

ENGLISH LITERATURE OF THE XVIII-XIX CENTURIES AS A REFLECTION OF SOCIAL-CULTURAL LIFE

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Abstract— By the beginning of the XVIII century, England took a leading position in Western Europe. Its marketplace was expanding, new industries and factories appeared, and trade developed. It had the strongest Navy in Europe and the most democratic nation system at that time. In 1707, the legislative act of Union was adopted, which United England and Scotland into a Union state — Great Britain. The main influence in the country related to the Parliament, and it was at this time that the two-party system (Whigs and Tories) was formed, which — albeit in an imperceptibly different form—exists in England to this day. The progressiveness of the British political system in the XVIII century can be evidenced by the fact that many political exiles who came into conflict with the officials in their own country, it was here that they found refuge. For example, Voltaire, forced to leave France because of persecution, immediately went to England, where he lived for three years, studying its literature, philosophy, and political system. The cultural level of English society has also grown. Printing was improved, and the printing of books became more affordable, which led to an expansion of the readership. Largely inspired by the findings made by Isaac Newton in mathematics, physics, and astronomy, the British awakened interest in the exact sciences. It even became fashionable for members of the upper classes to attend speeches on physics and astronomy, which eventually led in the middle of the century to the formation of the community "Bluestockings", which included fashionable ladies who were interested in science.

Keywords— Literature, cultural level, English history, novel, authors.

I. INTRODUCTION

The expiry of the Licensing Act in 1695 halted state censorship of the press. During the next 20 years there were to be 10 general elections. These two factors combined to produce an enormous growth in the publication of political literature. Senior politicians, especially Robert Harley, saw the potential importance of the pamphleteer in wooing the support of a wavering electorate, and numberless hack writers produced copy for the presses. Richer talents also played their part[3].

The Union of the Parliaments of Scotland and England in 1707 to form a single Kingdom of Great Britain and the invention of a common state by the Acts of Union had little impact on the literature of England nor on national mindfulness among English writers. The situation in Scotland was varied: the passion to sustain a cultural identity while participating in the advantages offered by the English literary demand and English literary standard language led to what has been described as the "invention of British literature" by Scottish writers. English writers, if they viewed Britain at all, tended to pretend it was solely England writ large; Scottish writers were more clearly aware of the new state as a "cultural amalgam comprising more than just England"[5].

The second half of the 18th century is sometimes called the "Age of Johnson". Samuel Johnson (1709–1784), often referred to as Dr Johnson, was an English author who made lasting contributions to English literature as a poet, essayist, moralist, literary critic, biographer, editor and lexicographer. Johnson has been described as "arguably the most distinguished man of letters in English history".[6] After nine years of work, Johnson's A Dictionary of the English Language was published in 1755; it had a far-reaching effect on Modern English and has been described as "one of the greatest single achievements of scholarship".[8] Through works such as the "Dictionary, his edition of Shakespeare, and his Lives of the Poets in particular, he helped invent what we now call English Literature"[7].

The period of the 18th century saw the emergence of three major Irish authors Oliver Goldsmith (1728–1774), Richard

Brinsley Sheridan (1751–1816), and Laurence Sterne (1713–68). Goldsmith settled in London in 1756, where he published the novel *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1766), a pastoral poem *The Deserted Village* (1770) and two plays, *The Good-Natur'd Man* 1768 and *She Stoops to Conquer* 1773. Sheridan was born in Dublin, but his family moved to England in the 1750s. His first play, *The Rivals* 1775, was performed at Covent Garden and was an instant success. He went on to become the most significant London playwright of the late 18th century with plays like *The School for Scandal* and *The Critic*. Sterne published his famous novel *Tristram Shandy* in parts between 1759 and 1767 [9].

A shift in philosophy but primarily in literature, romanticism is the revolt of the feelings or passions against the intelligence and of the individual against the consensus. Its first stirrings may be seen in the work of William Blake (1757-1827), and in continental authors such as the Swiss philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the German dramatists Johann Christoph Friedrich Schiller and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe.

II. METHODS AND MATERIALS

In this research qualitative method is used in order to investigate culturally and socially specific information about English literature in XVIII-XIX centuries. By this method, answers to questions were sought. Qualitative methods are also effective in recognizing intangible factors, such as social standards, socioeconomic status, gender positions, ethnicity, and religion, whose role in the research. systematically uses a predefined set of procedures to answer the question and collects evidence Especially, the comparison of William Thackeray and Charles Dickens' works produce findings that were not determined in advance and applicable beyond the immediate boundaries of the study.

In the late XVIII and early XIX centuries Ch. Dickens' "Dombey and Son", W. Thackeray's "Vanity Fair", CH. Bronte "Jane Eyre", M. Gaskell's works, such as "Mary Barton", saw the face of the world. In the same years, famous realist writers, poets, critics, like Thackeray, Bronte, reached out. Poetry and prose reflected the mood of the broad masses of the people, their performances against social injustice. Critical realism involves the cultural achievements of the last century, the illumination of realism, the achievements of art. At the same time, its development is connected with the emergence of new aesthetics, new principles in describing existence and reality.

Literature during this period was often considered a tool for the advancement of knowledge. Writers were often found observing nature in their attempts to express their beliefs. Human nature was considered a constant that observation and reason could be applied to for the advancement of knowledge. Within these circumstances, the Age of Satire was born. Satire was the most popular literary tool that was utilized by writers

of the time. With the help of satire, writers were better able to educate the public through literature. Its function was to acknowledge a problem in society and attempt to reform the problem in a comical manner while still educating the public. Its effectiveness can be seen in literary pieces by Jonathan Swift such as *A Modest Proposal* where he addresses and criticizes the problem of a growing famine in Ireland. Playwrights of the time were also known to incorporate satire in their plays. Through the use of satire, they were able to expose and critique social injustices. "Over the thirty years of its triumphs, Restoration comedy, in an astounding fugue of excesses and depravities, laid bare the turbulence and toxins of this culture" (Longman). Satire was a highly successful literary tool that worked to promote social awareness through literature, the theater and periodicals of the time[1].

Daniel Defoe, the author of *Robinson Crusoe*, was a gifted author for journalism in an age before newspapers exist which can accommodate his kind of material. He admired traveling as a semi-secret political agent, he worked by collecting material of use to those who pay him. In 1712 he founds and writes virtually single-handed, a thrice-weekly periodical, the *Review*, which continues hardly a year. But it is his ability for what would now be called feature articles which point him out as the archetypal commentator.

III. EXPERIMENT AND RESULT

Nineteenth-century literature and culture have demonstrated a rich scope for interdisciplinary investigations. Books in this series have traced the crossings and pressures between Victorian literature and the visible arts, politics, gender and sexuality, class, social organization, economic conditions, technical modifications, scientific thought - in short, culture in its most general sense. Many books are now classics in a range which since the series' conception has seen influential commitments with feminism, visual studies, post-colonialism, critical race inquiries, new historicism, new formalism, transnationalism, queer pieces of knowledge, human fairness and progressivism, incapacity studies, and global studies. Academic difficulties and historiographical changes continue to disarrange scholarship in the nineteenth century in fruitful ways. New work on the heart and the feelings, the atmosphere and climate, race and the decolonization of literary studies, biopolitics and materiality, the animal and the human, the regional and the global, statesmanship and form, queerness and gender statuses, and intersectional approach is re-animating the field.

These values achieved their most powerful literary representation in the verse of Alexander Pope. Pope—neoclassicist, humorist, and master of the noble couplet—was critical of human failings but regularly assured that order and happiness in human intrigues were feasible if balances were avoided and sober dictates regarded. The glorious prose satirist Jonathan Swift was not so hopeful. His savage resentment ended in devastating strikes on his age in *A Tale of*

a Tub (1704), Gulliver's Travels (1726), and A Modest Proposal (1729).

Middle-class inclinations were shown in the growth of publications and newspapers, the best of which were the Tatler and the Spectator created by Joseph Addison and Sir Richard Steele. The novels of Daniel Defoe, the first modern novels in English, owe much to the techniques of journalism. They also demonstrate the virtues of trader adventure vital to the rising middle class. Certainly, the novel was to become the literary structure most sympathetic to middle-class demands and benefits.

The work is based on a real story that appeared to the Scottish sailor Alexander Selkirk, who labored as boatswain on the ship "Senk Por" and settled in 1704, at his offer, on the uninhabited island Mas-a-Tierra (Pacific Ocean, 640 km from the coast Chile). The actual problem of Robinson Crusoe was caused by his unfriendly personality, the literary one – defiance to parents, preferring the reverse direction of life (a sailor instead of an official in the supreme ruler) and a heavenly punishment, declared in a natural catastrophe for any explorer – shipwreck. Alexander Selkirk lived on his island for four years, Robinson Crusoe – twenty-eight years, two months and nineteen days.

Essential things (ship's boards, food, clothing, carpenter tools, knives, weapons, gunpowder, etc.) in the novel are compared with money. Robinson Crusoe understands the latter as "worthless garbage": on an island empty of people and dealer shops, they are useless. At the same time, the gold found on the ship still wraps the hero in a part of canvas and takes it to the island. The act is not revealed to them in any way, but the reader gets that he is commanded by the goal of returning to the fold of civilization.

Jonathan Swift in 1726 wrote one of the world's most popular stories and again seems to do so for reasons not quite signified by its author. Jonathan Swift, a man inspired by violent anger at the ways of the world, writes Gulliver's Travels as a satire in which human action is viewed from four revealing edges.

When Gulliver arrives in Liliput, he observes with polite disdain the habits of its tiny residents. But in Brobdingnag, a land of giants, he is the midget. When he proudly tells the king about European habits, he is astonished at the royal response. The leader says that humans sound like 'little odious Vermin'. Laputa - the flying island is the next stop of Gulliver. This area is governed by philosophers and scientists (as Plato might have wished). They make a mess of things. At the end, the hero of the book Gulliver visits a land dictated by smart horses (the Houyhnhnms, Swift's version of whinnying). The hooligans here are cruel and oafish animals in human shape, the Yahoos.

I could frequently distinguish the word Yahoo, which was repeated by each of them several times: and although it was impossible for me to conjecture what it meant, yet while the

two horses were busy in conversation, I endeavored to practise this word upon my tongue; and as soon as they were silent, I boldly pronounced Yahoo in a loud voice, imitating at the same time, as near as I could, the neighing of a horse; at which they were both visibly surprised; and the gray repeated the same word twice, as if he meant to teach me the right accent; wherein I spoke after him as well as I could, and found myself perceivably to improve every time, though very far from any degree of perfection. Then the bay tried me with a second word, much harder to be pronounced; but reducing it to the English orthography, may be spelt thus, Houyhnhnm. I did not succeed in this so well as in the former; but after two or three farther trials, I had better fortune; and they both appeared amazed at my capacity[9].

The clear intensity of the author's vision transcends his direct target. Of the millions who enjoy Gulliver's fantastic adventures, few are principally aware of Swift's harshly satirical purposes. Within the broad plot of Gulliver's Travels, Gulliver seems to be a common man in eighteenth-century England. He is bothered with his family and job, yet he is faced with the pigmies that politics and political theorizing make of people. Gulliver is completely incompetent of the silliness of the Lilliputian politicians, and, therefore, he and the Lilliputians are ever-present adverse for us. We are always aware of the separation between the incomplete moral life of Gulliver, and the poor and stupid political life of emperors, prime ministers.

IV. CONCLUSION

In the 18th century, the publication of newspapers and magazines attracted a great number of readers from the middle class. These new readers had limited interest in the ballads and the tragedies which had entertained the upper class.

Thus the demand for new types of writing rose that would represent the new ideas of the 18th century and this new type of literature was none but fiction. The 18th-century literature was characterized by the spirit of realism and romantic characteristics like enthusiasm, feeling, creativity, etc. failed in this conclusion.

Intelligence, ability, accuracy, satirical spirit, etc. were the main characteristics of 18th-century literature. The English novel had all these features.

As reading became less of a privilege of the wealthy and more of a pastime of the common British citizen, publications such as periodicals flourished. These magazines provided monthly installments of news articles, satiric essays, poetry and fiction. These serial publications enabled many authors to easily share their work Dickens, Eliot, Tennyson, and the Brownings (Norton). Because literature was an accessible and pervasive part of Victorian society, studying it is crucial in understanding the attitudes and concerns of the people who lived during this era. Much of the writing during this time was a reaction to the rapidly changing notions of science, morality,

and society. Victorian writers also reacted to the writings of previous generations. George Landow argues that the Victorians wanted to escape what they saw as 'the excessive subjectivity of the Romantics' while at the same time keeping their "individuality, originality, intensity, and, above all, sincerity." Thus Victorian literature tries to combine the use of Romantic subjectivity (~1798-1830) with the objectivity of the Augustans (~1660-1798). Landow argues that the birth of the dramatic monologue and autobiographical fiction were used to bring personal experiences to literature without the author seeming self-obsessed[4].

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