

**+3 Arts, English Honours,
1st Semester, Core-1**

British Poetry and Drama: 14th to 17th Centuries



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DIRECTOR

Unit 1

Medieval Period: Feudalism and Role of the Church

Age of Feudalism: Social-Political Fragmentation

Role of the Church

Literary Contribution of Medieval Society

Age of Feudalism: Social-Political Fragmentation

Medieval period was a period of constant change. After the Norman Conquest in 1066 William I or William Rufus, popularly known as William the Conqueror, became the King of England. William the Conqueror is credited with introducing Feudalism in England. Under the system of Feudalism, society was divided into different hierarchical classes depending upon their position in the prevailing agrarian economy. The system gave rise to numerous feudal units of subservient vassals controlled by individual lords.

Feudalism was based upon the exchange of land or Fief for military service. William I rewarded his Norman supporters for their help in military service with Fiefs. According to him all men living in his kingdom owe allegiance to the king and their immediate supporters have to pay for the land in terms of trained soldiers who can fight for the king. During the period of war, troops were raised from

among the farmers or serfs working in the lands of the landlords. Every man was expected to fight for a limited period of forty days.

Under the Medieval Feudal system the order of rank was as follows:

The King

Nobles

Knights

Archbishop

Freemen

Yeomen

Servants

Peasants / Serfs / Villeins.

The encouraging fact in the order of Feudal System was that it did not exclude the opportunity for anyone from among the system to move higher up in class and power. If anyone could prove his valour in battle could raise himself up to the class of nobility. The most powerful nobles were ambitious to aspire for replacing the king. It gave rise to the feudal wars i.e. the feudal lords battled against each other with the support of their peasant armies whose prime duty was to win land for their lords. During the later Middle Ages the church lost its power to the Monarchies that rose up to consolidate their feudal manors into powerful city-states and nation-states. The new states objected to the power of church and opposed their interference in tax collection and legal affairs. The rise of monarchies resulted in the rise of money economy. As monarchs brought peace to their feudal society, the feudal lords instead of defending their lands focussed upon amassing wealth to improve their style of living. Very soon the serfdom declined with former serfs becoming tenant farmers or land-owners

instead of slave-like labourers. The rise of agricultural and manufactured goods trade helped develop the cities as the centre of factories and trade.

Role of the Church:

The beginning of medieval period was characterized by a sharp divide between religious and lay life. Religious and lay lives were equally hierarchical and the churchmen's power and authority were similar to that of the great lords'. Churchmen were distinguished from lay men by three major characteristic features, viz., they were virgin, non-combatant and educated in Latin.

The medieval English Church has always been a source of influence upon the literary culture of the age. The Norman influence can be seen in the stone-built parish churches with rounded arch which is called upon the general European style as Romanesque. An example of Romanesque parish church is Kilpeck near Hereford. The work of the Herefordshire School with many fine churches have contributed to society's education in producing devotional works like the *Ancrene Riwe* and the Katherine Group of manuscripts in the early thirteenth century. The Romanesque style of architecture has been a part of an international style called the Gothic. The Gothic style is characterized by large bright windows that give an image of moving upwards or aspiring towards the bright Heaven. The great example of it is the King's College Chapel, Cambridge. A similarity can be found between the Gothic style of architecture, manuscript painting, script and sculpture. The styles of late medieval literature aspire for brightness and openness. They combine moral aspiration along with pleasure in Nature, i.e., in the comic, grotesque and ugly. The emotional disturbance and the juxtaposition of idealism and realism, that is the characteristic feature of Gothic style—is represented in Christ's representation through the Cross. In

Anglo-Saxon and Romanesque art, Christ's image does not reflect a heart-touching picture: he is crowned with a straight body, stiffly spread arms and his feet side-by-side nailed with two nails. But the Gothic S-shape made Christ's image more realistic and emotionally moving although anatomically it seemed impossible—the body of Christ hanging tormented, dying or dead with bowed head and a foot placed on the other pierced with a single nail. It represented transcendence of suffering and overcoming of death. Later the Gothic style with its further additions in style and art making it more elaborate, artistic and ritualistic made it intolerant. It obscured its purpose. Moreover, corruption too crept into the church. It presented thus a fantastical religious picture portrayed through art and literature—in emotional religious poems, improbable legends of Saints, etc., that led to severe criticism in the Age of Reformation.

Structure of Society under the Church:

The country was divided into dioceses. Its head quarter was Cathedral and was under the authority of a bishop. The dioceses were divided into parishes—each under a priest. Parish Churches and Cathedrals were left to secular clergy who were educated, practiced celibacy and were responsible for the development of the moral and religious inclination of the people of their area. Parsons lived near the Church and had to visit the Parish regularly. Bishops led a life like great lords. Parsons lived in plain houses whereas the Bishops had palaces of their own. The development of attitudes towards religion and education in the minds of people were attributed to the clergy but as they could not live up to the expectations many anti-clerical satires were written. Monasteries were controlled by Monks who were supposed to lead a pious life—a life of chastity, frugality and stability, praying for not only their sins but also for sins of

the whole mankind. They were to lead a life of simplicity. Most of the monasteries were poor and used to get lands from pious patrons in gifts as a token of love, respect and devotion. Later when such a practice increased to an extent of poor parson's exploitation, the monks / possessioners faced attack from the poor friars and parsons. The monks of the greater monasteries or abbey were sent out of the monasteries to manage the property. A portrait of monk (keen on hunting) and of a poor parson could be found in Chaucer's work.

Monks who were within the cloister were in stark contrast to the ones who were outside the cloister. Monks who were within the cloister led a life with devotion towards their duty. For spiritual development they introduced 'divine reading' of the Holy Bible called as *lectio divina* which had strong influence upon the fourteenth century mystic woman Julian of Norwich and Langland. Some abbeys even went on to become centres of learning under the supervision of well trained and skilled monks—skilled in writing. Abbeys had well equipped writing rooms called as *scriptorium* meant for the purpose of developing writing skills. The facility might have propelled some people associated with the monasteries to compile books which would add to the stock of their library. Langland's *Piers Plowman*, Mandeville's *Travells*, few religious romances in English, a chronicle and other devotional and religious scripts in Latin, are to name a few. Chaucer's *Parson's Tale* might have been read during monk's meals or have been in circulation for private reading by the monks. Latin was the language of learning and of writing and there was not much contribution to vernacular literature. It was John Lydgate a monk of Bury St. Edmunds whose contributions to vernacular language is noteworthy. The monks also studied Latin in the Universities. Unlike monks who led a life of seclusion in monasteries—a life dedicated only to religious duty, friars were free to move around

and mix with common folk. There were two major order of Friars—one The Franciscan Order and the other The Dominican Order.

The Franciscan Order or the Order of Friars Minor was founded by St. Francis in 1209. They were also known as Grey Friars because of their Grey dress. (Although according to the Franciscan Order of Friars, the Friars were supposed to lead a life of poverty or frugality yet they became prosperous on the basis of bequests. This not only brought unrest in the order but also led to its split into various sects.) They arrived in England and settled in Canterbury, London and Oxford in 1224. They were to move amidst the common folk and preach Christianity. Their responsibility counted upon their being learned and also in being pious. On the one hand they had to learn Latin and on the other they had to be well versed in vernacular language upon which their preaching depended. The demand of their profession expected them to develop into great scholars—producing eminent scholars as Duns Scotus and William of Ockham. In order to reach up to common country folk and convince them some friars may have contributed in making religious and emotional lyrics and carols in English. The name of James Ryman is unforgettable in his writing of religious, emotional carols and songs. St. Francis expected his friars to become God's minstrels. He believed in showing devotion to the infant Christ during Christmas. The religious attitude that St. Francis made popular was affected with emotion, expression and idealism. It was well represented in his acceptance of 'Gothic Crucified Christ' as an image of God.

The Dominican Order or the 'Order of Preachers' was founded by St. Dominic in 1220-21. They were also called Black Friars because of their black dress. They established themselves at Oxford in England just after the Franciscans. The Dominicans like the Franciscans practiced a life of poverty and were dutifully devoted

to learning and preaching. The greatest scholastic philosophers of the Dominicans were St. Thomas Aquinas of Italy and St. Albert the Great from Germany. The order was noted for their support and preaching for undertaking crusades. They took charge to hunt for heretics and were responsible for Inquisition. The contribution of the Dominicans towards intellectual growth of the medieval church was noteworthy even though they did not do much for the development of religious feeling and of the vernacular literature.

Besides the Black and the Grey Friars there were Friars of other Orders who moved around to preach and hear confessions of people. But as the moving friars were generally unknown to places they visited, people did not hesitate to confess their sins to the unknown friars. Moreover they could easily be bribed in return of easy penances. Therefore, the image of the friars dwindled in society and faced strong criticism in the hands of Chaucer and Langland. Chaucer presented a satirical picture of friar in *General Prologue*.

Another religious order that was prominent in the age was known as Augustinian Canons (also known as Canon Regular or Black Canons). Their secular clergy, monks and friars lived in small communities in Southwell. They strictly followed the rules of St. Augustine. Although they were austere yet they were a moderate group of people. Their contribution to the literature of the society was appreciable. The two Augustinians, John Myre of late fourteenth century and Walter Hiton made a mark as a sermon writer and as a writer of mysticism respectively. Moreover, many anonymous pieces like devotional verses and prose were mostly ascribed to the Augustinians.

The medieval society produced recluses irrespective of gender who did not ascribe to any religious order. They led a secluded life—a life devoted to quiet observation,

prayers, fasting and meditation. Christina of Markyate is one such example. A remarkable woman who fought hard with her family for the choice of her life earned fame for *opus anglicanum* and manuscripts like *Albani Psalter*. Godric of Finchale a recluse of twelfth century was another example who renounced his successful life of a merchant and a sea farer to lead a life of austerity in caves. He is said to have written a lyrical prayer to Mary in English. Richard Rolle a mystic left the University of Oxford to write emotional and devotional works both in English and in Latin. There was Julian of Norwich (c. 1342-c. 1413), a recluse who meditated to get self enlightenment and write *Revelations of Divine Love* that became the first autobiographical memoir in English.

People in the medieval period undertook religious pilgrimage that had secular, social and religious agenda. The image of pilgrimage can be seen in the fourteenth century literateurs like Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and Langland's *Piers Plowman*. In both their works autobiographical traits show interests of the age.

The church's educational mission paved way for general religious literature in English like lyrics, sermons and treatises like *Parson's Tale* by Chaucer. It was generally accepted that through literacy one could attain intellectual as well as spiritual progress. The fact that teaching common folk in their common language would be more effective resulted in development of vernacular and English writings which owe its ideas, subject matter, form, style and content to the literature and language of Latin. The Universities of Oxford and Cambridge taught in Latin and the change to vernacular language was seen only in eighteenth century with the influence of the Humanists.

Influence of Church on Secular society:

The Church towards the later middle Ages with its literary and religious missions could make a place in the hearts and lives of people as well as in the law governing the whole society and the state. Business organizations of traders and artisans showed their religious fervour by paying the churchmen to pray on behalf of them. Every strata of society was wrapped into religious boundary. The activities of the soldiers and the knights were judged according to religious ideals.

Learning and teaching in the vernacular language English was a massive effort of the church that brought laurels for them. It created an impact upon the whole state that towards the close of fourteenth century there was demand for the religious books especially Bible written in English. The Movement was led by Oxford don John Wycliff who though wrote books in Latin yet could understand the worth of vernacular language. Wycliff with his supporters of general people called as Lollards did not support transubstantiation of the bread and wine into the real body of Christ (started by the Lateran Council in 1215), objected to the amassing of massive wealth by the church and demanded for Bible written in mother tongue.

The effort of the church was noteworthy when it succeeded in sanctifying the institution of marriage. In early medieval period marriage was easy. One could marry legally with no witness and only by holding hands and declaring about marriage. It would be followed by going to bed together. Later either or both of the partners could break their promise of marriage and separate giving rise to conventions, problems and legal battles. The issue of easy marriage leading to rampant infidelity was solved by the church towards mid sixteenth century.

The church declared that marriages would be legal and socially acceptable only when they were performed in public by a priest. The issue of marriage and chastity gets well portrayed in the play *Troilus and Criseyde* by Chaucer and in the poem *Sir Gawain*

and the Green Knight. The contribution of church to society and state is remarkable whether it is in establishing morality, spirituality, law and order, education or in bringing about the importance of vernacular language i.e. English to the forefront thus adding to the stock of religious and literary works.

Literary Contribution to Medieval Society:

The Norman Conquest of England could not stop the vernacular language i.e. English language to gain importance. The contemporary French influence upon the literature of the period relegated German literature to the background. Moreover, English language got a simplified structure, spelling and vocabulary giving it a written as well as a spoken form and accepted as a standard language.

The period saw the development of secular literature alongside religious literature. The French romantic poems influenced the literature of the age providing with themes like chivalry and nationalism. Translations of romantic cycles of chivalry were frequently found.

Layamon's Brut is an English translation of *Wace's Brut* that made rounds in the last quarters of twelfth century or in the beginning of the thirteenth century. Layamon the poet was a priest of German origin from Elney near Welsh. He considered the Saxons as barbarians while supported Britons as the legitimate owners of England. The poet's heroes were not Alfred and Hengist but were Brutus a descendant of Aeneas and King Arthur. The poet is considered as the first to weave fairy lore about King Arthur. The story is of the British King Uther who defeats his brother Pascent, with the help of Arthur when Pascent tries to dethrone Uther along with Gillomar the savage Irish invader. The poem *Layamon's Brut* is written with an epic mood and has wild and impassioned content. It is a chivalrous romance exhibiting transitional character of

Arthurian story. Layamon is considered as the last of the scop and the first of the English trouveres.

Romances of “Havelock and Horn” are anonymous poems and inspired by Scandinavian legends. It is more original in design, plot, execution and feeling than its original French version. Goldburh, the daughter of Athelwold is an orphan and is under the guardianship of Godrich her uncle the Earl of Cornwall. He promises her to marry her off to the best man. But he himself has an eye upon the kingdom. Havelock, the son of Birkabeyn, the Danish King, is under the power of Godard who wants to give Havelock to Grim the fisherman for putting him to death. Grim on the other hand leaves the boy who comes to England and works under the service of Goldburh’s cook. There he exhibits his strength and Goldrich marries Goldburh the princess to Havelock being very sure that he is a common man who can never be able to fight for the Kingdom or even rule. But Goldburh recognizes his royal birth by the red cross he bears on his shoulder and by the light that radiates from his mouth. Havelock recognizes Denmark and also takes over England from Godrich. Goddard is punished by being dragged over stony soil by an old man and then is hanged. Godrich is burnt alive. Horn on the other part of the story is the son of Havelock and Godburh. Havelock later is killed by Saracens who then send Horn with twelve boys away in a ship without sails or oars to die. But Horn reaches the land of Alimar, King of Westerners where he is loved and liked by all. He falls in love with the princess of the land Rymenhilde. But he is banished when his love for the princess is discovered. He wants his lady love to wait for seven years for him. If he did not return after seven years she was free to marry anyone. The princess gives him a ring to remind of their love. After many years when Rymenhilde is about to marry Madi the king of Reynes forcefully, Horn returns in the guise of a beggar. He meets the princess and shows her

the ring as a proof. She is then reminded of Horn and finally both the lovers are united.

