period. The second is to introduce the student to the socio-economic environment of the age that provided a new potential and direction to the English theatre. The third is to make the student focus on the peculiar imaginative bent of the period which delighted in satire, evolved a precise prose style and began exploring into the potential of the novel.

Objectives :

1. To introduce the student to the genres epic and elegy, and, to make the student appreciate the scholarly loftiness of Milton in both genres.
2. To facilitate the student to apprehend the socio-political satiric compositions and the structure and style of the mock-epic.
3. To make the student gain exposure to the two kinds of prose-style of the period – the measured and ironic style of Addison and Steele and the satiric and acerbic style of Swift.
4. To introduce the student to two kinds of Restoration dramatic styles – the heroic play of Dryden (in heroic couplet poetic form) and the racy / witty dramatic prose style represented by Congreve.
5. To initiate the student into the diverse concepts of fiction and the evolution of the English novel through representative selection that ranges from the solemn, social criticism to the psychological / humorous metafiction.

Paradise Lost Bk IV has been prescribed in Unit I to give the student a taste of the form and structure of the English epic and an idea about the thematic uniqueness of Milton's epic. In the same unit, the student is introduced to the English elegy, which, said to have begun with Lycidas, runs through a long tradition to the twentieth century. The second unit takes the student to the heart of English satiric poetic tradition, with Dryden representing the politico – social dimension and Pope the personal literary dimension. The third unit introduces the student to two of the best varieties of English prose – the gently ironic represented by Addison and Steele and the wittily satiric represented by Swift. In the third unit the student is given an exposure to Dryden's history – play that adopts a new perspective on Antony and Cleopatra and the heroic couplet form, and,

Congreve's focus on the social theme and the use of brilliantly vivacious English prose. The fifth unit, introducing the student to English fiction, takes

her/him from allegorical fiction through social / journalistic fiction to metafiction.

Unit I

Milton : Paradise Lost Book IV
Lycidas

Unit II

Dryden : Absalom and Achitophel
Pope : Epistle to Arbuthnot

Unit III

Addison & Steele : Character of Will Wimble, Sir Roger at the Church, Sir Roger at the Theatre

Jonathan Swift : The Battle of the Books.

Unit IV

Dryden : All for Love

Congreve : The Way of the World

Unit V

Defoe : Robinson Crusoe

Sterne : The life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman