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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

STUDY MATERIAL (NEP & CBCS)

SEMESTER WISE

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SEMESTER-I (NEP)

MAJOR COURSE

FRANCIS BACON : *OF STUDIES*

Of Studies by Francis Bacon

Introduction

The essay *Of Studies* by Sir Francis Bacon is the first essay in the series of ten essays published in 1597. Later, it was revised in 1612 with the addition of some more sentences and ideas in it along with the alteration in some vocabulary terms. This essay is regarded as Bacon's masterpiece enriched with stylised Latin vocabulary, fresh and new ideas, logical and relevant themes and wisdom of the world. For these reasons, the essay is still popular among individuals of all ages. Adopting a didactic approach, the essay informs the readers about the benefits and uses of studies in one's life.

Summary

Highlighting the importance of studies, Bacon's essay illustrates the role studies play in an individual's daily life. For Bacon, the study is always related to the application of knowledge in practical life. At the beginning of his essay, Bacon describes the three main purposes of study including studying for gaining delight, studies done for ornamenting one's life and studying in order to improve one's ability. The author is the notion that only learned and well-read men can execute plans effectively, manage their daily affairs with expertise and lead a healthy and stable life. He further states that reading makes a full man; conference leads to a ready man while writing makes an exact man. While throwing light on the advantages and usefulness of studies, Bacon also puts forward some demerits of study as he thinks that studying for a prolonged period of time may lead to laziness. He also condemns the act of studying from books solely without learning from nature around. The essay *Of Studies* further asserts the benefits of studies by considering this act as a medicine for the defects of the human mind and the source of enhancing one's wit. While discussing the importance of studying in an individual's life, the essayist informs his readers about the benefits of reading good books. For Bacon, some books are only meant to be tasted; others are there to swallow while some books are meant for chewing and digesting properly. Therefore, the readers must choose wisely before studying any book to enhance his/her knowledge about the world around.

Of Studies : Analysis

In this essay Bacon describes the importance of studies in human life. Bacon begins the essay by enlisting three purposes of studies – “to delight, for ornament and for ability.” Studies delight most when one is secluded and reposed. Knowledge acquired through studies serve as ornament in a conversation. A well read man will have a good vocabulary and greater knowledge which will increase the worth of a conversation. Studies improve one's judgmental and authoritative abilities.

Ordinary men can no doubt go about their daily business without difficulty but a learned man will do so with higher efficiency. Bacon however says that studying too much is a sign of laziness and using too many ornaments while conversing makes one look pretentious. To make judgments only on the basis of rules is the eccentricity of a scholar.

Studies make a man perfect. Studying is not an inborn talent; it is acquired. The natural abilities of man are to be enhanced by studies just like the growth of plants is enhanced by trimming. Studies provide both direction and experience. Practical men often condemn studies but wise men use it. Studies teach man to learn from observation. One must not use knowledge as a means of contradiction or confutation. Studies must also not be used to believe or to take for granted, or to talk and discourse but “to weigh and consider”.

Then Bacon speaks about the different ways in which different books are to be read. He says – “Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested.” This means some books are to be perused lightly, that is, tasted while some other books are to be understood and enjoyed, that is, swallowed. On the other hand certain books are to be digested, that is, to fully extract their meaning and implemented in one’s life. Therefore some books are to be read only in parts, others are to be read with less curiosity, and some books are to be read with attention and diligence. Bacon however also says that sometimes it may be enough to read extracts or reviews of books made by others instead of reading the whole book by oneself. But according to Bacon this is to be done only in case of books of less importance. He considers these “distilled books” to distilled waters which he calls “flashy things”.

Reading makes a man complete, conversation makes a man quick and witty, and writing improves the memory. If a man writes less he will lack a good memory, if he speaks little he will lack wit and presence of mind, and if he reads less he will not have much knowledge.

A study of history makes a man wise while a study of poetry makes him witty. Mathematics makes a man exact and precise and natural philosophy increases the depth of the mind. Morals make a man grave whereas a study of logic and rhetoric makes him more comprehensive. Studies pass into character. A man’s character is influenced and defined by the type of books he reads.

There is no disease of the mind that cannot be cured by proper study. Bowling is good for the bladder and the kidneys, shooting for the lungs and breast, walking for the stomach and riding is good for the head. Similarly mathematics is the remedy for a wandering mind because if a man’s mind wanders while solving a problem he will have to begin again. If a man is unable to make distinctions he must study schoolmen and if he is not quick in passing through matters he should study the law. Thus Bacon concludes the essay by establishing that for every deficit of the mind a remedy is to be found in studies.

Studies makes one develop one’s abilities with ease Studies by themselves provide guidance, but without practical experience this is abstract. Men who are cunning, do not approve of the studies, but those who are simple, feel an admiration for studies. Men who are basically wise, make use of studies for their progress.

Analysis

This essay deals with different kinds of books and their effect on the reader. The uses of studies are classified by Bacon under three heads – the use of studies for delight; the use of studies for ornament and the use of studies for ability. Bacon also gives us some excellent advice as to why or how one should read. He tells us that different studies have varied effects on the human mind.

Various mental defects can be remedied by various kinds of studies. The need of experience to supplement and perfect studies has duly been emphasized in the essay. Bacon would not be satisfied with more bookish knowledge. The wisdom won by experience is as necessary as the wisdom gained from books.

But it is not only the ideas that are so important in this essay. We find Bacon displaying his talent for using the maximum economy of words in order to express his ideas. The essay is a masterpiece of brevity and terseness. Some of his sentences read like proverbs.

Theme:

The Elizabethan Age is the most creative period in English Literature. The foreign wars were over and the Englishmen had for the first time the leisure to devote their energies to interests other than war upon their neighbours.

Fortunately, just at this time, the great wave of the Renaissance, the new birth of letters, having spent itself in Italy and crossing over France and Spain reached the shores of England.

With Francis Bacon begins philosophical reflections upon life, in the style of Plutarch's "Morals" and the "Essays" of Montaigne. Bacon's mind was catholic in its range, but the subjects of moral thought that interest him are comparatively few and generalized. The method used by Bacon is to reduce reflection to the lowest terms to try to discover the fundamental principles of conduct, the influence and the actions of men. His essays reflect his experiences of learning. His observations do not clear his likes or dislikes. They are austere, brief to the point of crudeness. In the essay Of Studies, a life-long student, Bacon describes his craft. He was no plodder upon books though he read much and that with great judgment. The subject of this essay was the one that revolved longest in the edition of his "Essays".

Structure:

One peculiarity of this essay which deserves notice is the frequency with which Bacon repeats himself. Thus essay has each sentence carefully selected and strung together, Bacon has gems of thought and language, but he does not scatter them about with uncalculating profusion of a Shakespeare, non 'like wealthy men who care not how they give, but rather like those who are spending their story with care'.

Bacon is not an optimist. He has no sentiment to lead the reader astray. He writes with brevity and compactness. To the careless reader much of what he has written will seem common-place enough. But to the serious reader, his thoughts are universal. The sentences are compact and simple.

PHILIP SIDNEY: SONNET 1

Title: Sonnet 1 - "Loving in truth, and fain in verse my love to show"

Overview

This is the opening sonnet in 'Astrophil and Stella', a sequence of 108 sonnets and 11 songs by Sir Philip Sidney. The poem sets the tone for the work, introducing themes of love, creativity, and self-expression. The speaker, Astrophil, addresses his love for Stella, showcasing his struggle to find the right words to express his feelings.

Themes:

Love and Expression: The speaker wants to use poetry to express his love, hoping it will inspire reciprocal affection. The Role of the Muse: The Muse represents inspiration and inner truth, urging the speaker to turn inward rather than imitate others. Struggle of Creativity: The speaker struggles with writer's block and finds no solace in imitating others' works. Authenticity vs. Artificiality : The final line emphasizes the value of personal truth over studied artistry.

Analysis

Octave (Creative Frustration)

- Sidney captures the speaker's frustration with poetic conventions and external influences. Phrases like "turning others' leaves" suggest an attempt to borrow inspiration from other poets, which fails to produce genuine emotion or originality.

Sestet (Resolution)

The turn (volta) occurs at line 9, where the speaker admits defeat in his attempts at forced creativity. The Muse's advice—"look in thy heart, and write"—marks a shift toward authenticity, highlighting the Renaissance emphasis on self-expression and individual creativity.

Imagery and Language

"Sunburnt brain": Evokes the exhaustion and barrenness of forced creativity.

"Blackest face of woe": Reflects the depth of Astrophil's despair.

"Biting my truant pen": A vivid image of frustration, showing physical manifestations of mental struggle.

Tone

- Reflective and self-critical, shifting to hopeful with the Muse's guidance. The humor in self-reproach ("Fool," said my Muse) tempers the speaker's frustration.

MINOR COURSE

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE : SONNET 116

Here is a detailed study guide for *Sonnet 116* by William Shakespeare, incorporating insights from various sources. It includes the text, analysis, themes, literary devices, and critical commentary.

Paraphrase and Summary

Paraphrase :

- True love is constant and does not change under any circumstances. It does not waver when faced with challenges or fade when beauty fades. Love is steadfast and eternal, unaffected by time or external forces. If this concept of love is proven wrong, then no one has ever truly loved.

Summary:

The sonnet explores the nature of true love. Shakespeare argues that genuine love remains steadfast despite life's challenges and changes. It is unshaken by external forces and unaffected by time, making it eternal and unyielding.

Themes

Eternal Nature of True Love: Love transcends time and remains constant, even as physical beauty fades.

Unchanging and Immovable Love: True love does not change based on circumstances or external pressures.

Love vs. Time: The poem juxtaposes the timelessness of love with the transience of human life and beauty.

Love as a Guiding Force : Love is likened to a star, guiding lost souls much like a lighthouse to ships.

Literary Devices

Metaphor :

"It is an ever-fixed mark" compares love to a lighthouse or a steadfast point.

"It is the star to every wandering bark" likens love to a guiding star for ships.

2. Personification

"Love's not Time's fool" gives Time human qualities, presenting it as powerless against true love.

"Within his bending sickle's compass come" personifies Time as a reaper wielding a sickle.

Alliteration :

- "Let me not to the marriage of true minds"* emphasizes the musicality of the verse.

Imagery:

- The use of natural elements like tempests and stars creates vivid images to support the idea of love's resilience and constancy.

. Antithesis:

- Contrasting ideas, such as love's permanence vs. time's transience, highlight love's enduring nature.

6. Symbolism:

- "Edge of doom"* symbolizes the end of time, underscoring love's eternal quality.

Critical Analysis

- Shakespeare challenges the conventional, romanticized notions of love, asserting that true love is not about physical attraction or fleeting emotions. Instead, it is an enduring, spiritual connection that survives all hardships.

- The sonnet is structured as a logical argument, building upon the premise of love's unchangeable nature and concluding with a bold declaration of its truth.

Structure and Form**

Type: Shakespearean sonnet (14 lines) Rhyme Scheme ABABDCDEFEGG

Meter: Iambic pentameter

- Volta: Occurs in the final couplet, emphasizing the poet's assertion about the unassailable nature of true love.

SEC COURSE

IDIOMS AND PHRASES

Here's a detailed list of study materials for idioms and phrases that can help B.A. Hons students prepare effectively. These materials include examples, explanations, and exercises, ensuring comprehensive learning.

Study Materials for Idioms and Phras

Basics of Idioms and Phrases

Definition: Idioms are expressions whose meanings are not directly derived from the literal interpretation of the words.

Example: "Piece of cak means something very easy.

Importance: Understanding idioms helps improve language fluency and interpret figurative meanings in context.

2. Commonly Used Idioms and Their Meanings

Here are some idioms with examples:

1. Burn the midnight oil– Work late into the night. Example: She burned the midnight oil to prepare for her exams.
2. Hit the nail on the head – Say exactly the right thing. Example: His answer hit the nail on the head.
3. Break the ice – Start a conversation in a social setting. Example: He told a joke to break the ice at the meeting.

3. Categorized Idioms for Easy Learning

Idioms Based on Nature. Raining cats and dogs*: Heavy rainfall. A storm in a teacup: Exaggerating a small problem.

Animal Idioms: The lion's share: The largest portion. Cry wolf: Raise a false alarm.

Idioms Related to Time: At the eleventh hour: At the last moment. Once in a blue moon: Very rarely.

4. **Phrases and Their Usage:** Phrase: A group of words that work together to convey a particular meaning. By all means: Certainly. At a glance: Immediately upon seeing.

6. Idioms in Literature

Encourage reading classical and modern literature to spot idiomatic expressions in real contexts. For instance: "To be or not to be" (from Shakespeare) can be seen as reflective.

SEMESTER-II (NEP)

MAJOR COURSE

J.M SYNGE : RIDERS TO THE SEA

1. Summary

Riders to the Sea is a one-act tragedy set in the Aran Islands off the western coast of Ireland. It centers on the grief-stricken Maurya, who has lost her husband and sons to the sea. The play begins with the death of her last son, Michael, and ends with the drowning of her youngest son, Bartley. The sea, both a source of sustenance and destruction, looms as an uncontrollable force throughout the play.

2. **Key Characters:** Maurya: The central character, an old woman who symbolizes maternal grief and resilience in the face of repeated loss. Bartley: The youngest son, whose death symbolizes the inevitable power of fate. Cathleen: Maurya's elder daughter, who represents practicality and stoic acceptance? Nora: The younger daughter, who helps provide hope and support despite the family's grief. The Sea : Not a character, but an omnipresent force that drives the tragedy and reflects the harsh realities of life on the islands.

3. **Themes:**The Power of Nature: The sea is depicted as an indifferent, destructive force that humans cannot control. Fate and Fatalism : The characters accept their fate with resignation, reflecting a deep-rooted belief in destiny. Grief and Loss: The play explores the human experience of mourning and the inevitability of death. Gender and Maternal Love: Maurya's character is a study of maternal suffering and the strength of a woman enduring loss. Religion and Superstition: The play intertwines Catholic faith with pagan superstitions, reflecting the cultural milieu of rural Ireland.

4. **Symbols:** The Sea: A dual symbol of life and death, sustenance and destruction. The Spinning Wheel: Represents domestic life and continuity amidst tragedy. The Bundle of Clothes: Michael's clothes, brought to confirm his death, symbolize the finality of life and the tangible evidence of loss. The White Boards: The coffin boards prepared in advance highlight the inevitability of death. The Pony: Bartley's white and red pony foreshadows his death, symbolizing purity and blood.

Cultural Context: The play reflects the life of the Aran Islanders, who lived in constant struggle with nature. Synge's depiction of rural Ireland emphasizes authenticity, drawn from his own experiences on the Aran Islands. The coexistence of Catholic faith and pagan beliefs reflects the cultural duality of Irish life at the time

5. **Analysis:** Maurya's Tragedy: Maurya's suffering is universal, reflecting the universal human condition of loss and endurance.

Conflict Between Nature and Man: The play emphasizes the helplessness of humans against nature's overpowering forces.

Resignation to Fate: Synge presents a world where human effort cannot escape predestined tragedy.

MINOR COURSE

J.B. PRIESTLEY : AN INSPECTOR CALLS

Background of the Play, Author: J.B. Priestley, **Genre:** Drama / Social Commentary, **First Performance:** 1945 (Russia) / 1946 (London), **Setting:** Set in 1912 but written in 1945, creating dramatic irony for the audience.

Historical Context: Pre-World War I (1912): Rigid class structures, limited social mobility, Post-World War II (1945): Growing awareness of social inequality, rise of socialism, and welfare state ideologies.

Plot Summary: The play is set in 1912, in the Birling family's dining room. The Birlings, wealthy and self-assured, are celebrating Sheila Birling's engagement to Gerald Croft when Inspector Goole arrives unexpectedly. He questions each character about their involvement in

the tragic suicide of a working-class woman, Eva Smith (also known as Daisy Renton). The inspector's inquiries reveal their shared responsibility in her demise. The play concludes ambiguously, with the family's moral failures exposed but a shocking twist suggesting that another inspector is about to arrive.

Key Characters: Arthur Birling: A wealthy businessman and patriarch represent capitalist ideologies and self-interest. Overconfident in his views, dismisses social responsibility.

Sybil Birling: Arthur's wife, a proud and cold woman. Denies culpability and represents upper-class hypocrisy. Sheila Birling: Young, initially naïve, but grows into a morally aware individual. Represents hope for change and the younger generation's conscience. Eric Birling: Troubled and irresponsible, but eventually remorseful symbolizes the failures of the privileged youth but also the potential for growth. Gerald Croft: Sheila's fiancé, shares the capitalist mindset represents complicity in maintaining class inequality. Inspector Goole: Mysterious and omniscient figure represents morality, social justice, and collective responsibility. Eva Smith/Daisy Renton: Never appears on stage but symbolizes the struggles of the working class and victim of systemic oppression and the characters' selfish actions.

Themes: Social Responsibility: The central message: individuals and society are responsible for each other and critique of capitalism and selfishness in the upper classes. Class Inequality: Highlights the vast differences between the privileged and the working class and explores how social hierarchies lead to exploitation. Gender Inequality: Portrayal of women's vulnerabilities shown in 1912. Sheila's transformation contrasts with Sybil's adherence to traditional norms. Generational Conflict: Younger generation (Sheila and Eric) is open to change. Older generation (Arthur and Sybil) clings to outdated values. Dramatic Irony: Arthur's predictions (e.g., Titanic unsinkable, no war) emphasize his ignorance. Morality and Justice: Inspector Goole embodies an almost supernatural moral force.

SEMESTER-III

CC-VII : BRITISH POETERY AND DRAMA (17TH TO 18TH CENTURIES)

THOMAS DEKKER : SHOEMAKER'S HOLIDAY (ND)

First Performed in 1599 and it's a City Comedy containing themes like Class mobility, community, love and marriage, trade and economy, nationalism.

Plot Summary: "The Shoemaker's Holiday" intertwines three main storylines:

1. Lacy and Rose's Love Story: Rowland Lacy, a gentleman, disguises himself as a Dutch shoemaker, Hans, to be with Rose Oatley, the daughter of a London alderman. Rose's father disapproves of their union because of Lacy's status and involvement in war.
2. Simon Eyre's Rise: Simon Eyre, a jovial shoemaker, rises from a humble craftsman to the position of Lord Mayor of London, exemplifying the possibilities of social mobility.

3. The Shoemakers' Brotherhood: The camaraderie among Eyre's workers showcases the unity of tradesmen and celebrates their craftsmanship and resilience.

Key Characters

Simon Eyre*: The central figure, a shoemaker who embodies humor, optimism, and entrepreneurial spirit. Margery Eyre: Simon's supportive yet overbearing wife. Rowland Lacy (Hans): A nobleman who disguises himself as a shoemaker to win Rose's love. Rose Oatley: Lacy's love interest, caught between love and parental control. Sir Hugh Lacy: Rowland's uncle, who supports the marriage between Lacy and Rose. Ralph Dampart: A shoemaker who returns from war, representing loyalty and perseverance. Master Hammon: A wealthy suitor for Rose, representing the oppressive elite.

Themes: Class and Social Mobility: The play highlights how individuals like Simon Eyre can ascend socially through wit, hard work, and opportunity. Love and Marriage: Romantic subplots illustrate challenges posed by class and parental authority. Community and Craftsmanship: The unity among shoemakers celebrates the dignity of labor and the importance of fraternity. Patriotism and London Life: A tribute to the vibrancy of London and the pride of its citizens. Disguise and Deception: Lacy's disguise drives the plot, symbolizing adaptability and resourcefulness.

Notable Features: Language: Full of humor, puns, and colloquial speech that brings vibrancy to the shoemakers' world. Representation of Tradespeople: Unlike many contemporaneous plays, Dekker gives prominence to working-class characters and celebrates their lives. Carnavalesque Tone: The play overturns social norms and hierarchies, often with comedic undertones.

APHRA BEHN : OROONOKO

Oroonoko* is a tragic novella written by Aphra Behn in 1688. It tells the story of a noble African prince, Oroonoko, who is enslaved and brought to the West Indies. The novella is set in Suriname, a colony of the Dutch, and is framed as a memoir of the narrator. The narrator claims to have witnessed Oroonoko's tragic story firsthand, emphasizing his nobility and beauty. Oroonoko is the prince of the African kingdom of Coramantien, renowned for his strength, intelligence, and bravery. He falls in love with Imoinda, a beautiful woman from his kingdom. The king, Oroonoko's grandfather, also desires Imoinda and arranges for her to become part of his harem. Imoinda, loyal to Oroonoko, reluctantly agrees to this arrangement to avoid punishment. After some time, Oroonoko learns that Imoinda has been taken by the king, and he is heartbroken. Oroonoko eventually wins Imoinda back, and they plan to marry. However, the king orders Imoinda to be sent away, which causes Oroonoko's anger and frustration. Oroonoko attempts to raise an army to fight the king for Imoinda's freedom. The war ends in Oroonoko's defeat, and he is betrayed by a trusted servant. Oroonoko, along with Imoinda and others, is captured and sold into slavery. They are shipped to the colony of Suriname, where they are treated as property by Europeans. In Suriname, Oroonoko is branded as a slave, and Imoinda is sold to a European planter. Oroonoko's sense of honor and dignity makes it difficult for him to accept the condition of slavery. He befriends a European

gentleman who sympathizes with his plight. Oroonoko learns that he has been betrayed, and his hopes for freedom begin to fade. Despite his noble birth and warrior spirit, he is powerless in the face of European colonization. Oroonoko becomes a leader among the slaves, organizing a revolt against the Europeans. His beauty and noble qualities continue to impress those around him, even in captivity. He forms a plan to escape with Imoinda, but his efforts are thwarted by the betrayal of a fellow slave. Imoinda, desperate to stay with him, agrees to kill herself after Oroonoko's failure. In a final act of tragic defiance, Oroonoko kills Imoinda to spare her from further suffering. Oroonoko then tries to kill himself but is captured before he can succeed. He is cruelly tortured and killed by his European captors, his body mutilated to break his spirit. The story ends with a lament over the fate of noble individuals crushed by European imperialism. The narrator expresses admiration for Oroonoko's strength and beauty but acknowledges the injustice of slavery. Oroonoko explores themes of slavery, colonialism, race, and the clash of cultures. Behn's portrayal of Oroonoko challenges contemporary racial stereotypes by presenting him as a noble and dignified figure. The novel critiques European colonial exploitation and the inhumanity of the slave trade. Behn's writing is notable for its vivid descriptions of landscapes and people. Oroonoko's internal conflict between his African heritage and his situation as a slave reflects the larger struggles of colonized peoples. The novella also highlights the complexities of human relationships, including love, loyalty, and betrayal. Imoinda is portrayed as both a symbol of purity and victimhood, making her a tragic figure in the story. The tragic fate of Oroonoko and Imoinda underscores the theme of love doomed by social and racial divides. Behn's narrative includes ironic commentary on European notions of civilization and savagery. The treatment of Oroonoko as a slave exposes the hypocrisy of European attitudes toward race and humanity. Behn critiques the social hierarchy, where even noble African people are reduced to property by European colonizers. The novella also highlights the power dynamics between European men and enslaved women. Oroonoko is often regarded as one of the earliest English novels, reflecting changing attitudes towards race and colonialism. Behn's inclusion of the narrator's personal involvement suggests a level of empathy toward the enslaved Africans. The use of a first-person narrative adds authenticity and emotional depth to the portrayal of Oroonoko's story. The story questions the morality of slavery, particularly the way it strips individuals of their humanity and dignity. Behn's portrayal of Oroonoko reflects the influence of both classical and contemporary literary traditions. The novella can be interpreted as a critique of European imperialism and a call for greater empathy toward the oppressed. Oroonoko's tragic end emphasizes the destructive effects of colonization on both the colonizers and the colonized. Oroonoko challenges readers to reconsider ideas of race, identity, and power within the context of the transatlantic slave trade. Behn's complex characterizations raise important questions about loyalty, freedom, and the human capacity for cruelty. The novella can be read as a work of proto-feminism, as Behn gives voice to Imoinda, a woman caught in the horrors of slavery. Oroonoko also critiques the colonial ideal of the "noble savage" by presenting a nuanced portrayal of African nobility. Behn's rich, descriptive language paints a vivid picture of both the natural world and the brutal realities of slavery. The novella's tragic tone reflects the inevitable loss of dignity and hope in the face of colonial domination. Oroonoko's strength and valor ultimately cannot protect him from the overwhelming forces of European exploitation. Behn's narrative techniques, such as direct address to the reader, create an

emotional connection and add urgency to the story. The moral of Oroonoko is clear: the dehumanization of enslaved peoples is a deep injustice that calls for recognition and change. By giving a voice to the enslaved African prince, Behn challenges the Eurocentric perspectives of her time. The story has been influential in shaping literary discussions on race, colonialism, and the history of slavery in the Western world. Oroonoko* remains a powerful work for its empathy, critique of colonialism, and its timeless exploration of human suffering and dignity.

CC-VIII: BRITISH LITERATURE (18TH CENTURY)

WILLIAM CONGREVE: THE WAY OF THE WORLD

William Congreve (1670–1729), a prominent Restoration playwright, wrote *The Way of the World* in 1700. The play is a comedy of manners set during the Restoration period, reflecting the values and vices of aristocratic society. It explores themes of love, marriage, wealth, deceit, and social hypocrisy. It is a Restoration comedy which is blended wit, satire, and sophisticated humor in it. The play is set in London, capturing the world of the upper class. It has five acts, revolving around the intricate schemes of Mirabell and Millamant. Mirabell and Millamant were witty lovers who navigate societal norms to marry on their own terms. Lady Wishfort, a wealthy dowager, opposes their union out of pride and self-interest. It includes other couples' dynamics, particularly the deceitful marriage of Mr. and Mrs. Fainall. Mirabell must win Lady Wishfort's approval to secure Millamant's inheritance. Act I begins in a chocolate house where Mirabell and Fainall discuss society and love. Millamant is witty, charming, and fiercely independent, representing the "new woman." Lady Wishfort's vanity and gullibility contrast with Millamant's intelligence. Mirabell devises a plan to manipulate Lady Wishfort through her attraction to the disguised "Sir Rowland." The play mocks societal pretensions, especially in matters of love and marriage. Fainall conspires to control Lady Wishfort's wealth and expose secrets. Early discussions hint at later revelations about the characters' true motives. Her speeches reveal her desire for personal freedom even within marriage. A pivotal moment where Millamant negotiates the terms of her marriage with Mirabell. Millamant says, "I hate a lover that can dare to think he draws a moment's air

independent of the bounty of his mistress.” Her obsession with youth makes her an easy target for manipulation. The play highlights witty dialogue and the absurdities of high society. Wealth and marriage symbolize power and social mobility. Characters often act contrary to their professed morals, exposing hypocrisy. An ambitious character who manipulates others for her gain. In Act IV, Fainall attempts to blackmail Lady Wishfort with her secrets. Mirabell reveals a counter-scheme that exposes Fainall’s treachery. A deed of trust saves Lady Wishfort’s fortune and secures Mirabell’s marriage. Mirabell and Millamant are united, while Fainall and Marwood are disgraced. Marriage is portrayed as a transactional and power-driven institution. Lady Wishfort’s exaggerated reactions add humor. Characters are flawed and realistic, embodying the complexities of human nature. The play critiques the artificiality of Restoration-era morals. Millamant’s assertiveness challenges traditional gender roles. Congreve’s use of witty repartee is a hallmark of the play. Initially a moderate success, it is now hailed as a masterpiece of Restoration comedy. The play’s insights into human relationships remain relevant today. Congreve’s elegant prose and sharp dialogue make the play engaging. Her blend of independence and humor captivates audiences. The play suggests love and mutual respect should prevail over greed and manipulation.

CC-IX: BRITISH ROMANTIC LITERATURE

WILLIAM BLAKE: LAMB, CHIMNEY SWEEPER, THE TIGER

William Blake (1757–1827) was an English poet, painter, and visionary thinker. His works are deeply symbolic and focus on themes of innocence, experience, and the spiritual struggles of humanity. Blake’s poetry collections *Songs of Innocence (1789) and Songs of Experience (1794) present contrasting perspectives on life.

The Lamb (Songs of Innocence)

The Lamb is a pastoral poem reflecting themes of innocence, purity, and divinity. It is written in a question-and-answer format, symbolizing a child’s curiosity and wonder. The speaker, a child, asks the lamb who created it. The lamb symbolizes innocence and is also a metaphor for Jesus Christ. The child answers that the Creator is meek and mild, much like the lamb itself. Blake uses simple diction, repetition, and a lyrical tone to echo the purity of a child’s voice. The poem represents God as a loving, nurturing presence. Themes: innocence, spirituality, divine creation, and unity with nature.

The Chimney Sweeper (Songs of Innocence)

This poem explores the harsh realities of child labor during the Industrial Revolution. The speaker is a young chimney sweeper, sold into servitude after his mother’s death. The child narrates the story of his friend, Tom Dacre, who dreams of angels setting the children free. Despite the grim setting, the poem ends on a hopeful note, emphasizing faith in God’s protection. Blake critiques the exploitation of children and the hypocrisy of societal

institutions. The poem reflects innocence amidst suffering and the resilience of hope. Themes: social injustice, innocence, faith, and exploitation.

The Chimney Sweeper (Songs of Experience)**

The Songs of Experience version contrasts with the earlier version by emphasizing despair and societal corruption. The speaker, an older and disillusioned sweeper, critiques religion and the complicity of parents. The child's parents, engrossed in prayer, neglect their child's suffering. Blake exposes how religion is used to justify oppression and suffering.

The Tyger (Songs of Experience)

The Tyger is a companion poem to *The Lamb*, presenting a stark contrast in tone and theme. The tiger symbolizes power, ferocity, and the mysteries of creation. Blake questions how the same Creator who made the innocent lamb could also create the fearsome tiger. The poem explores the duality of creation – beauty and terror, good and evil. The fiery imagery emphasizes the tiger's intensity and strength. The refrain, "Tyger Tyger, burning bright," conveys awe and fear. The poem employs a rhythmic, hypnotic structure to mirror the tiger's energy.

CC-X: BRITISH LITERATURE (19TH CENTURY)

ROBERT BROWNING: MY LAST DUCHESS

Introduction

"My Last Duchess" is a dramatic monologue by Robert Browning, first published in 1842 in *Dramatic Lyrics*. The poem is set during the Renaissance and reflects the themes of power, control, and art. It is narrated by the Duke of Ferrara, speaking to an emissary about a portrait of his late wife. The poem is written in rhyming couplets of iambic pentameter, known as heroic couplets. It uses enjambment, allowing the Duke's speech to flow naturally, and mimicking real conversation. The single speaker format showcases Browning's mastery of the dramatic monologue. The Duke proudly shows the emissary a portrait of his deceased wife, the "last Duchess." He reminisces about her, but his tone reveals possessiveness and jealousy. The Duke accuses her of being too kind and appreciative of simple joys, which he found disrespectful. He implies that her behavior embarrassed him, as she treated everyone equally, regardless of status. The Duke confesses that he "gave commands," hinting he had her killed to maintain his control. The poem concludes with the Duke moving on to discuss a new marriage arrangement, revealing his calculating nature. The Duke's obsessive need to dominate is central, as he views his wife as property. The Duke resents the Duchess's warmth and joy, wanting her admiration solely for him. The Duke's authority reflects the gender dynamics of the time, where women were subordinate. The Duchess's portrait symbolizes how the Duke prefers a static, controllable image over a living, free-spirited person. It represents the Duke's control over the Duchess, as he can now command who views her. This statue symbolizes the Duke's view of himself as a figure who tames and dominates.

The Duke's polished language masks his sinister intentions. His pride in his art collection reflects his materialistic values. The contrast between the Duchess's liveliness and the Duke's coldness highlights their incompatibility. Browning critiques authoritarianism and the dehumanization of women through the Duke's actions. The Duke unwittingly reveals his flaws while trying to impress the emissary. Alliteration and Assonance: Add rhythm and musicality to the Duke's speech.

The vivid description of the Duchess's expressions brings her character to life. Objects like the portrait and statue reflect deeper themes of power and control. The poem reflects Victorian concerns with morality, gender roles, and social power. The historical Duke of Ferrara, Alfonso II, inspired the character, as his young wife died under mysterious circumstances. "My Last Duchess" critiques the misuse of power and the destructive nature of jealousy. The poem showcases Browning's ability to create a compelling, psychologically complex character. It invites readers to analyze the gap between appearance and reality in human relationships. Through the Duke, Browning warns of the dangers of unchecked authority. The work remains a timeless exploration of power dynamics, art, and morality.

CC-XII: BRITISH LITERATURE (EARLY 20TH CENTURY)

JOHN OSBORNE: LOOK BACK IN ANGER

Look Back in Anger was first performed in 1956 and marked the beginning of the "Angry Young Men" movement in British theater. It critiques post-World War II Britain, exploring class struggles and emotional alienation. This play was semi-autobiographical, reflecting Osborne's personal struggles. The play is set in a one-room attic apartment in the Midlands of England during the 1950s. The apartment is cramped and represents the limited opportunities for the younger generation. Jimmy Porter is a bitter, angry, and frustrated young man. Jimmy is well-educated but works in a sweet-stall, feeling stifled by society's lack of opportunities. Jimmy's wife, comes from an upper-middle-class background. Alison struggles with Jimmy's constant verbal abuse and their class differences. Jimmy's friend and flatmate, provides emotional support to both Jimmy and Alison. Cliff is kind, warm, and acts as a mediator between Jimmy and Alison. Alison's friend, who was eventually, becomes romantically involved with Jimmy. The play explores themes of anger, class conflict, love, disillusionment, and generational differences. Jimmy's anger stems from his perception of societal stagnation and his resentment of the upper class. The tension between Jimmy and Alison symbolizes Britain's class divide. Jimmy often lashes out at Alison, calling her "pusillanimous" and accusing her of being emotionally detached. Alison endures his abuse quietly, reflecting her passive nature. Helena enters the narrative as a catalyst for change in Alison's life. Helena represents the practical, upper-class perspective Jimmy despises. Alison eventually leaves Jimmy after revealing she is pregnant. Jimmy reacts with more anger but also deep emotional vulnerability. Helena stays behind and begins a relationship with Jimmy. The play critiques traditional gender roles, highlighting women's struggles in relationships. Alison later suffers a miscarriage, symbolizing the loss of hope in her relationship with Jimmy. She returns to Jimmy, seeking solace and reconciliation. The ending is bittersweet, with Jimmy and Alison rekindling their bond. The play leaves the future of

their relationship ambiguous. Jimmy's monologues are a key feature, showcasing his intellectualism and bitterness. Osborne uses a mix of humor and intense drama to convey the emotional depth of his characters. The ironing board is a recurring symbol, representing domestic life and Alison's burden. Critics have called the play a "kitchen sink drama" for its focus on ordinary, working-class struggles. It introduced a new era of realism in British theater. The play was controversial for its raw portrayal of relationships and class tension. It resonated with younger audiences disillusioned by the status quo. *Look Back in Anger* was also praised for its complex characters and emotional authenticity. Osborne's work inspired other playwrights like Harold Pinter and Arnold Wesker. The play remains relevant as a critique of class and interpersonal dynamics. Its exploration of emotional alienation continues to resonate with modern audiences. *Look Back in Anger* is a cornerstone of modern British theater, celebrated for its intensity and social commentary.

DSE-3: LITERARY THEORY

POSTCOLONIAL STUDIES: GENEALOGY AND DEFINITION : SCOPE AND RELEVANCE IN TEXTUAL READING, MAJOR THEORIES, KEY TERMS.

Postcolonial Studies emerged as a field of literary, cultural, and historical inquiry after the mid-20th century, responding to the impact of colonialism. Its foundation lies in the critique of colonial power structures and their lasting effects on colonized societies. Influenced by historical decolonization, it examines the voices of the formerly colonized and their attempts to reclaim cultural identity. The field draws on the intellectual traditions of thinkers like Edward Said, Frantz Fanon, Homi Bhabha, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Edward Said's **Orientalism** (1978) is considered a foundational text, defining how the West constructed the East as the "Other." Postcolonialism intersects with disciplines like history, anthropology, gender studies, and globalization studies. The term "postcolonial" does not imply the end of colonialism but rather its continuing impact on cultural, political, and social frameworks. The focus lies on the inequalities that persist in the global South and the struggles for representation and agency. Postcolonial readings interrogate how literature and culture represent colonial encounters and their aftermath. It critiques Eurocentric narratives and highlights marginalized voices from colonized regions. Texts are analyzed for power dynamics, resistance, hybridity, and cultural negotiation. Themes like identity, race, language, migration, and displacement dominate postcolonial readings. For instance, Chinua Achebe's **Things Fall Apart** deconstructs colonial narratives about Africa. Postcolonial readings also question how literary canons were shaped by colonial power structures. The framework exposes how colonial ideologies are embedded in literature, films, and popular culture. In postcolonial readings, the role of language is central, as it often reflects colonial dominance and cultural loss. Edward Said's *Orientalism*: Examines how the West constructed stereotypical images of the East to justify colonial domination. Frantz Fanon's *Decolonization Theory*: Focuses on the psychological and cultural impacts of colonization

and the need for revolutionary action. Homi Bhabha's Hybridity Theory: Emphasizes cultural hybridity, mimicry, and the "Third Space" where new identities are formed. Gayatri Spivak's Subaltern Studies: Advocates for giving voice to the oppressed and marginalized ("subalterns") in colonial and postcolonial contexts. Postcolonial Feminism: Examines intersections of gender and colonialism, addressing the dual oppression of women in patriarchal and colonial systems. Cultural Materialism: Investigates how cultural productions reflect and resist colonial ideologies. Globalization and Neocolonialism: Analyzes contemporary forms of imperialism, including economic and cultural dominance by Western powers. Eco-Postcolonialism: Focuses on the environmental exploitation tied to colonialism and its lasting effects. Colonialism: The political and economic control of one nation by another. Imperialism: A policy of extending a country's influence through colonization or military force. Decolonization: The process by which colonies gain independence and self-determination. Orientalism: The Western portrayal of Eastern societies as exotic, backward, and inferior. Subaltern: Marginalized groups excluded from dominant power structures.

DSE-4: LITERARY CRITICISM AND HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

PHILIP SIDNEY: APOLOGIE FOR POETRY, JOHN DRYDEN: ESSAY ON DRAMATIC POESY, ALEXANDER POPE: ESSAY IN CRITICISM

Philip Sidney: An Apology for Poetry

Sidney argues poetry is the highest form of art due to its ability to teach, delight, and move audiences. He divides literature into three categories: divine (religious), philosophical, and poetical. Poetry, Sidney claims, excels over history and philosophy because it combines universal truths with engaging narratives. History deals with facts, and philosophy is abstract, but poetry blends truth and imagination. Sidney emphasizes poetry's moral purpose, presenting virtuous examples and cautionary tales. He praises the poet as a creator, likening poets to God for their imaginative power. It criticizes English poetry of his time for lacking innovation and complexity. It defends fictional and imaginative elements in poetry, dismissing the idea that fiction is inherently false. It asserts that poetry inspires virtue through its unique capacity to engage emotions and intellect simultaneously.

John Dryden: Essay on Dramatic Poesy: It is a critical dialogue discussing the nature and principles of drama during the Restoration period. It presented as a debate between four characters: Eugenius, Crites, Lasideius, and Neander (representing Dryden himself). Eugenius argues in favor of modern drama over ancient works for its innovations. Crites defends the classical unities (time, place, and action) and praises ancient drama for its structure and purity. Lasideius champions French drama, emphasizing its adherence to rules, refinement, and decorum. Neander defends English drama, highlighting its variety, complexity, and creative freedom. Dryden critiques the rigidity of the classical unities, suggesting they limit creativity. English drama, especially Shakespeare's, is praised for blending tragedy and comedy, reflecting life's unpredictability. Neander argues that modern plays evoke stronger

emotional responses than ancient works. The essay concludes without declaring a definitive winner, showcasing Dryden's balanced perspective on tradition and innovation.

Alexander Pope: *An Essay on Criticism*: It is a didactic poem offering guidance on literary criticism and good writing. Pope emphasizes the importance of studying classical works as models of excellence. The critic must possess natural taste, sound judgment, and knowledge of literary traditions. Advocates for balance in criticism: neither blind admiration nor excessive harshness. It warns against pedantry, arguing that knowledge without taste leads to flawed criticism. "A little learning is a dangerous thing," Pope cautions, stressing the need for thorough understanding. It encourages critics to follow Nature, as it is the ultimate standard of beauty and truth. It Celebrates ancient authors, particularly Homer, as paragons of literary excellence. It is a Critiques affectation, excess ornamentation, and over-ambition in writing. It urges humility among critics, advising them to recognize their limitations.