Religious Writing in English:

After the Norman Conquest it took time for the English language to come to importance because of the strong French influence. Later on English literature comprised of Homilies, Sermons in prose as well as verse, translations of the Psalms and parts of the Bible and the lives of saints.

Poem Morale is the earliest religious writing which is simple, severe and sincere in its approach towards the readers. It was written in order to convince people to reject a life of material pleasure and instead aim for salvation through a life of simplicity and devotion.

Ormulum by a monk Orm is regarded as the first work in blank verse. It is a paraphrase and translation of forty gospels.

Ancren Riwe is fine example of the prose of the age. It is written by a priest of high rank prescribing rules for three anchorite women to lead an ascetic life away from the convent in a separate and solitary place by the Church.

The Life of Saint Dunstan by Robert of Gloucester is a kind of pious writing that was prevalent in early fourteenth century noted for its light-hearted charm, and liveliness.

Cursor Mundi of 1320 is a collection of pious stories in verse. It is a version of The New Testament written in Northumbrian dialect.

Richard Rolle of Hampole is a work written by the sage himself and is the revelation of his experience of meditation. It reveals of his devout being and his disregard for a life of pleasure which brings misery and vicissitudes. He serves as a bridge between the orthodox saints and the protestant visionary.

Secular writings in English:

The Owl and the Nightingale a poem of mid thirteenth century is written in eighteen hundred lines in an allegorical style. It is a debate between an owl and a nightingale regarding their style of singing songs. Both of them were pious for the nightingale tried to please heaven through her hymns whereas the owl with its screeching sound is supportive of seriousness, introspection and good deeds.

The satirical fervour in English poems was seen in the fourteenth century in poems like *Dame Siriz* or *The weeping Bitch*, *The Fox and the wolf*. Social satire was also to be found in the poem like the *Song of the Husbandman* which satirises upon the tax burden and of the oppression of the bailiffs.

Sir Gawayne and The Green Knight, *Pearl*, *Purity* and *Patience* are four alliterative poems together in a manuscript. The poems of anonymous authorship are written in Lancashire dialect of the period 1360-70. The poet is particular about moral edification and through all his poems praises chastity and purity. The giant like Green Knight enters Arthur's Court in the great hall of Camelot, on a giant horse during Christmas celebrations. His intention was to challenge Arthur's knights. Gawayne takes up the challenge and chops off the head of the Green Knight. But the giant Knight picks up his head coolly and asks Gawayne to keep up his word of 'coming in a twelve month, and a day' and then departs. After a year Gawayne leaves in search of the Green Knight. He reaches a beautiful castle on Christmas eve and becomes the guest of an old man and his beautiful wife fairer than Queen Guinevere. When the old man goes out for hunting every day Gawayne had to face the amorous advances of his beautiful wife which he successfully resisted. But he manages to take a girdle of green silk from her that can save him from death. When he is attacked by the Green Knight

by an axe it could not harm his head rather just cuts his skin. Thus later it was known that the old man was the Green Knight and his wife was the lady Morgayn la Fay who had planned to humiliate King Arthur and his Knights. Gawayne returns to Camelot and Arthur orders a band of bright green to be worn by every lord and lady of his court for the sake of Gawayne. The story has some kind of similarity with the second part of *Faerie Queene* by Spenser and also reminds of a mournful scene of *Beowulf*. The ideals of Christian Knights, their human defects and the suggestive power of numbers are also reflected in other poems to certain extent. *Patience* narrates the story of the Prophet Jonah who was not associated with patience rather with impatience. *Pearl* presents the dream of a distraught father who tries to find his two year old daughter in the image of a pearl. The age witnessed experiments with meter used in the stanzas like that of the French. *Amis* a twelve-line tail-rhyme stanza romance and the thirteen-line rhyming stanzas with nine long alliterative lines and four short lines of *The Awntyers of Arthure* are few examples. *Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight* has stanzas of varying length each of which concluding with five short lines with rhyme scheme of *ababa*.

Geoffrey Chaucer (1343-1400):

His masterpieces *Troilus and Criseyde* and *The Canterbury Tales*, his minor poems and his prose works all demonstrate his belief in the influence of nature upon man. In *The Parliament of Fowls* he gives a picture of birds assembled on St. Valentine's Day to choose their mates. It clearly presents the fact that if the bird is noble the courtship remains formal.

The *General Prologue* gives a picture of pilgrims before their journey to the shrine of Thomas Becket in Canterbury. First is the Knight, his son the Squire followed by his

attendant Yeoman. Then is the turn of the representatives of the Church—the Prioress, Nun, Personal Chaplain and three other priests. The third group is of a variety of figures rich, middle class and poor. Next is the group of urban guildsmen—Haberdasher, Carpenter, Weaver, Dyer and Tapicer and a rich widow with her own trade known as Wife of Bath. They are followed by the Parson, the Ploughman, the Manciple and reprobates (the Reeve, the Miller, the Summoner and the Pardoner). Through this work Chaucer wanted to present a comparative picture of the virtuous and the vicious characters.

In *The Canterbury Tales* he is an objective interpreter, a historian or chronicler of the fourteenth century England.

The Booke of the Duchess written on the death of Blanche of Lancaster, the wife of John of Gaunt in 1369 is an elegy. It presents the grief of her husband at her death. Chaucer uses allegory. He imagines himself to be a sleepless lover reading the story of *Ceyx and Alcyone* from Ovid's *Metamorphosis*. But when he falls asleep he dreams to be a member of the hunting party of Emperor Octavius. He finds there a handsome Knight whose wife is on the death bed. He consoles him by telling about the charms of his own wife whom he has lost.

The poem *The House of Fame* is written in octosyllabic couplets. It is written in dream-allegorical style. It presents Chaucer's dream in which he is carried away by an eagle to the House of Fame. There he witnesses a race—a race of the aspirants of fame approaching the throne. Few among them could get the throne while others could not succeed. Chaucer's genuine humour could also be seen in *The Legend of Good Women* in which he had although planned to tell nineteen tales of ancient women of virtue yet he ends up with only eight tales.

John Gower (?-1408):

He was the true representative of his age. He began writing in Latin to please his readers because the literate and the rich of the age preferred Latin and French to the common people's language—English. But later took to writing in English under Chaucer's influence. He had more inclination towards moralising and giving wisdom to the readers but had to respect the demands of the readers and provide them amusement.

The Peasant's Rising haunted him like a nightmare and he voiced his fears and grievances in his Latin *Vox Clamantis*. In about 1383 or 1384 he composed his only English Poem *Confessio Amantis* at the command of King Richard. It is a compilation of stories in octosyllabic lines. The setting is allegorical and the poet speaks of different vices through many anecdotes like The Seven Deadly Sins, the Story of the Trojan Horse, Pyramus and Thisbe, Phaeton driving his father's chariot carelessly.

William Langland (1332-1400):

Langland's *The Vision of William Concerning Piers the Plowman* is the most popular poem of the fourteenth century. It is of west midland origin and is written in the dialect of the south. The poem is highly alliterative and has no French influence. The poet has borrowed moral allegories from the country. Three texts of different forms of the same poem appeared in 1362, 1377 and between 1395-1398 creating confusion. But the first one was later assumed to be authentic. The poem is the result of a religious mind angry upon the vices of the society which stood for Christianity only in name. The poet gives a satirical account of the existing society in the beginning and then shows how transformation can be brought about by following the teachings of the Gospel. The poet in the guise of a shepherd falls asleep one May morning in the

Malvern Hills and has a vision of a meadow full of people irrespective of their kinds and status. Lady Holy Church appears and admonishes him for the worldly and earthly interests of the people when they were expected to remain detached of earthly goals. She teaches that faith without work is worthless and that through love and charity one can attain pleasures of heaven. Piers the Plowman from among the crowd then takes the charge to lead the crowd in their quest for ultimate truth. The poet uses two detached episodes of '*The Marriage of Lady Meed*' and '*The Confession of the Seven deadly Sins*' that has no connection with each other within the framework of the poem. But as they are narratives of moralities they are independent in themselves upholding their dramatic significance. In attacking the vices of the Clergy and in opposing the aristocratic system and social inequalities Langland has a rare understanding of the political and religious needs of his time. He is for the reform of the secular and religious clergy. His recommendation of a parliamentary system where the king rules the country with the support of the common people is very unique and novel.

King James I of Scotland (1394-1437):

He is the first Scottish poet. He wrote *The King is Quair* which presents a romantic incident of his life. The poet narrates the incident of his capture and imprisonment in England and of his falling in love with Lady Joan Beaufort whom he married in 1424.

William Dunbar (1460-1520):

He is the poet laureate of Scotland. His official allegory *The Thrissil and the Rois* celebrates the marriage of King James IV to Margaret Tudor, daughter of Henry VII in 1503 symbolising the union of Scotland and England. In another allegory *Goldyn*

Targe written in nine line stanza with two rhymes continuously he describes his dream when seven ladies in 'kirtillis greene' land from a ship. Dame Beauty accuses the poet but Reason defends him with a golden targe or shield until Presence blinds Reason by throwing powder in his eyes. At the end the poet is taken as a prisoner. Dunbar's *The Dance of the Seven Deadly Sins* is a jest against the Highlanders of Scotland whom he never supported. In *Lament for the Makaris* Dunbar enumerates the names of the poets of his country and of England who have died. His fables *Tretis of the Jwa, Mariit Wemen and the Wedo* outnumber Chaucer's *Wife of Bath* in commenting on the duties of matrimonies.

Medieval Drama:

Miracle or Mystery Plays: It is a form of religious drama that began in France and made an entry into England after 1066. It was didactic and instructional in nature as its main intention was to convey religious ideals to the illiterate and common mass. The characters were taken from Bible or from the Legends of Saints. The drama was enacted within the premises of the church and the act was performed by the priests. Latin was the language used in drama as the theme drawn was biblical. They were of two types—Mystery plays and Miracle plays. Mystery plays had their materials selected from the Bible and presented the mysteries related to religion. Miracle plays had stories of saints. Due to increase of the popularity of plays the stage was shifted from within the church building to the porch and then from the church premises to the village or city streets. Later the participation in the drama was made open to common men who in turn made way for the inclusion of vernacular language instead of Latin. The earliest drama performed in England dates back to 1110. It was a Latin play in honour of St. Katherine.

Miracle plays were presented in towns at the festival of Corpus Christi in early summer. They were plays presented in sequences or cycles beginning with the fall of man to his redemption. Their performances were arranged by the trading guilds of different towns. Four of such complete cycles are The Chester Cycle of 25 plays, The Coventry Cycle of 42 plays, The Wakefield Cycle of 31 plays and The York Cycle of 48 plays.

Mystery plays have comic elements too. *Abraham and Isaac* and *Iphigenia* have unsurpassed comedy intermingled with solemn themes. The comic scenes like the one related to Noah's wife does not decrease religious fervour of the plays *Noah* and of *The Nativity*.

Morality Plays: Morality plays are also didactic in nature but its characters were personifications of qualities of mankind like patience, perseverance, Free will, Five senses, seven deadly sins good and bad, etc. The character of Devil had a special place in the play. Later the character of vice, a humorous personification of evil brings in the comic relief in the play. This character of vice later became the forerunner of the clown of Elizabethan Drama. The oldest and the longest morality play is *The Castell of Perseverance* where the soul of man is enslaved by Pleasure and Folly. When it takes refuge in the Christian virtues inside the Castell of Perseverance, the soul is seduced by Covetousness. As punishment the soul has to be driven out of the Castell and into the Hell but is saved by Peace and Mercy. Other morality plays of importance are *Mankind* and *Everyman*. It is the morality plays unlike mystery and miracle plays that could be constructed and arranged without restrictions. The writer has freedom to give unity and shape to the drama. This led to the advancement of modern drama in succeeding years.

The Interlude: It was a developed product of the morality plays and saw its culmination in early 16th Century. It was a short piece of satiric drama. Its tone and purpose was less serious than morality plays. The name of John Heywood (1497-1580) the court musician and entertainer of King Henry VIII is associated with Interlude. He wrote *Four P's* which is a dialogue between a Palmer, a Pardoner, a Potheary and a Pedlar exchanging stories and later engaged into a competition of telling the biggest lie. Mostly the Interludes were enacted by the household servants of the lords who took credit in possessing better trained actors. Thus there were theatrical companies in the name of "The Earl of Leicester's servants" and "queens Players."

The Ballad: Fifteenth century was a period which saw a number of anonymous popular verses called as ballads. These ballads popular in Great Britain were different from their primary form of ballads which were accompanied by dance and music along with refrains. It was a song that had a story in it which could be either a part of an epic or a small summary of old chivalrous poems. Moreover the story could be familiar and related to some known heroes with incidents that were either glorious or tragic. The most important ballads of England before Renaissance were *Chevy Chase* and *The nut Brown Maid*.

Chevy Chase is an epical ballad that gives a historical account of the battle between Percy of Northumberland and the Douglas of Scotland in the beginning of the 15th Century. It is lyrical with seven accented line in two divisions and the rhymes in couplets.

Percy of Northumberland provokes Douglas of Scotland with his hunting game carried in Scotland. But Douglas insists upon having a single combat i.e. between

Percy and Douglas himself in order to save innocent lives of their soldiers. But Percy and his men do not agree and instead fight a battle which proves to be fatal for Douglas. Percy at the end of the battle feels guilty of his act and breaks down with emotion. The ballad describes the heroism of Percy and Douglas. It also makes the writers' patriotic feelings towards England clear in the conclusion.

The Nut Brown Maid sings of women's unflinching chastity. The lady in the ballad loves her lover truly. Her love remains unaffected even when she is told that her lover is a squire of low order and that he has killed a man for which he has to remain in hiding in the woods. Later the man bows down at his beloved's love and trust and reveals that he is the son of an Earl and proposes marriage. The ballad is written in sincere and simple style and remains the favourite of the people of the age.

Prose Writers:

1. Sir John Mandeville or Jehan de Mandeville a knight is known to have compiled a book called *Travells* in French between 1357 and 1371. He is believed to have crossed the sea in 1322 and travelled to far away and unknown lands. The book is a compilation of ideas taken from popular books on voyage like *Friar Odoric* by Hatoum of Armenia and of books by Marco Polo. The book is full of descriptions and anecdotes besides containing few inventions and imaginations. The piece of work therefore is derivative and fictitious.
2. John Wycliff (1320-84) was a man of religion. He strongly denounced the corrupt practices of the priests and of church authorities. With his group of Lollards, a radical group he objected to the church's doctrine of transubstantiation of bread and wine into the real body of Christ. He did not believe in the worth of priesthood and moreover did not support the idea of

the

Church's doctrine of amassing wealth. He favoured writing and reading of Bible in the mother tongue. He issued a large number of treatises and pamphlets in English language to create awareness among people. He translated Bible into English which were known as *Lollard Bibles*. They were simple in style and language and therefore had a wide appeal.

3. Sir Thomas Malory's *Morte d Arthur* is a compilation of prose romance drawn from French Arthurian romances. It presents romance and chivalry in detail with great dignity. It mingles dialogue and narrative with clarity thus providing a platform for the development of English prose.

The prose of the age was decentralised and diversified. With apparent French and also of Greek and Latin influence the texts were written in various dialects having wide range of subjects like saints' lives, sermons and homilies, doctrinal treatises, controversial tracts, scientific or quasi-scientific manuals, chronicles, romances, and letters both official and personal. The prose style varies from being close to speech and also to poetry.

Questions:

- Q-1. How did Monks contribute in the development of religious attitude in the medieval society?
- Q-2. What role did the church play in feudalism during the middle ages?
- Q-3. Trace the beginning of theatre from the middle ages.
- Q-4. Assess Chaucer's contribution to English language.
- Q-5. Trace the development of the Bible from the middle ages and its contribution to the development of English as a vernacular language.

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Unit 2

Early Modern: Humanism and the English Renaissance and the Print

Revolution

Rasheda Parveen

Introduction

Humanism in Renaissance

Influence Upon the English Renaissance Literature

2.4The Print Revolution

Introduction:

The Reformation of England wiped out the armed knights and the monks and assisted in the restoration of the power of the landless poor. The social pattern installed by Feudalism faded away. But the government supported by the public opinion tried to preserve the previous set up of the society to certain extent. The force of the law kept the labourers hooked to the land. The yeomen and the lesser tenant farmers were state protected as they were the chief suppliers of food (corn), revenue and man-power to the nation. For administration the government continued with its dependence on the land lords. It was evident that there was rapid increase of capitalism in the country side resulting in the making of yeomen and gentlemen as knights and the poorest as beggars. Renaissance could succeed in England only after Reformation and spread of Anglican religion.

The Age of Queen Elizabeth I is known as the 'Age of Renaissance' in England. Etymologically 'Renaissance' means 'rebirth' or 'reawakening'. Rebirth or Re-

awakening as a force in all walks of life in political, social, economic, literary and cultural began in Italy in the fourteenth and fifteenth century. The 'revival of Learning' in Italy was spearheaded by the Turkish Conquest of Constantinople on 29th May 1453 resulting in escape of thousands of scholars taking refuge in Italy with their valuable manuscripts. The intermingling of the scholarly refugees brought about a revival of Classical studies. Along with the writings of Virgil and Ovid other literary writings of Latin writers like Catullus and Lucretius were re-read. The imagination of the Italians were ignited by the antique pieces of knowledge giving birth to a new culture and aesthetic taste that marked the beginning of the modern spirit. The Renaissance Movement from Italy spread over to Germany, France then to England. In England the Renaissance spirit was in full swing in the sixteenth century under the regime of Elizabeth I.

Humanism in Renaissance:

The defining concept of the Renaissance was humanism, a literary movement that began in Italy during the fourteenth century. Humanism was a distinct movement because it broke from the medieval tradition of having pious religious motivation for creating art or works of literature. Humanist writers were concerned with worldly or secular subjects rather than strictly religious themes. Such emphasis on secularism was the result of a more materialistic view of the world. Unlike the Medieval Era, Renaissance people were concerned with money and enjoyment of life and all its worldly pleasures. Humanist writers glorified the individual and believed that man was the measure of all things and had unlimited potential.

Humanism had far-reaching effects throughout Italy and Europe. The advent of humanism ended the church dominance of written history. Humanist writers secularized the view of history by writing from a non-religious point of view.

The Humanists also had a great effect on education. They believed that education stimulated the creative powers of the individual. They supported studying grammar, poetry, and history, as well as mathematics, astronomy, and music. Humanists promoted the concept of the well-rounded, or Renaissance man, who was proficient in both intellectual and physical endeavors.

Humanist writers sought to understand human nature through a study of classical writers such as Plato and Aristotle. They believed that the classical writers of Ancient Greece and Rome could teach important ideas about life, love, and beauty. The revival of interest in the classical models of Greece and Rome was centered primarily among the educated people of the Italian city-states and focused on literature and writing.

During the Middle Ages in Western Europe, Latin was the language of the Church and the educated people. The Humanist writers began to use the *vernacular*, the national languages of a country, in addition to Latin.

English humanism flourished in two stages: the first a basically academic movement that had its roots in the 15th century and culminated in the work of Sir Thomas More, Sir Thomas Elyot, and Roger Ascham and the second a poetic revolution led by Sir Philip Sidney and William Shakespeare.

Influence Upon The English Renaissance:

Sixteenth century England under the influence of Renaissance generated freedom of thought and a broad outlook among the people. Religious dogma and morals gave way to free spirit. Reformation questioned the authority of the clergy. The discovery of new world and strange lands by the navigators bewildered the people of the age. Greek and Roman classical writings inspired the English intellect to the extent of developing a feeling of Nationalism and Humanism. As English language was still immature and the secular literature of the times were dependent on French or Latin works for translation, the humanists of the age could not find great pieces of literature in vernacular language. Therefore, they depended upon Latin and French literary creations for writing and two writers Sir Thomas More and Bacon with their creations *Utopia* (1516) and *Instauratio Magna* (1620) respectively attained great reputation throughout Europe.

Utopia: The Discourses of Raphael Hythlodays, of the First State of Commonwealth was first published in 1516. It was translated into English by Ralph Robinson after More's death in 1535. It is a satire on the social and political evils of the time. It appreciates the social conditions that are ideal for state and strongly condemns the age old practices that pose as hindrance in the development of society. *Utopia* is therefore regarded as "the first movement of modern socialism". Comparing *Utopia* with Plato's *Republic*, it can be said that Socialism of More is based on democratic principles whereas Plato's basis is communion of the aristocrats. More believes in a state for the people with a government elected by the people and in turn controlled by the state. A Utopian society is one that is controlled by the state, where people work for six hours a day, denounce luxury and idleness and where the issue of over population and of land ownership is heeded the most. As a dream of an English Scholar the Utopian world expressed a vision of a social and political life. Like

Erasmus's Christian Primer it reflected the ideals of an ideal state. Both intellectuals advise for following the golden rule and expected the Kings to remain away from favouritism and instead work for the entire nation. More's humour is genial and humane whereas Erasmus is cold and filled with embittered satire.

Renaissance brought about a marked change in religion with an English translation of the holy Bible's New Testament by Tyndale in 1525. Earlier it was John Wycliff who in 1382 attempted to translate the Gospels. Later in 1535 Miles Coverdale produced a first complete version of Bible translated in English. Although Tyndale's version was into controversy due to its choice of certain terms yet the future translators and their Biblical works owe much to Tyndale's version.

Early Renaissance Poetry (1406-1490):

Sir Philip Sidney a sonneteer of repute studied astronomy, music, art, literature (especially poetry of Tasso) of Italy which had a profound influence upon his writings. In 1576 he fell in love with Penelope the twelve year old daughter of the Earl of Essex. He wrote *Astrophel and Stella* which is a series of sonnets addressed to lady 'Stella' (Sidney's name for Penelope and he referred to himself as Astrophel). Although the relationship sustained till the end of his life but it did not consummate into marriage. *Astrophel and Stella* with 108 sonnets and 11 songs was published in 1593. A versatile personality and a genius Sidney sometimes lacked how to express in the right manner inspite of knowing what to say.

Edmund Spenser is another name who is the product of Renaissance and Reformation. He reconciled the elements of Puritanism and Reformation. Born in 1552, his life was influenced by Harvey, Edmund Kirke, Earl of Leicester and Sir Philip Sidney with whom became a life-long friend. He showed amorous advances towards a lady of high

status who figures in his works as Rosalind. His *The Shepherd's Calender* (1579) was inspired by Virgil and Theocritus and is an artificial pastoral. His *Faerie Queene* the epic of the English wars in Ireland was planned in 12 books. But it remained incomplete with only 6 books of which first three were published in 1590 and the rest (books IV, V and VI) were published along with the first three in 1596. It is an allegory and tells the story of 12 knights who take up various acts of bravery in the honour of Gloriana or Faerie Queene. The poem is a fine mix of chivalrous, pictorial and fantastic deeds and serious didacticism. Although not lyrical, Spenser's epic genius is visible when he creates an ambience of dream with simplicity, beauty and rich and decorative imagination. His *Amoretti* or the love sonnets blend Renaissance melancholy with delight in beauty and gorgeousness of things. In the short poem "Epithalamion" Spenser has packed intense passion that is enough to arrest the attention of the readers. In "Colin Clout" he removes the dreamy ambience and pays tribute to Raleigh.

Michael Drayton began his career with *Idea, the Shepherd's Garland* (1593). Here the poet sings praises of Beta or Queen Elizabeth and feels sorry for the real heroes of England and the rejection of his love suit by his stone-hearted mistresses Idea. *Idea's Mirrour* (1594) was his first sonnet sequence. *The Owl* (1604) and *The Man in the Moon* (1605) are his two satires. His most important work *Poly-olbion* appeared in 18 Cantos in 1613 and its other 12 Cantos were published in 1622. His other poems are "Nymphidia, Quest of Cynthia" and "The Muses of Elizium" (1631). In "Nymphidia, Quest of Cynthia" he presents the great quarrel between King Oberon and the Knight Pigwiggen for love of Queen Mab. His *Heroic Epistles* (1597) is modelled on the letters exchanged between the famous lovers of mythology in Ovid's *Heroid*. In *Poly-olbion* Drayton is patriotic. Here with the help of mythology he personifies every hill,

valley and river. Although the theme of the poem is extravagant and monotonous yet it is pursued with new vigour. The youthful renaissance spirit is coalesced with the great and sublime. Thus it reflects the true spirit of the age.

Shakespeare with his poetry brought newness and originality. His *Venus and Adonis* dedicated to his patron the Earl of Southampton, is melodious and filled with youthful exuberance. On the other hand *Tarquin and Lucrece* has restraint, dignified with lofty imagery. The sonnets of Shakespeare have achieved their greatness, perfection and maturity even in their form with three decasyllabic quatrains each rhyming alternatively. It has a rhyming couplet at the end that is a perfection made upon the sonnet sequence of the predecessors. Love sickness was the literary convention of the times. Shakespeare therefore in his sonnets was subjective, autobiographical, described the changing seasons, emotions of lovers with matured artistic touch and with a sense of indebtedness to masters like Petrarch, Rosalind and others.

The effect of Renaissance could reflect in Marlowe's work *Hero and Leander*. The original story, written by Musaeus an Alexandrian, ends with feeling of melancholy as well as tragedy. But Marlowe in translating the story transmutes it which not only depicts fancy but also satire and irony. Disrespecting the purity of the legend and the noble qualities of young lovers, Marlowe with the language and vocabulary of the age expresses his sincere passion along with the feeling of cynicism.

Satire that was the literary trait in the age of King James I later became a powerful yet sincere expression of melancholic, pessimistic and an aching attitude. Pure and unalloyed satire is found in the works of Ben Jonson's as well as Shakespeare's plays whereas John Donne with his poetry was for classical Elizabethan satire.

Ben Jonson was a great humanist scholar of his age. Influenced by Greek and Latin literary works he brought in neoclassicism into English poetry. His poetic works are

Epigrams, The Forest and Underwoods which are satiric and epigrammatic. His moral satires *Epistle to Edward Sackville* and *Epistle to a Friend, Master Colby* illustrate his blunt frankness. He was greatly influenced by Renaissance humanism.

John Donne through his *Songs and Sonnets* and his *Elegies* declared of his unconventional intensions, his position against the morals of chivalry, dislike for regular metrical arrangement and harmonious sound. Through his satires he violated rhythm, refused to subordinate meaning to melody and rejected mythological imagery. His flair for subtlety, wit and fusion of diametrically opposite ideas are his strengths. For him to imagine his mistress to be like an angel is profane rather he accepts her in flesh and blood as she is. He treats women and their cult with explicit irony. He rejects platonic love which is the cause of passion in women and rather believes it to be a temptation. He transforms his sensuous love to attain ethereal heights where bodies do not matter. His poems "The Canonization", "Ecstasy", "Anniversary", "The Relique" all revolt against the poetic canons of his age setting his unconventional mark akin to Renaissance spirit. Even through his religious poems and the longer poems like "The Anatomy of the World", "Of the Progress of the Soul", "The First Anniversary" and "The Second Anniversary" Donne carries a characteristic of the Renaissance to the extreme.

Renaissance Novel and Prose:

As the Renaissance period was dominated by poetry the prose of the period too was poetic in nature.

The early writers such as Lyly and Sir Philip Sidney had a great influence upon the later writers. Lyly's euphuism and arcadianism influenced most specifically Robert Greene. Robert Greene (1560-92) an ardent follower of Lyly wrote *Marmillia* (1583)

that advises the youth against the temptations of pure love which in turn would lead them to pure lust. His *Arbasto*, *Perimedes* (which imitates Boccaccio), *Pandosto* and *Menaphon* were published in 1589. His style and morals follow Lyly's *Eupheus* while his theme especially romantic in nature follows Sidney's *Arcadia*. His series of short stories *The Conny-Catching Tracts* (1591-92) paints the underworld of London to make people aware of the tricks employed by such conniving people to trick the unwary and gullible citizens. Through his confessions he pours out his sincere feelings of sorrow, regret and repentance for the evil deeds, and immoral life led by him. Thomas Lodge (1558-1625) in *Rosalynne* (1590) presents a euphuistic romance which later became the source of Shakespeare's *As You Like It*.

Thomas Nashe (1567-1601) through his satirical prose brought in a new genre in writing. He was a realist, known as the young Juvenal and the best pamphleteer. A controversial figure he accepted criticism in right spirit. In *The Anatomy of Absurdity* (1589), *Pierce Penniless*, *His Supplication to the Devil* (1592), *Christ's Tears over Jerusalem* (1593) and the *Terrors of the Night* (1594) he reviewed the manners, absurdities and superstitions of his times. His *Unfortunate Traveller*, or *The Life of Jack Wilton* is a picaresque novel based on the history of the life of Jack Wilton who was a page of Henry VIII as well as an unscrupulous adventurer.

Thomas Dekker the successor of Greene and Nashe wrote on themes like social issues (e.g. London life). In "Wonderful Year" a poem in mock heroic prose Dekker pays tribute to Elizabeth, acknowledges the succession of King James I and the Great Plague of London. His comedy *The Bachelor's Banquet* deals with the sorrows of husbands who are deceived, unfortunate and are at the receiving end.

Greene, Nashe and Dekker all three of them essentially dramatic authors wrote in prose. Other dramatists of Renaissance alternated prose and poetry according to the

need of the context and the mood of the characters in the play. Generally verse was used for tragedy while prose was used in comic scenes. Whether it is Marlowe in his *Jew of Malta* or in *Dr. Faustus* or Greene in his *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* or Shakespeare in *Merry Wives of Windsor* or in *As You Like It* all intermingled prose with poetry. Rosalind in Shakespeare's *As You Like It* is made to speak in prose to suit her garrulous nature. The famous passage on man by Hamlet in the play is also in prose. Othello too uses prose in moments of tragic to project his imbalance of mind and soul. King Lear in his madness speaks in prose. Henry V's speech on the event of Agincourt is in prose where he uses argument and proof like a lawyer. Brutus's address to Romans built upon reason and Antony's fiery speech to incite people all take recourse to the medium of prose. Shakespeare uses prose whenever he has to reveal his serious intentions because is a medium of reason and rational thoughts. In such a case Ben Jonson does not remain behind. In his comedies *Epicoene or The Silent Women* and *Bartholomew Fair* he uses prose more akin to everyday speech and which is idiomatic and clear.

Religious literature of the Renaissance has been controversial. Richard Hooker (1554-1600) championed the cause of Anglicanism with his controversial yet monumental master piece of prose *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*. Modelled on Latin the prose piece is convincing and logical in style and noble in tone. John Donne the sermon writer uses metaphysics, high figurative description in his sermons that makes it obscure and uncertain. During the Renaissance the religious prose writing that attained great acclaim was the *Authorised Version of the Bible* in 1611. Based upon the basic translations of Wycliff, Tyndale and Coverdale (of 1382, 1525 and 1535 respectively) the new *Authorised Version of the Bible* was the scholarly product of 47 scholars nominated by King James I and presided by Bishop Lancelot Andrews. The

new *Authorised Version of Bible* was accepted by the Protestants and by the people in general. The Bible then became a model for English prose writers like John Bunyan who contributed in the growth of secular literature based on biblical philosophy and morals parallel to the religious literature. Francis Bacon (1561-1626) a pioneer of modern philosophical prose wrote a number of prayers of Anglican faith for himself. His writings did not keep with the theology and Christian morality. In *Novum Organum* (1620) he is of the view that man is only a servant, an observer and interpreter of Nature. He can command Nature only if he remains obedient to it. Bacon is also recognised for his other prose pieces like *Essays*, *Advancement of Learning*, *History of the Reign of King Henry the Seventh*, *Apophthegms New and Old*. Bacon could carve a place among great writers of English prose through his *Essays*. Machiavellian in spirit he admires man's actions that is performed on his own and does not believe in the codes of conducts according to which man's actions should be guided. His concept of good is twofold—first 'goodness' can be interpreted according to the individual and the other according to the state. He deals with the art of success among men and therefore his essays are a source of practical wisdom.

Robert Burton (1576-1640) an eccentric humanist in his *The Anatomy of Melancholy* humorously presents the Renaissance pedantry. He draws all his ideas from Greek, Latin and modern authors to great extent that he lacks originality, spontaneity and grace.

The Print Revolution:

The spirit of the age of the Renaissance is well portrayed through literature along with art. The poetry of the Italian poet Francesco Petrarch (1304-1374) projected the spirit of the age—Humanism. Bocaccio's *Decameron*, a series of hundred stories of real

experiences of the Black Death of Florence in 1348 has a realistic approach as it is based upon real experiences of society. Literature of the age flourished because of technological advancement. In 1454, with the publication of the first book printed by a machine—*Gutenberg's Bible* by Johann Gutenberg gave an impetus to the book printing system. Increase in the volume of books printed provided for an easy expression of 'humanistic' ideals of the Renaissance to the readers. The ancient literatures of the Greeks and the Romans were studied by the writers who gave a new and a modern interpretation of it. Moreover, with rise in printing of books the prices of the texts decreased thereby giving an access to the sources of knowledge to a large number of people. The period of Renaissance became a period of learning with a massive quantity of books printed as well as circulated cheaply. With literacy there was a predominant rise in the middle class participation in the intellectual discussion. The middle class contribution to the intellectual discourse in turn created a tension between the ideals of humanism and the doctrines of the church demonstrating a protest against the power of the church. The rise of a contemporaneous power with the rise of commerce alongside the power of church created competition among the two to achieve supremacy while allowing their co-existence. The age of Renaissance witnessed a change in the balance of power—a capability to influence upon the most powerful and the most rigid institution in the world—Religious institution.

The spread of printing to other parts of England was left upon William Caxton.

William Caxton (1422-1491): William Caxton a prosperous English merchant trading in the Low Countries receives the credit of establishing the first printing press in England in 1476. Serving as the governor of the English nation in Bruges in Belgium he translated in *Recueil des Histoires de Troie*, a collection of stories of Troy

from French to English in 1470 with the support of Margaret of Burgundy, his patroness. The translated work in a manuscript form began to be demanded greatly; such that the number of copies produced by the series fell short of its demand. Caxton with an eye on money making went on to study the newly developed art of printing and to set up a press at Bruges first in 1475 and then in England in London the following year. It was in Bruges that he printed his own translation *Recuyell of the Histories of Troy*, the first book in English produced from movable types. He worked as an editor, translator, printer, publisher and bookseller at Westminster. He collected texts, mostly French, translated them, edited, printed and published them. He edited Lydgate's poems *Churl and Bird* and *Horse, Sheep and Goose*, printed Chaucer's *The Parliament of Fowls*, *Anelida and Arcite*, *The Canterbury Tales*, Higden's *Polychronicon*, Gower's *Confessio Amantis* and Malory's *Morte D Arthur*. His first edition of Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* (1478) and its second edition in about 1484 was the first major book printed in England.

With printing, paper substituted vellum making the book lighter and cheaper. The idea of edition came into being with a release of a number of copies at a time. A public force could be created in favour or against reformative ideals. This ability to generate a mass response regarding certain issue gave rise to the need for censorship. Circulation of identical texts served for authentication of a particular variety of linguistic form. The product of a significant number of copies reduced the price per copy. Therefore to secure economic stability, a printer diversified his sources of income. Reprints, for the markets, publications for schools, ephemera for city, church and court and personal as well as institutional patronage all provided continuity in printing business as well as immediate returns. Under competitive pressure in the market books acquired a set of display conventions—title page; chapter, paragraph

and verse divisions; colour, decoration and illustration, standard number forms; distinction, in size and style of type; headings, side notes and foot notes; braces; column and tabular setting; indexes; paper size and quality. A book became a medium of self-instruction. Desire for books gave rise to personal collections and institutional libraries. Caxton's preference for the vernacular, his love for his own literature, his regard for the makers of literature and his understanding of his role as printer to promote and preserve literature is noteworthy as a humanist. In 1407 censorship was levied to prohibit heresy and translation from scripture. This gave rise to wide spread dissatisfaction between the book-sellers and church resulting in book burning in 1521 and 1524 under the guidance of Wolsey the cardinal of Roman Catholic Church. The major cause of disturbance were relating to Lutheran books and the Bible in English. In 1529, a list of prohibited books came out and in 1530 the system of licensing reserved secular authority over Holy Scriptures. Tyndale's New Testament (1525-6) was suppressed in England. Instead Coverdale's translation of the complete version of Bible (1535) made its round with the death of Wolsey and resulting break with Rome. In 1537 the King approved a fictitious Thomas Matthew's revised translations of the Tyndale and Coverdale versions of the Bible. It underwent print under royal patronage. Later on, it was further revised and printed in 1539 as The Great Bible. Under the royal supervision The Great Bible did a good business in the market. A copy of it was forced to be kept in all churches for religious reference. In making the English Bible important Caxton's devotion is noteworthy. But it had fought its way in future to get acknowledged. In 1542 under Stephen Gardiner the Bishop of Winchester during the reign of Henry VIII and Mary Tudor's Lord Chancellor, reading of The Great Bible in English was forbidden on the basis that local language i.e. English could not keep the sanctity and the spirit of the religion. Moreover, it was

also a threat to the profession of churchmen. Tyndale's version of the Bible in turn gained importance till the accession of Edward VI, when Gardiner lost his power. His voice again reached the peak during Mary's reign and suppressed the English translated version of the Bible. This led to the coming of The Geneva Bible in 1560 that was the translation made by the Protestant exiles.

The booming business of printing brought in its wake its associated concerns that could jeopardize the business—such as freedom to reprint. Therefore in 1512 with Linacre's *Progymnasmata* royal privilege began to be granted with an aim to restrict unauthorized reprinting. But as it could not fulfil the purpose, in 1538 a proclamation was made that could take into consideration both—right to print and the protection of that right. The proclamation finally could achieve its desired target—pre-publication license for printing, ban on the import of English books from abroad, addition of phrases like 'for sole or exclusive, printing' on the limited books printed by the licensed printer. Later 'Patents' were granted to individual printers or booksellers for a particular kind of books—for example right to print law books, chronicles, Bibles, almanacs, Latin grammar etc. According to the charter from Mary Tudor in 1557 printing ceased to be confined only to London. Instead Oxford and Cambridge received grants. Elizabeth's *Injunctions* (1559) made pre-publication licensing necessary with a view to prevent the printing of anything unchristian. This idea again was reinforced in Star Chamber decree in 1586 to exhibit control over the extreme expressions of the Puritans and the Roman Catholic. It confirmed pre-publication licensing under the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London. Besides, it also set a limitation to the printing business by making the entry or registration of copies printed mandatory in order to have a control over printers, presses and apprentices.

Printing of religious books especially of Bible created a debate over the preference of religious institution. Catholic priests instructed through images as they believed images directly created an effect upon the mind. Whereas the Protestants, in opposition to Catholic view regarded that a visual image reduced the concept to mundane material forms of the world therefore not only limiting its thought but also tending to falsify it. The progressive ideology of the Protestants based upon literacy which in turn had a positive influence upon printing industry was counted upon more.

Translation of religious work no doubt created problems in the society, but very soon it was learnt that translation of literary books into English and their printing was the source of market expansion for printing industry. With the publication of John Rastell's English version of *Abridgement of the Statutes* (1527) and Robert Redman's edition of *Magna Carta* and other Statutes (1534), printing of English translated books increased in the market. Besides religious and law books, the translations of texts that had a practical usage could appeal most to the readers. Market was flooded with books such as Andrew Borde's *Braviary of Health* (1552), Thomas Gale's *Certain Works of Chirurgery* (1563), Thomas Wilson's *Rule of Reason* (1551) and *Art of Rhetoric* (1553), Abraham Fraunce's *Lawyer's Logic* (1558), etc. In the sixteenth century the London book trade opened up its opportunities for modest books on literatures and intellectual history such as Encyclopaedias, works on husbandry, judicial astronomy, recipe books, pamphlets on trials and executions, etc. They served dual purpose—one they were educative in nature and content and the other their popularity gave them a commercial value.

Like Caxton printers in the beginning applied writing and editing skills of author and editor into each other's work and thereby tried to mix up the performance of author,

editor and printer. Printing even focussed upon providing illustrations, marginal notes, glossaries, indexes, etc.

As fiction and history play a central role in influencing the present of a society, the book trader played a complementary role assisting in chronicling and translating history for the readers. Both narrative and dramatic history was translated and printed by the printer. Sir John Hayward's *Lives of the Third Norman Kings of England* (1613), Thomas Wilson's translation of *Demosthenes* (1570), Sallust's *Jugurtha* (1520) and *Catiline* (1557), *Caesar* (1530), *Xenophon* (1532), *Thucydides* (1550), etc. all were opened for readers to read first instead of the works of the classical dramatists like Seneca and Terence.

Printing made new books common in 1620s. It became easier for the common mass to make themselves aware of the current issues and events remaining at home thereby increasing the source of spreading news—that was earlier limited to pulpit and the play house. Responsibility of the writers got changed; instead of mere observation, analysis and re-creation of events, a sense of social morality and political responsibility was expected of them. In future the printing business gave rise to journalism. Printers at the same time created rivalry with the playwrights as printing of plays in books restricted audience turn-over in theatres. In 1641 all the provisions of licences relating to book printing became invalid with the abolishing of the court of Star Chamber and court of High Commission. But again very soon the Stationer's Company could restore the restrictions upon printing to protect its rights. Milton in his *Areopagitica* (1644) from the stand point of a learned Protestant writes for the freedom of press and states that licensing is an insult to all. The voice in *Areopagitica* was heard and the Licensing Act became invalid in 1695 and there was the creation of author copyright in 1709. In 1710 the Statute of Anne came into existence which was

the first legal arrangement to bestow the right to copy to the author for a period of fourteen years after the first date of publication. If the author was still living after the initial term, a second term of fourteen years was granted to him to own the copy. In order to ensure the ownership of the copy the author had to register his work in the Stationer's register. Each time the work was reprinted the publisher had to seek the permission of the author and pay him for the reprint. Soon the author began to ask for high sums for their manuscript which the booksellers resented because it was hard to tell which manuscript would be a success. Throughout the eighteenth century both in England and Europe the authors continued their struggle to own the rights over their work.

The writers thus had incentive to keep themselves engaged in the task of writing because usually not only their subsistence was dependent on it, but also their personal fame.

Questions:

- Q-1. How did humanism give rise to early modern philosophy?
- Q-2. What are the contributions of John Wycliff?
- Q-3. Trace the contribution of Renaissance poets to English poetry.
- Q-4. Give an assessment of Renaissance prose and its development.
- Q-5. Give an account of the contribution of William Caxton in bringing about a development in printing.

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Unit 3

The Beginnings of Colonialism

Rasheda Parveen

Colonialism: An Introduction

Establishment of Colonies: The Major Players in the Age of Exploration

Mercantile Trade Centres / Colonies: A Mission to Achieve Power

Colonial Critique

Introduction:

Colonialism refers to a practice of domination that involves the subjugation of one group over another. While defining colonialism it becomes difficult to explain it without referring to Imperialism. Frequently the two concepts colonialism and imperialism are treated synonymously. Like colonialism, imperialism also involves political and economic control over a weak or dependent country. The etymology of the two terms makes clear about their differences. The term colony comes from the Latin word *colonus*, meaning farmer. The practice of colonialism involves the shift of population to a new land, where the newcomers live as permanent settlers but maintained political allegiance to the country of their birth. The term imperialism, on the other hand, is derived from the Latin term *imperium*, which means to command. Hence, the term imperialism draws attention to the way with which one country exercises power over another; whether through settlement, sovereignty, or indirect mechanisms of control.

Colonialism has become an integral part of the world history from early modern period to the period when decolonisation began. The history of expansion show that not only the early colonial powers such as Spain and England but also the later colonial powers like Germany, Japan or the USA have contributed in the changing face of the world. But no continent has either planned or formed colonies and justified its act in the world on the basis of “civilizing mission” as done by modern Europe. Spain and Portugal in signing a Treaty of Tordesillas on 7 June 1494 make a declaration—a declaration that was a genuine European claim to hegemony. The extraordinary continuity of Chinese colonialism or that of the Aztecs in Central America before the Spaniards arrived is indeed structurally comparable to modern European expansion. But similar to the Phoenician and the Roman empires, the phenomenon of expansion usually ended with colonisation and not in colonial development. All directly or indirectly participated in the colonial division of the world. The Treaty of Tordesillas (1494) put global power thinking into words that perceived of colonial possessions as a political, economic and cultural right, last not least even as an obligation to a civilizing mission that was only definitively shaken with the independence of India in 1947. These two dates mark the start and decline of a key problem in the history of Europe, perhaps even its most momentous, that the always precarious colonial rule caused complex competitions among Europeans just as much as among the indigenous population in the colonies, that it was able to simultaneously create cooperation and close webs of relationships between conquerors and the conquered, and that it was never at any time free of violence and war, despotism, arbitrariness and lawlessness. This turns the simultaneity and multitude of European colonialisms and imperialisms into a border-bridging experience.

Establishment of Colonies: The Major Players in the Age of Exploration

The Age of Exploration started with a larger interest of the European nations in exploring, settling and claiming the geographical territories of the New world. The individual explorers received sponsorship from their nations with a planned intention behind.

Spain:

The Spanish monarchy sponsored Christopher Columbus's journey in search of Asia. The explorer could not reach Asia and instead in the year 1492 landed on the Bahama Islands. With a strong determination the very next year in 1493 he established a settlement of Santo Domingo that can serve as a base from where he can start his further exploration of routes towards Asia. In the same year 1493 with the Pope's declaration over land authority of Spain, a dispute erupted between Spain and Portugal the two nations having great sea power. The dispute over the lands towards the west of Azores and the Cape Verde Islands was solved with a Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494, a compromise reached between the two nations regarding exclusive land authority of Spain. With the Treaty signed, the future discoveries were to be divided between Spain and Portugal; both would lead in exploration of the New World—the Portuguese focussing on the navigation and geographical observation while Spain concentrating upon expedition and colonization.

Spain soon sent continuous groups of explorers led by Conquistadors into South America to look for gold, slaves and trade routes. By 1522 and 1536 Spain conquered the Aztecs in Mexico and the Incas in Peru respectively. Conquistadors exploited the

native tribes for their treasure and for their labour. They established big estates where the natives slaves were employed who later died due to malnutrition, fatigue and various diseases. But their deaths did not ruin the estates rather their place were taken by the African slaves brought by the Portuguese traders.

Spain even expanded its claim on North America. It conquered Florida in 1513. It discovered the Mississippi river in the south east of United States in 1539. A fortress was built in St. Augustine, Florida as a symbol of a successful European settlement by Spain in 1565. In 1610 the Spanish settlers established a colony of Santa Fe in the southwest of America. In this effort to establish their supremacy in the Northern part of America, Spain had to fight with the British settlers and destroy many forts established by them.

France:

France with the efforts of the explorer Jacques Cartier and his explorations of the Northwest Passage he had undertaken in his three voyages between 1534-1542, could establish an early dominance over North America's major waterways. Although by 1562 the French settlers tried to settle in South Carolina but most of their efforts in making permanent settlements failed. In 1564 with the Spanish attack, a French settlement near Jacksonville in Florida was destroyed. The French earned profit through fur trade, and want to expand it by setting up different trading centres in Newfoundland, Maine and other western regions. The credit of establishing the first permanent French settlement at Quebec in 1608 goes to Samuel de Champlain who went on to create trade relations with the Native American Tribes. A harmonious business relationship established by the French with the Native Americans led them to

control major waterways—St. Lawrence River, Mississippi River, the Great Lakes—along with the central portion of land.

The Netherlands:

In 1609 the Dutch East India Company showed interest in making settlements in North America only when Henry Hudson sailed up to the Hudson River (named after him). With an intention to establish a settlement in New Amsterdam near the Hudson River the Dutch bought Manhattan Island from the native Americans in 1625. The Dutch in the colony concentrated only upon fur trade that earned them a great profit. They had no intentions of expanding their settlement. In 1664 due to a conflict between England and Netherlands, the English attacked the Dutch colony at Amsterdam, destroyed it, renamed it as New York and took control over it.

England:

In 1497 John Cabot an explorer was sent across the Atlantic in lieu of the New World by the then King Henry VII of England. His sea voyage became successful and he could claim Nova Scotia, Newfoundland along with the Grand Banks for the King of England. But the explorer's efforts became futile as the English could not sustain their focus upon exploiting the New World for long due to certain domestic issues that drew their attention more than anything else. Therefore the power of England in the New World could not be felt in the first half of the sixteenth century.

In the second half of the sixteenth century the Monarchy of England was attracted by the bounteous wealth and riches poured into Spain from the New World in America and the West Indies. The attention towards the abundant wealth was drawn in 1570s when Captain Francis Drake and others brought riches to England after looting and

plundering the Spanish ships carrying cargoes and treasures from America. Moreover the religious groups especially the Puritans of England who were against the Church of England and its practices showed a desire to settle in the New World where they could practice their religion without any hindrance and interference from the English Church.

In 1584, England under Sir Walter Raleigh armed with a royal charter established a settlement—Roanoke—on an island off the coast of North Carolina. But the settlement was destroyed as it had to face regular raids by the native American tribal groups. With English attention towards the wealth of the New World and their notoriety in plundering the Spanish ships, Spain felt threatened by the British sea power and its Puritan settlements strengthening its position in strategic and crucial posts to gain a stronghold in the New World. To end this rivalry Spain sent Spanish Armada in 1588 to the coast of England to attack and destroy its sea power. But the fierce battle turned into England's favour making its stand further stronger as a naval power. But the struggle between England and Spain continued through sixteenth century because of which direct government investment on colonization got jeopardised. Hence in the seventeenth century English colonization was left in the hands of joint-stock companies that collected funds for colonization by selling public stock. Besides, the Puritan groups took a brave step in settling up in colonies in the New World with a desire to lead a puritanical life of their choice without any fear of condemnation or persecution.

Mercantile Trade Centres / Colonies: A Mission to Achieve Power

The Colonial Economy: Mercantilism:

The main intention of the British government behind setting up of colonies in the New World was to earn wealth and riches. The prime focus of earning was through trade. In 1650 the British Government made a policy of profit making in international trade. The policy of mercantilism—increase of exports than imports—builds the economy of a nation. The English therefore passed regulatory laws to improve their economy. According to the law Americans would provide raw materials to England to produce manufactured goods that could be marketable both in European markets as well as in the colonies back in America. There would be no competition between America and Britain in manufacturing industry. The goods and cargoes from America would be channelized only to Britain and to no other country. In order to implement a mercantile trade balance the English Parliament passed four Navigation Acts that restricted colonial trade such that it would only benefit Britain. Only English ships were allowed to pass through imperial ports and ships carrying rice, tobacco, furs and other materials could not head towards foreign nations without going through England and Scotland.

The colonists did not support trade restrictions on them and therefore resorted to smuggling. The English though had passed navigation and trade laws that went into their favour but they also implemented a policy of salutary neglect which made them not to enforce certain trade laws that created unrest among the colonial population. British never wanted to lose support from the colonial population because they were their close allies when it came to fight against France another powerful nation that had earned superiority in establishing colonies in the New World along with the English.

The British trade had a triangular route that linked the American Colonies. Rum from New England was brought to Africa and was traded in return of slaves. Slaves from Africa were taken to West Indies to be traded for sugar and molasses which was taken to England as raw material for the production of rum that had European as well as colonial market. The trade policy followed gave rise to a kind of division in the colonial society—slaves and that of the merchants. The merchant class being wealthy formed a dominating class over the slaves and could influence the political scenario in the colonial world.

The Eurocentric international trade policy and the triangular trade route and marketing system followed by the British and its colonies in the North of America developed structural and economic dependency in South of America. Progress in the industrialization and economy of the North created depletion in the Southern economy which in turn affected their society and culture. The dependency of the South and its exploitation in the hands of the European powers resulted in racism—making European thoughts, culture and standards superior. Moreover the concept of evolution and the unalterable difference given by Social Darwinism provided validity to the European structure of superiority. The acknowledgement of such a claim formed the basis of imposition of European civilization as modern and progressive upon the rest of the world terming them as the other or the opposite—barbaric, despotic and regressive.

Techniques of Rule:

Colonialism depended upon different techniques of rule—military, administrative, legal and cultural. In the nineteenth century Europe gained technological superiority

that depended upon scientific and technological advancement—steam powered gun boat after 1830s, dynamite and machine guns in 1850s, discovery of quinine and other medical discoveries, etc.

To have control over the administration of the colonies, the European power made certain development within the colonies such as the system of judiciary and revenue. Two-tier rule came into existence—rule of the colonial masters and of the indigenous authorities—which required a knowledge of local peculiarities. The British colonial masters integrated local traditions and sensibilities in colonial legislation in the colonies both in America as well as in the colonies in India. But most of the legal ordinances were favouring colonial masters who framed them. Their treaties supported Britain and in the development of its economy—opening up harbours and establishing trade and diplomatic relations with the natives. The European settlers were provided with a certain rights which allowed them for free movement, rights of land holding, freedom to evangelize along with granting custom privileges and tax benefits. Various diplomats and generals were appointed to advice on the matters of legal and judiciary to promote peaceful business with the natives of the colonized land. The British rising as a powerful colonial power in the world invited competition as well as unrest among other colonial powers. The rivalries between the colonial powers were regulated through the treatises and conferences such as the Berlin Congo conference of 1884-1885 which led to a peaceful consensus with the division of Africa another colonial world.

With colonial power and its medium of control—education, language, religion, science—the hegemony of Europe and its culture could easily be proclaimed. The

major reason for territorial expansion was authenticated on the basis of religion and scientific rationality that served a dual purpose—one in spreading Christianity and the other in increasing the subjects under the British, Spanish or the Portuguese crown. The church made strategies to project an image of tolerance and openness in accepting certain local traditions into Christianity giving the religion an indigenous fervour. The English Evangelical Movement further increased their activity of spreading the message of God to non-Christian areas or to be specific the lands that were not under the British rule. Hence with a religious and economic mission the colonizers led their political ambition by providing a stable administration, health and education within the colonies under the British. An imposed foreign religion, education and legal and administrative laws with an idea of its superiority in comparison to its native counter-parts would generate a sense of dependency among the natives thereby authenticating and recognizing the colonizers as supreme rulers.

Colonial Critique

Liberalism and Empire:

In eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the legitimacy of colonialism became a debatable topic among philosophers and thinkers of not only Britain but also of France and Germany. The Enlightenment thinkers specifically Kant, Smith and Diderot challenged the idea of superiority of the Europeans and of their moral obligation to civilize the non-Christian population of the world. They criticized the barbarity of colonialism that gets unnoticed in the mission of civilizing. Colonialism included slavery, quasi-feudal forced labour and confiscation of personal property. All these methods go against the theory of Thomism—that every human being is capable of reason and logic and of governing oneself—upon which the fundamental principles

of Enlightenment depend. But the Enlightenment scholars could not term colonial policy as against humanity when the indigenous cultural practices were interpreted so as to prove them as violating the natural law. Hence it justified colonialism and related exploitation.

Diderot, a hardcore critic of European colonialism challenges European view that the native population get benefit out of European colonization. He goes on to argue in Reynal's *Histoire des deux Indes* that the European colonialists are the ones who are uncivilized of all. According to him culture plays a major role in developing morality and a sense of respect in a person but these moral and ethical norms get dissipated in the absence of legal boundaries. It is therefore that the European colonists when away from their land and its jurisdiction feel free of any restrictions and hence give in to utmost brutality and violence.

Challenging the justifications of European colonialism Diderot is of the view that European traders and explorers should not colonize lands that are already populated rather they can colonize the areas and establish their supremacy over uninhabited land. He neither approved of the right to commerce nor the right to civilize of the colonialists that was used as justification for colonizing both by the Spanish as well as the English from the sixteenth century. Depending on this view Queen Victoria had given a decision that native population of any land are not supposed to disregard peaceful traders and merchants and hence their approach should be honoured and appreciated. Hence any violation against the amicable merchants and traders becomes liable to be reciprocated through war and conquest of the territory. Diderot hence terms the colonialists as “dangerous guests” (Muthu, 2003: 75).

Before enlightenment the thinkers could critique colonialism on the basis of the importance of culture and its varieties. But the idea that all human beings have their own dignity and self-respect could not alone justify the stand of anti-imperialists. It was also essential for them to recognize the human inclination to develop diverse institutions, narratives, and aesthetic customs and practices which are the results of everyday challenges of life and existence.

The anti-imperialists of the Enlightenment period struggled with the tension between human rights as a universal concept and the realities of cultural pluralism. Works of Kant and Diderot reflect this tension. They believed that universally every human being has a capacity to reason and hence is worthy of human dignity. But to the Europeans certain other cultural practices those are unfamiliar to them seem to be irrational, disturbing and unworthy of recognition. Therefore according to Diderot the problem can only be solved if we can identify one of the important feature of universal trait i.e., particularity. He focussed and emphasized upon the inherent desire of man to generate feasible rules of conduct which develops and gives rise to particular ways of life—a life justified and kind towards every person within its influence. Hence we can find infinite solutions for the challenges of everyday life and each carrying its unique feature. Therefore societies tend to find a middle path to balance individual ego and sociability. They also need to find methods of overcoming physical and environmental adversities. Hence it can be claimed that instead of rationality it is the culture that is a universal capacity of man.

Diderot differed in his views with the eighteenth and nineteenth century political philosophers. He did not support the idea that in comparison to European society the non-western societies lacked in modern political and social organization and hence were primitive in their approach. For him the social organizations having complexities in them did not make them superior. Based on the views of the relationship between culture, history and progress the critics and the proponents of colonialism and imperialism differed from each other. Many French and English philosophers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries incorporated certain ideas related to developmental approach to history a version upheld by the Enlightenment philosophers of Scotland. The stadial theory of historical development states that societies have a natural inclination towards progress that showed a movement from hunting to herding, then to farming and to commerce which is a steady development from savagery through barbarism to civilization. Civilization thus takes into consideration both, material and moral progress.

The writers like Edmund Burke, Karl Marx and John Stuart Mill in their writings however diverse cannot separate with the language of civilization, savagery and barbarism. The Scottish Enlightenment philosophers Ferguson and Smith believed the developmental theory of history cannot be distinctive of the liberal tradition. It is strongly associated with liberalism. Smith opposed imperialism due to economic reasons. For him the dependency of metropole and periphery upon each other in imperialism would disturb the market mechanism which is self-regulatory. He also was of the opinion that military domination of imperialism would generate a situation of stress among taxpayers. As civilization was regarded as the result of a process of historical development imperialism too was justified on the basis of its civilizing

mission which would develop the savage society into a modern and civilized one. Hence imperialism could be justified. According to Uday Mehta liberal imperialism resulted from the interaction between universalism and developmental history. The doctrine of liberalism holds that all men have a capacity for reason and self-government. The theory of developmental history modifies upon 'universalism,' the doctrine of liberalism with the belief that the capacity for reason and self-government emerges only at a certain stage of civilization. For example according to John Stuart Mill savages have a love for excessive freedom and therefore they are incapable of governing themselves for their lack of self-control. Moreover, slaves, peasants and bonded-labours, under the influence of a feudal and a barbarous society practice obedience to such an extent that it impedes their capacity to reason and rationality. It is only in a society that is commercial that it gives rise to material and cultural conditions that provides for the realization of individuals of their potential for freedom and self-government. Therefore logically Great Britain being a civilized society, if governs other non-European societies, does an act of favour towards those savage societies that are less or under developed. Imperialism if seen from this perspective is not primarily a form of political domination or economic exploitation rather a compassionate filial form of government that exports "civilization or modernization" in order to improve the lot of the native people in non-European societies. Hence according to John Stuart Mill a despotic government is a means to improvement, civilization and ultimately self-government.

John Stuart Mill an employee of the British East India Company recognized the fact that a despotic government formed by a group of foreigners leads to injustice and economic exploitation. If the brutality, injustice and exploitation remain unchecked

imperialism would lose its legitimacy and efficacy. Mill in *Considerations on Representative Government* (1861) identifies four reasons why he regards foreigners especially Europeans unsuitable for governing colonies. First, foreign politicians are unlikely to know and understand local conditions which are necessary to solve issues related to public policy. Second, due to cultural, linguistic and religious differences between colonizer and colonized, it is most likely for the colonizer to act tyrannically towards the colonized and not sympathize with them. Third, however hard the colonizer may try to treat the colonized fairly but their sympathy for other foreign colonizers similar to them would always pose as a hindrance in solving cases of conflict. Finally, Mill concluded that as the colonists and the merchant class people aim to go to other countries with a sole purpose of acquiring wealth with little effort and risk, it is but natural that they exploit the colonized country for their own economic benefit rather waste time, money and energy on developing the colonized land. All these arguments reverberates the opinions made by Edmund Burke in his writings on misgovernment in India and his famous speech on Fox's East India Bill (1783).

According to Mill the problem of imperial misgovernment can be solved by eschewing parliamentary oversight and favouring specialized administrative corps. The members of the administrative corps would be trained to know and understand local conditions and hence would be able to solve conflicts between the colonists and indigenous people. They would be paid by the government and cannot take personal benefit from the economic exploitation of the colonizers. However Mill could not explain how good governance would be ensured when the political group in power

was not accountable to the indigenous population rather to a foreign government. Hence Mill's writing also reflects the failure of liberal imperial thought.

The liberal thinkers of the nineteenth century were supportive of the legitimacy of foreign conquest and domination. Alexis de Tocqueville did not rely on the idea of the "civilizing mission" of colonialism. According to him colonialism could not provide good government to the colonized. But still he did not oppose colonialism as it brought laurels to France (with French colonies in Algeria) in comparison to England its rival. It would also provide a land for excess population of France. He gave priority to French political interests rather than to morality. Moreover imperial attempt incites a feeling of patriotism that would counter balance the modern forces of materialism and class conflict.

Tocqueville contested for a seat in Chamber of Deputies in 1837. The same year he published his analysis of French colonialism where he argued in favour of expanding French colonies in Algeria. In 1841 he went to Algeria and composed "Essay on Algeria" which became the basis for two parliamentary reports on the topic. Tocqueville agreed that the colonial military in the colonized land did not provide good government or advance civilization with its brutal and tyrannical rule. He acknowledged that the French colonials fought barbarously than the Arabs and hence the Arabs seem to be more civilized. It reversed the four stage theory of Scottish Enlightenment. But this acknowledgement did not imply that Tocqueville critiqued French brutality rather he defended controversial tactics like the destruction of crops, confiscation of land and seizure of unarmed civilians. His work does not provide a philosophical justification of colonization yet he condemned the war tradition on the

basis of the fact that if a group is given the right of war it means the group is authorized to ravage a country.

According to Tocqueville the regime's stability depended upon the ability of the colonial administration to give good government. Excessive centralization of decision making in Paris and arbitrary practices of the local military leaders gave an impression that French colonists felt insecure of their property. Tocqueville was least bothered about the use of martial law against the natives and believed that it proved to be counter-productive when applied to the French. The success of the French in Algeria was basically due to its large number of French permanent settlers who rushed to Algeria. As the French could not win over the natives in Algeria the stability of the regime was dependent upon its increased number of French permanent settlers in the colonies. Military domination was required to rule the native Algerians. The French permanent settlers were allured to stay there in lieu of economic gains in a land that tries to reproduce the cultural and political environment of France. In his "Second Letter on Algeria" Tocqueville optimistically speaks of the amalgamation of different races but later he comes to understand the permanent opposition between the colonized and colonizer—a structure that gives rise to economic benefit to the colonizer alone.

Marxism and Leninism:

Marxism has influenced post-colonial theory as well as anti-colonial independence movements around the world. Marxists have focussed our attention towards the fact that the basis of European political expansion was materialism. It also developed concepts that could explain the continuous economic exploitation with the end of

direct political rule. But in recent times with decreasing influence of Marxism in the academia and in politics the debates on colonialism within Marxist tradition has received less attention.

Marx did not develop any theory of colonialism but his analysis of capitalism focussed upon the innate tendency of capitalism to expand into new markets. In his works like *The Communist Manifesto*, *Grundrisse*, and *Capital*, Marx had forecasted that bourgeoisie would cross local and national boundaries to create an expanding global market. The spirit of capitalism is over production and which in turn leads to expansion. It is due to the competition among the producers that leads to cutting down of wages resulting in under-consumption. Therefore the only solution to prevent economic breakdown is to discover new markets for the over-produced consumer goods. Hence according to Marxism certain form and degree of imperialism remains unavoidable. Through colonialism, a nation can create a source of raw materials for consumer goods production in a foreign land along with a market for them. A colonized country has two choices—either it can voluntarily accept foreign products in its market or can forcibly accept flooding of foreign goods into its market through political domination. Whatever may be the choice in both the cases domestic industry faces a setback.

In the *New York Daily Tribune* in the 1850s Marx in his discussion related to British colonialism in India describes India as a feudal society that has become miserable in facing the challenges of modernisation with the colonial influence. He mistakenly was of the view that Indian agricultural land was owned communally and therefore thought that Indian feudalism was a unique form of economic organization. Marx

refers to “Oriental despotism” that has its origin in India. He describes “Oriental despotism” as a type of class domination that uses the state’s power of taxation for extracting resources from peasantry class. It is the result of the dependency of agricultural productivity on large-scale public works those are financed by the state like that of irrigation. Hence the state has an upper hand and cannot be easily replaced by any decentralised system of authority. Although in Europe a feudal property can be converted into a privately owned land but in India this conversion of ownership is impossible because the lands are held communally. This made a hindrance to the development of commercial agriculture and free markets. Therefore with colonialism and British domination there was economic modernization.

Marx recognizes the suffering of the society in going through a transition phase from feudal society to bourgeoisie society during both colonialism as well as capitalism. Both colonialism as well as capitalism ultimately bring progress and so are regarded as a necessity. In India he argues that introduction of foreign commerce would bring about social revolution which would have both positive as well as negative consequences. With change peasants suffer as they tend to lose their traditional means of livelihood. But as the village communities are places of caste oppression, slavery, misery and cruelty they can hardly be regarded as perfect in its functioning. Generally in the first phase of modernization process the poor have to pay heavy tax in support of British rule. They also have to suffer economic disturbance due to excess of cheap English cotton flooded in Indian market. British merchants later on could realize the impossibility of the Indian consumers to pay for imported cloth and for the British administration. But this could only be possible when the British would efficiently produce goods for trading that can provide incentive for British investment for

infrastructure and production industry. Marx was of the opinion that even though colonialism was motivated by greed and was exercised through barbarism and cruelty yet it remained a major means for progress and modernisation. Hence Marx's attitude towards colonialism with respect to India had three dimensions—one as an account of progressive nature of colonialism and foreign domination, second as a critique of human suffering involved in the process of development and third that the foreign rule must be temporary if progress has to be realised in true sense.

Lenin's idea on western economic and political domination can be best exemplified in his pamphlet *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1917). He takes a critical stand on imperialism. He believed that imperialism is a technique of putting off the inevitable domestic revolution by shifting economic burden to other weaker countries. For him late nineteenth century imperialism was the result of economic logic of late-capitalism. The decreasing rate of profit resulted in economic crisis that could be solved by expanding territorially. Capitalists were compelled to expand beyond their national boundaries looking for new markets and resources. This analysis is fully consistent with Marx, who saw European colonialism as continuous with the process of internal expansion within states and across Europe. Both Marx and Lenin thought that colonialism and imperialism resulted from the same logic that brought economic development and modernization of peripheral areas in Europe. But a special feature of Lenin's analysis is that since late capitalism was organized around national monopolies, the competition for markets took the form of military competition between states over territories that could be dominated for their exclusive economic benefit.

Other Marxist theorists including Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Kautsky, and Nikolai Bukharin also explored the issue of imperialism. Kautsky introduced concepts that continue to play a prominent role in contemporary world systems theory and post-colonial studies. Kautsky challenges the assumption that imperialism would lead to the development of the areas subjected to economic exploitation. He suggests that imperialism is a relatively permanent relationship structuring the interactions between two types of countries. Although imperialism took the form of military competition between capitalist countries, it would result in collusion between capitalist interests to maintain a stable system of exploitation of the under-developed nations. The most influential contemporary proponent of this view is Immanuel Wallerstein. He is known for world-systems theory according to which, the world-system is a relatively stable set of relations between centre and peripheral states. This international division of labor is structured to benefit the centre states and it transfers resources from the periphery to the centre.

Post Colonial Theory:

From the perspective of world-systems theory, the economic exploitation of the periphery does not require direct political or military domination. Similarly, contemporary literary theorists have drawn attention to practices of representation that reproduce a logic of subordination that endures even after former colonies gain independence. The field of postcolonial studies was influenced by Edward Said's path-breaking book *Orientalism*. In *Orientalism* Said applied Michel Foucault's technique of discourse analysis to the production of knowledge about the Middle East. The term "orientalism" described a structured set of concepts, assumptions, and discursive practices that were used to produce, interpret, and evaluate knowledge

about non-European people. Said's analysis made it possible for scholars to deconstruct literary and historical texts in order to understand how they reflected and reinforced the imperialist project. Unlike previous studies that focused on the economic or political logics of colonialism, Said drew attention to the relationship between knowledge and power. By foregrounding the cultural and epistemological work of imperialism, Said was able to undermine the ideological assumption of value-free knowledge and show that "knowing the Orient" was part of the project of dominating it. *Orientalism* can be seen as an attempt to extend the geographical and historical terrain of the poststructuralist critique of Western epistemology.

Said uses the term "Orientalism" in different ways. First, Orientalism is a specific field of academic study about the Middle East and Asia, albeit one that Said conceives quite expansively to encompass history, sociology, literature, anthropology and especially philology. He also identifies it as a practice that helps to define Europe by creating a stable depiction of its other, its constitutive outside. Orientalism is a way of characterizing Europe by drawing a contrasting image or idea, based on a series of binary oppositions (rational/irrational, mind/body, order/chaos) that manage and displace European anxieties. Finally, Said emphasizes that it is also a mode of exercising authority by organizing and classifying knowledge about the Orient. This discursive approach is distinct both from the materialist view that knowledge is simply a reflection of economic or political interests and from the idealist view that scholarship is disinterested and neutral. Foucault like Said describes discourse as a form of knowledge that is not used instrumentally in service of power but rather is itself a form of power.

The second quasi-canonical contribution to the field of post-colonial theory is Gayatri Spivak's "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988). Spivak works within Said's problematic of representation and expands it to the area of contemporary academy. Spivak questions the idea of transparent subaltern speech. When well-meaning scholars want to let the subaltern "speak for themselves" they hope that removing the intermediary (the expert, the judge, the imperial administrator and the local elite) will enable some authentic truth based on experience to emerge. But experience itself is constituted through representation and hence to deny the problem of representation does not solve it rather tends to make it harder to recognize. The central claim of the essay is that "representation has not withered away." Since power is everywhere, even in language itself, transparency and authenticity are impossible. This means that the messy and controversial work of interpretation is essential.

One of the main criticisms of Spivak's work is that her writing is such that it becomes difficult for scholars and activists to understand her text. Although her work remains widely cited in the academia, critics have been of the opinion that the highly theoretical and abstract nature of the analysis makes it irrelevant for contemporary political struggles and issues. Aijaz Ahmad argues that, despite Spivak's claims that her work is made within the Marxist tradition, her essays project contempt for materialism, rationalism, and progress, that are the main features of Marxism. In the opinion of Ahmad, Spivak is more concerned with narratives of capitalism instead of the institutional structures and material effects of capitalism as a method of production. Spivak's sharp criticism of movements that make subaltern subjects very crucial can also be read as an attack on the basic premise of Marxist politics that gives privilege to the proletariat as a group having shared, true interests that are produced

by the capitalist system. This debate reflects a tension that is an essential aspect of postcolonial studies. Although some thinkers draw on both Marxism and post structuralism, the two theories have different interests, methods, and assumptions. In the humanities, postcolonial theory reflects the influence of poststructuralist thought, while theorists of decolonization focus on social history, economics, and political institutions. According to Kohn on the one hand the postcolonial theory is associated with the issues of hybridity, diaspora, representation, narrative, and knowledge/power, while on the other the theories of decolonization are concerned with revolution, economic inequality, violence, and political identity.

Recently, scholars have started to question the usefulness and practicality of the concept of post-colonial theory. Similar to the Scottish four-stages theory, a theory which seems to be very different from post-colonialism, the concept of post-colonialism seem to rely on progressive understanding of history. It suggests that the main concepts and ideas of hybridity, alterity, particularity, and multiplicity may give way to a sort of methodological dogmatism or developmental logic. The term “colonial” used for inquiry is problematic as it suggests historically doubtful commonalities across territories that had an experience of different form and techniques of domination. Hence according to Gandhi the critical impulse behind post-colonial theory was started on its own and draws attention to the fact that it may itself be labelled by the utopian requirement to transcend the trauma of colonialism.

Questions:

Q-1. Discuss the factors that led to colonialism.

Q-2. How did colonialism become a mission to achieve power?

Q-3. Discuss how the desire to explore led to the establishment of various colonies.

Q-4. The ideas of Enlightenment led to the critique of colonialism. Discuss.

Q-5. Discuss how Marxism led to Postcolonial Theory.

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Unit 4.

The Enlightenment: Ideas of the Enlightenment and the Beginning of Modern Democracy

Rasheda Parveen

Beginning of Enlightenment

Influence of English Political Situation on Enlightenment

Ideas of Enlightenment and its Thinkers

Birth of Modern Day Democracy

Beginning of the Enlightenment:

The Enlightenment was an intellectual, philosophical, cultural, and social movement that spread in different parts of Europe during the 1700s. It was brought about by the Scientific Revolution which had started from 1500s and it represented a departure from the Middle Ages.

The Middle Age was significant for religious devotion among people and at the same time for the practice of cruelty. With the Roman Empire as the foundation of Christian religion, missions such as the Crusades and Inquisition were conducted to find, persecute heretics and torture them till death. Injustice of such an order not only offended but also frightened the Europeans. Although science in the beginning was used as a form of piety and appreciation of God's creation, it was frequently regarded as heresy, and those who tried to explain miracles and other matters of faith faced severe punishment. Society was highly hierarchical under feudal lords with no

personal liberties or rights. Religion was feared by the Europeans—feared either of an unmerciful God or at the hands of the brutal Church.

The Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment provided for freedom of thought and helped in the enrichment and expansion in the fields of mathematics, astronomy, physics, politics, economics, philosophy, and medicine. The Industrial Revolution, which provided rural population with jobs and new cities to live in, was brought about by the age. It initiated self awareness among the European civilization which in turn directly inspired the creation of the world's first great democracy, the United States of America. The new freedom and ideas brought on the one hand the positive signs of modern democracy while on the other the tyranny of the French Revolution. At times the spirit of Enlightenment especially its attack on tradition was held responsible for the violence and anarchy of the French Revolution. It took time for people to overcome this opinion and appreciate the Enlightenment's beneficial effect on their daily lives. The effects of Enlightenment soon permeated both European and American life, from improved women's rights to more efficient steam engines, from fairer judicial systems to increased educational opportunities, from revolutionary economic theories to a rich array of literature and music.

These ideas, works, and principles of the Enlightenment would continue to affect Europe and the rest of the Western world for decades and even centuries to come. Nearly every theory or fact that is held in modern science has a foundation in the Enlightenment; in fact, many remain just as they were established. Yet it is not simply the knowledge attained during the Enlightenment that makes the era so pivotal—it's also the era's groundbreaking and tenacious new approaches to investigation, reasoning, and problem solving that make it so important. Never before had people been so vocal about making a difference in the world; although some may have been

persecuted for their new ideas, it nevertheless became indisputable that thought had the power to incite real change. Just like calculus or free trade, the very concept of freedom of expression had to come from somewhere, and it too had firm roots in the Enlightenment.

Influence of English Political Situation on Enlightenment:

Seventeenth-century England with its struggle for political power had a profound impact on the philosophers of the English Enlightenment. The first power struggle came in 1649, when the English Civil War resulted in the execution of King Charles I and the establishment of a commonwealth under Oliver Cromwell. Although the republic of commonwealth under Cromwell endured for a decade, it also essentially devolved into dictatorship, and England ended up reverting to monarchy with the restoration of Charles II to the throne.

The re-established monarchy had clear limits placed on its absolute power, however, as was made clear in the bloodless Glorious Revolution of 1688, in which the English people overthrew a king they deemed unacceptable and basically chose their next rulers. The revolution occurred because Charles II's son, James II, was an overt Catholic, which did not suit the predominantly Protestant public. The English rallied behind James II's Protestant daughter, Mary, and her husband, William of Orange, who led a nonviolent coup that dethroned James II and sent him to France. When William and Mary ascended the throne, they effectively ended the Catholic monarchy and the idea of divine right. In the years that followed, an English Bill of Rights was drafted, boosting parliamentary power and personal liberties.

Ideas of Enlightenment and its Thinkers: The Enlightenment spirit in its wake initiated a thorough probe into old myths as the people of the age accepted nothing on the basis of faith. The most exciting debate topic of the period was religion. The critical spirits of the age were called 'deists' who were against the more orthodox Christians. Typical of the Enlightenment age was a faith in reason. Deists believed in a deity whose existence according to them could be rationally demonstrated. Deists attacked scriptures by pointing out its inconsistencies and absurdities. They could not be termed as disbelievers for they were true believers in their own way. Later on the deists reasoned their way into silence and ended back in the camp of orthodoxy. Whatever may be the case it initiated a sense of questioning and reasoning into the society.

Thomas Hobbes (1588 –1679): The first major figure in the English Enlightenment was the political philosopher Thomas Hobbes, who began his career as a tutor but branched out to philosophy around the age of thirty. In 1640 fearing that some of his writings had angered England’s parliament, Hobbes fled to Paris, where he wrote his major works.

He is best known for the epic *Leviathan* (1651), a lengthy, groundbreaking work that explores human nature. In *Leviathan*, Hobbes elaborates on the nature of man and justifies absolutist rule. He argues that human nature is inherently bad and that humans will remain in a constant a state of war, vying for power and material resources, unless awed by a single great power. However, Hobbes also claims that any group of men who ascend to positions of great power will be prone to abusing it, seeking more power than necessary for the stability of society. Thus, he reasons, a single absolute ruler is better than an oligarchy or democracy; because that ruler’s wealth and power is largely equivalent to the wealth and power of the nation, he will seek to lead the nation on a stable and prosperous course. Hobbes claims that this sovereign’s main duty is to provide protection to the citizens and that if he fails at that task, allegiance may be transferred to another.

An atheist, Hobbes argued that religion is useful as a propaganda machine for the state, as it is the entity most capable of reminding the ignorant masses of their role and their duties. He was of the opinion that human life is by nature “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short” and was pessimistic about the prospects for progress in a world short on ethics. Fearing, justly, that *Leviathan* might offend certain groups—especially Anglicans and French Catholics—Hobbes figured himself safest at home and returned to London, where he lived out his years privately.

Commentators have praised Hobbes's work for its logic and clarity but have disagreed over precisely what he meant. For instance, the rules Hobbes sets forth as to precisely when a citizen may transfer allegiance to a new sovereign are unclear. Basically, only when a ruler kills or ceases to protect a subject may a subject oppose the ruler; at all other times, the subject must remain subservient. The greatest criticism of Hobbes focuses on his failure to describe how totally selfish men would be able to create and maintain the covenant of the state. Hobbes avoids the errors inherent in assuming that all human beings are inherently virtuous, but he is hard-pressed to explain how humans would behave in the manner he describes if they are inherently stupid. Hobbes represents the pessimistic side of the Enlightenment and sees progress as the result of the suppression of man's instincts rather than the granting of freedom to those instincts.

John Locke (1632-1704): On the opposite side of the spectrum from the pessimistic Hobbes was John Locke, the other major English political philosopher of the seventeenth century. Locke received a prestigious education throughout his youth and remained involved in academics long after graduation. It was while dabbling in medicine with a mentor that he was introduced to political thought, which then captured his interest.

Locke's early writings focus on the religious intolerance and bickering that was blighting England at the time. Though important, these earlier works did not have nearly the influence or prominence of later works such as *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), in which Locke puts forth his optimistic idea that man's mind is a blank slate and that man can subsequently learn and improve through conscious effort. Locke followed with the work for which he is even better known, *Two*

Treatises of Government (1690). This political work was massively influential,

particularly the second treatise, and is still considered the foundation for modern political thought.

Not surprisingly, Locke's more optimistic work was more warmly received and more influential than Hobbes's in the long run. In particular, Locke's second treatise on government—which details Locke's belief that every man is inherently good but that the necessity of government requires that people compromise on some issues for the betterment of the whole—has endured. The work sets forth Locke's ideas for an ideal representative government and makes suggestions that would eventually be elaborated into ideas such as separation of powers—the system that the founding fathers of the United States used when writing the U.S. Constitution.

Montesquieu (1689-1755): In 1715 with the death of King Louis XIV, France got liberation from the solemn authority. Men of letters got an opportunity to produce writings of critical note.

Towards the end of the 17th century with the rise of translations of literary pieces of the countries like China and the Middle East and due to the availability of accounts documented by travellers from far off lands especially from Asia, European interest developed in them. Philosophies of Confucius and Mohammad could reach Europe and ignite theory of deism—universal natural religion. Montesquieu or Baron de la Bride's *Persian Letters* became a representative of the new spirit of liberation era. Written on the new concept of public awareness of the Middle East it was printed in the Netherlands. The book was later brought to France where it made its appearance as literary success in 1721. Montesquieu's *Persian Letters* was influenced by the Italian Giovanni Marana's *Letters of a Turkish Spy* (a literary piece that was written thirty seven years before *Persian Letters*). Enlightenment being an age of satire, it

produced writers like Jonathan Swift who wrote *Gulliver's Travells*. Written under the influence of Montesquieu's work it achieved the status of the best ever critique of society.

Montesquieu's book contain letters written and exchanged by two Persian travellers with each other after their visit to Europe. The letters are mostly comparison of each other's society—society of Persia and that of Europe. It not only gives information regarding the culture of the harem but also is a criticism of society and of European personalities like Louis XIV, a political observation with special reference to Hobbes, Locke and the social contract and Montesquieu's anti-clerical notions. It draws upon the moral that a happy life in a society is dependent on religion (all the religions of the world) and its ideals those of which support and complement to the happiness of man. Theology should not be disputed rather should be tolerated. The idea of deism, a comparative study of civilizations and political institutions marks the importance of Montesquieu's *Persian Letters*.

His last and greatest contribution was *The Spirit of Laws* in 1748. It was the first ever book on scientific approach towards government and politics. A systematic treatise, it is empirically based upon the laws and customs of the people of the whole mankind. It touches upon the feature of social sciences like that of Sociology and Economics. Based on historical and empirical data the book surpasses Hobbes, Spinoza and Locke who were mostly general and theoretical in approach. Montesquieu's book is speculative in nature and gives a model of a theoretical concept. It influenced future writers like Italian penologist Beccaria, Russia's Catherine (who formulated code of laws) and thus became a political model during the Enlightenment Age. A part of the book contains classification of governments—their forms and types. The three different forms of government discussed are republics (suitable for small city-states)

that stand for virtue, monarchies (suitable for contemporary Europe) for honour and despotism (suitable for huge empire like Rome) for fear. Highlighting about the influence of geographical location and climatic conditions on political institutions Montesquieu concludes that the people of the north are more courageous in comparison to that of the south. The people who reside in hot climatic conditions are ardent lovers than the people of cold climate. Lively Italian opera can be attributed to its climate again. Orientals according to Montesquieu are intellectually backward. Although the reflections upon the causes of variation in culture of people aroused curiosity as well as controversy, yet it led to the issue of historical causation among the historians. The causes no doubt were critiqued by the historians but they also became the subject matter of their thought.

The last section of the book showed the development of Roman and feudal law through the middle ages. All the three parts of the book contributed to answering different questions like reasons behind differing civilizations, of their rise and fall and influence of time upon development of government. Montesquieu thus searched for laws having a scientific approach. Fascinated by the methods of Newton he aimed to apply them to study the phenomenon of human civilization. He tried to analyse relationships between social phenomena. Montesquieu's theme in this book was close to the theme of the age—the science of Newton and Locke would explain everything and would wipe out errors prevalent in human affairs that continue from ancient time and thus would bring about a bright and an enlightened era.

Montesquieu in admiration of British Constitution pointed that there is a balance of forces between the king, the parliament and the judicial bench. But in reality the country witnessed a corrupt rule of Whigs or their Oligarchy. Of whatever kind, the English Constitution may be, in theory and in practice it was the most tolerant and a

free society who stood for liberty in the whole of the 18th century Europe. Although Montesquieu died in 1755, his book and his admiration for English Constitution and its idea of liberty and freedom penetrated into the French society.

Voltaire (1694-1778): Voltaire or Arouet was a man of wit who through his charming manners and brilliant conversation became the most adorable in the fashionable society of Paris. He earned success quite early in life i.e. in his twenties. His three year visit to England in 1726 to sort out an issue with Chevalier de Rohan- Chabot over an actress changed his intellectual perspective. He got impressed with the English liberty (from deistic controversy) and with the teachings of Newton and Locke. He was deeply influenced by the exiled statesman Lord Bolingbroke when he met him in 1719. His first writing, a treatise was written on the problem of evil. His first important play was an attack on the vengeful God of Calvinists and Jansenists through the presentation of a tragic drama based on the Oedipus theme. He focussed upon mathematics and philosophy and worked together with an intellectual lady Marquise du Chatelet, his mistress at Cirey.

Enlightenment is officially said to begin with the publication of *Letters on the English* or *Lettres Philosophiques* in 1733-1734. Voltaire was ridiculed and criticised for his book *Elements of Philosophy of Newton, Popularly Presented* (1738). He was also influenced with his friend Prince Frederick of Prussia with whom he corresponded regularly. His *Lettres Philosophiques* compared France with England and England

with its spirit of freedom, Newtonian and Lockean ideology, useful and virtuous citizens surpassed French citizens and its aristocratic fervour.

By 1750 in his middle age, Voltaire became a member of the Academy and the official historian of the king. His greatest works (*Candide*) and the famous Calas case made him a representative of opposition to intolerance and religious bigotry.

A note of pessimism could be sensed in Voltaire in his old age which resulted naturally due to reasons like--the death of his mistress, straining of his friendship with Frederick the Great, the war of 1756-1763 and the Lisbon earth quake of 1755. A deist, Voltaire believed in God and upon the harmonious universe. He supported the fact that man was a rational being and his rationality and reason was not only enhanced by Newton and Locke but also helped in removing evil. But such a belief although shattered to certain extent due to the Lisbon earth quake, yet did not lose hope completely. The poem written on the Lisbon earth quake shows an optimistic ending. His masterpiece *Candide* concludes with a suggestion “let us cultivate our own garden” (1966, 142). The world is filled with suffering, cruelty and evil and our fate is beyond our control. Voltaire while writing *Candide* wrote that the world is mad and intolerable.

Voltaire’s youth was surrounded by Jansenist controversy and deist movement. He was against the evils of French church. His religious views were ambiguous as he seemed to be undecided—to oppose Christianity for its superstition or to reform it. Being a deist he supported replacement of religion with natural and priest craft with philosophy. Contrary to deism he sometimes acknowledged the essentiality of religion and said “the people need a religion” (ibid.). His love-hate relationship was evident in his exposure of biblical contradictions and absurdities and on the other hand in his support of church and religion through purification and reform.

In 1762 the case of Jean Calas of Toulouse was a proof of clerical intolerance. Calas an elderly shopkeeper who was a Protestant was accused of killing his son to prevent

him from converting to Catholicism. Calas therefore was to face a brutal execution but was saved by Voltaire. Eighteenth century France was unknown to religious persecution. But by 1787 a sense of toleration was introduced in the law. During Calas' case the matter escalated due to the fact that France at the time was to wage a war against two Protestant powers that gave rise to anti-Protestant feeling in the 18th century French mass. But the effort of Voltaire led to believe that toleration was a virtue contributed by the 18th century philosophers who themselves fought against religious intolerance and bigotry. But the very fact was turned upside down when the biographers of Voltaire and even Diderot were of the view that both the philosophers wanted freedom of speech only for themselves and not for their anti-group members whom they expected to get suppressed. Although the philosophers aimed to cleanse the world of evil and bring about reason, yet they themselves had strong beliefs which led them either to tolerate and accept certain things or reject them. Such an attitude itself exemplifies a sense of intolerance.

Voltaire was regarded as the one who was not very democratic. He has very few statements mostly during the times of his old age that would proclaim him as pro-democratic. But still Voltaire was logical—in preferring dictatorship of reason than democracy of ignorance. He believed that the world has to be rescued by reason—a trait found in few or a small group of philosophers. It is the few who could enlighten the whole but the support of the ignorant mass would only serve as an ally to the enlightened few or enlightened despot under whose influence all were saved. Such views might differ from modern-liberal democratic ideologies but it no doubt has contributed in the later movements.

Rousseau (1712-1778): Jean-Jacques Rousseau was in complete contrast to Voltaire. A serious, intense, sentimental optimist democrat and a founder of romanticism differed from Voltaire the Classicist. Born in Geneva he reached Paris in 1742 at thirty years of age but with no worthy achievement. In his *Confessions* he objectively conveys that he was not responsible for his disgraceful youth rather it was his environment, the sins of others that were responsible. His laziness and oversensitivity has affected his youth but to a small effect. Rousseau's descriptions of nature and interior life were sure to bring an upheaval into prose writing of Europe. In Paris he failed as a musical scientist but became a secretary to the French Ambassador at Venice. The job of a secretary ended up soon in a fiasco when Rousseau called his employer half-wit. His mis-adventurous and quarrelsome life developed a bitter feeling in him for the Parisian world. It was his Prize Essay that gave him an opportunity to take his resentments out against the society in the literary form. Rousseau always stood against the old fashioned principles of Christian religion. When he met with Diderot in Vincennes prison he wept saying, "I saw another universe and I became another man" (1966, 146).

Rousseau argued that the art was the means to corrupt civilization. This was in reference to the literary society of Paris where amorous ladies served as patrons of the arts, of courtiers and snobs, of luxury and immorality and in a way was corrupting the

intellectual capital. He did not support the pretentious philosophers who under amorous patronesses pretended to engage in intellectual conversation to give vent to their sexual interests. He validated his stand further with the idea that luxury alone brought down Egypt, Greece and Rome. Sincere feelings and thoughts remain at stake when manners are refined more and more. With knowledge man adds vanity in him and increases his scepticism. He praises Bacon, Decartes and Newton for their

contribution of knowledge that is of use to mankind. Rousseau was optimistic and did not lose belief in civilization. He was only against the artificial and corrupt features of upper-class civilization of contemporary time and expected a reformation by focussing back to nature. He sang praises for the Spartans and the Scythians, honest peasants and persons who learnt from natural common experiences of life than from books. He was criticised by Voltaire for his admiration of natural learning and not of book learning. Voltaire therefore regarded Rousseau as the one who favoured mankind to recede to a four-legged creature. Rousseau supported his argument that knowledge and intellect corrupts people and therefore sided with Spartans and Scythians. But the Spartans or the Scythians in their turn never withdrew from literary productions. Rousseau's ideas were accepted and he was invited to present his play *The Village Soothsayer* in front of the king. But he not only rejected to present the play in front of the king but also did not accept a royal pension.

Rousseau's later work argues that man in his real nature is good but he is corrupted by society. He goes on to allege that love and marriage are representative of female plot and are inventions of civilization. For Rousseau private property gave rise to usurpation and leads to inequality, greed and war. The state was created by the social contract which was the result of the conspiracy and connivance of the rich to tame the poor. Therefore Rousseau believed that the existing state was not perfect, justified and legitimate and so it should be re-made on the basis of democratic principles.

Rousseau's reasons and ideas seemed to be the beginning of modern democracy, socialism and anarchism that became the ideology of the French Revolution a generation later. His writings the *The Social Contract* and *The Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* became great writings of social message which the European world never thought of.

The Discourse on the Origin of Inequality was written in 1755 as a response to an essay proposed by the Dijon Academy. In this essay he provides a picture of man in a hypothetical natural state. Rousseau's natural man unlike Hobbes' is jolly and healthy with few needs that can be satisfied, and is unknown of the sorrows that are the result of stress and strain of a civilization. Rousseau gives a rosy picture of innocent man who has a sense of a social responsibility and therefore feels pity for those suffering even when he fights for his legitimate self-interest. But he again blames on greed and selfishness for man's fall. Some men within them have fatal instinct in their ambition to seek more wealth and power at the cost of their fellow beings. Evolution of the concept of personal property gave rise to inequality and other evils which in turn led to the formation of state with a motive to provide protection to life and property. Since then the situation has created more problems giving rise to a race to find a solution for it. With all said, Rousseau's ideas are critiqued for being bipolar and having dualism. Rousseau's *Le Contrat Social* (1762) indicates how an illegitimate contract of government that is schemed by few despots is enforced upon the innocent people. Such a contract should not be legitimized rather a new contract be formulated for all as equals and not as haves and have-nots and the ruler and the ruled. Rousseau's creative career came to an end between 1761 and 1762 with additional two novels along with *Le Contrat Social*. His didactic and sentimental novels *La Nouvelle Heloise* and *Emile* also witnessed his detachment from society as a philosopher. He quarrelled with Diderot and wrote a letter of hatred to Voltaire in 1761. He took himself to be an enemy of religion bigotry and would not try to please religiously devoted men. His support for deism was taken to be a neutral stand for it was neither regarded as religious nor unorthodox. Rousseau was with 18th century atheism and infidelity for which he was staunchly opposed by Voltaire. *La Nouvelle Heloise* was a

sentimental parable on the subject matter of virtue. The virtuousness and fidelity of a beautiful young woman who overcomes the temptation of flesh is given importance to. She is able to convince her lover not to be physical with the idea that friendship is a higher relationship than a physical relationship. Thereby she remains true to her husband whom she does not love but remains loyal as a dutiful wife. The novel achieved success in all history.

Emile a treatise on modern education generates awareness on the need to treat a child as a developing personality. A child has four stages of growth. Five to twelve years of age is a pre-rational age when there is the domination of the senses and when education appeals only to real life experience. Twelve to fifteen years of age is a period where subject for study should be introduced to develop the intellect. Next stage that follows is to develop morality and then is the final initiation into the mysteries of sex. Here too inspite of recognizing some tendency of children toward evil Rousseau emphasizes upon the natural innocence of children. He was of the view that natural education imparted from real life and situational experiences and events is the best form of education. As the existing education is based upon wrong principles one should do opposite of what is in practice. In *Emile*, Rousseau spoke of the famous Creed of the Vicar of Savoy. Vicar in the novel is aware of God's existence through his sharp intuition. He resists evil and urges that the existence of evil is essential for free will. With no freedom to choose between good and bad the value of virtue would not be known. But the reason of existence of unnecessary and anomalous evil in the world could not be explained. Rousseau does not mention about the Christian doctrine of redemption. Virtue brings reward and vice its share of punishment. Rousseau could not accept the doctrine of Christianity—doctrine of original sin. By nature man is innocent. In corruption man, abandons simple life to get more wealth to set up private

property and then bring in their woes further. But this can be rectified for men have not lost their free-will and that they are not born sinners. The Vicar concludes by expecting for a pure, simple and less dogmatic religion. Emile when eighteen years of age agrees to go to Paris to get moral education on the advice of the Vicar. In Paris he encounters women who did not believe in honour and men who did not believe in virtue and therefore returns to the country to further face adventures of love and sex. Rousseau was ridiculed for supporting to remove gains made by reason and to return mankind to primitive barbarism. He was persecuted for *Emile* and *The Social Contract* and therefore had to flee France. But whatever might be the outcome his writings made a great impact on the public greater than the plays of Voltaire.

Birth of Modern Day Democracy: Rousseau stood for equality and democracy but at the same time abolished the rights of the individuals. For him in the new society the power is in the community and where popular will is made the general will or collective will. Rousseau reiterates the innate goodness of an individual and that evil is developed due to the influence of society upon man. Society is essentially needed for man and therefore our task is to reform and reconstitute it as a corruption free place. A society must be founded upon community feeling rather than individualism. To ensure liberty men should enter into a social contract on the basis of equality. They will not choose a king for themselves rather would choose themselves as their own rulers. Their sovereign is the general will or the will of all. The general will is not the sum of individual wills rather it represents what the people ought to will if they willed rightly. An individual in such a society owes all rights to the state as rights cannot exist outside society. Rousseau could not foresee the uses of his general will as made by the dictators during the French Revolution after few years of his death.

The legacy

of his thought was further carried by his linear descendant Hegel. Today modern day democracy and socialism is regarded as an offspring of Rousseau that captured the world. But at the same time Rousseau was of the opinion that democracy is an idea hardly ever realised in the real world.

Questions:

1. How does Hobbes' perspective on man differ from that of Locke's and how does it affect their government?
2. In what ways were the discoveries and innovation of the Scientific Revolution instrumental to the beginning of the Enlightenment?
3. Rationalism, skepticism, and romanticism were the three primary philosophical schools of thought during the Enlightenment. Choose one and explain why you feel it's a better approach to life than the others.
4. Explain the impact that philosophers of England and France had on the growth of the Enlightenment.
5. What evidence is there that the ideas of the Enlightenment continue to be influential in modern times?

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Unit-5

Colonialism to Imperialism

Rasheda Parveen

- Imperialism: An Introduction
- Trade and Economy: Ideologies of Imperialism
- Imperialism: A Postcolonial Approach
- Language and Power: An Imperialist Debate
- Imperialism: A Challenge
- End of Imperialism

Imperialism: An Introduction

Imperialism comes from the Latin term *imperium* meaning to command. Therefore imperialism refers to the way that one country exercises power over another country either through settlement, sovereignty or through indirect mechanism of control. It has primarily been applied to western political and economic dominance in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Moreover imperialism should not be confused with colonialism. It operates from the centre, is a state policy and is developed for ideological and financial reasons. On the other hand colonialism is just a development made for settlement or for commercial purpose in a new land. Imperialism hence always includes some form of colonialism whereas colonialism does not automatically imply imperialism. Writers like Edward Said use the term with a broader aspect. He describes imperialism as any system of domination and subordination that has an imperial centre and a periphery. For Marxist theorist

Vladimir Lenin, imperialism is a natural feature of a developed capitalist country as it grows into monopoly capitalism. In *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Lenin is of the opinion that with capitalism maturing in the western world there was a shift in the economy from commodity production to banking and finance. Commodity production was outsourced and was done by the colonies of the empires. The competition between the empires, and the uncontrolled desire to maximize profit, lead to wars between the empires. The resulting world wars and other military invasions and occupations into the under-developed and weak countries of the world were with a motive to expand and exploit cheap labour for the monopolist businesses of the empires. In modern times colonialism (with no formal colonies) which is referred to “informal imperialism” cannot exist without the other. Looking at the world history the domination of Europeans over the non-Europeans has been an age old affair. Hence it can be observed that old imperialism has begun from 1460-1650 with Portugal, Spain, France, Britain and Netherlands reigning whereas new imperialism continues from 1870-1914 with countries like Great Britain, France, Germany, USA, Italy, Belgium and Russia dominating.

Beginning of British Imperialism:

Before 1850 colonies were regarded as futile as its burden were more than its profits. According to the liberal reformers who favoured laissez faire economics the colonies did not seem to fit the model of global free trade. William Gladstone the liberal party leader believed that the whole British Empire should dissolve at the end. In 1852 Benjamin Disraeli in reverberating Gladstone’s voice said, “These wretched colonies will all be independent in a few years and are millstones around our necks” (Johnson, 2003). Between the year 1775 and 1875 there were successful revolutions in North

America and Latin America and owing to which the Europeans lost more territory than they acquired. Hence the idea that sooner or later the colonies would revolt and would attain freedom did the rounds. But by 1870s the negative attitudes of the British, French, and German changed towards the colonies. The British Tory Party under the leadership of Benjamin Disraeli adopted an imperialist ideology and was called “Little Englanders.” In the beginning they lost parliamentary seats as well as popularity among the country men. But in 1876 with Disraeli’s encouragement when the British parliament bestowed “Empress of India” title upon Queen Victoria of Britain, the attitude towards colonies, especially with India becoming the “Jewel in the Crown,” changed. Hence the popularity of imperialism became an explanation for colonial expansion. It was calculated that in the year 1800 the Europeans controlled 35% of the world’s land, but the figures increased with succeeding years. By 1878 their control was upon 67%, by 1914 it was 84% and by 1900 about one-fifth of the globe or 400 million people of different beliefs and ethnic groups were governed by the British Empire. “There were 60 dependencies covering 3.2 million square miles, and British India consisted of a further 2 million square miles and 322 million subjects. In addition Britain possessed five dominions covering 7.6 million square miles and 24 million people” (Johnson, 2003). Britain thus could become a centre and a hub of trade, financial services, communications, and migratory patterns, naval and military power. The control was exercised through either despotism or through voluntary association between local rulers and the Crown.

British imperialism cannot be categorized having any single motive—economic, cultural, military or political. Rather the empire was built up over a long period of time and lands were acquired with different purpose at different times. Some colonies

achieved self-government in order to continue their cooperation with Britain while others did not. In the sixteenth century with the centralisation and consolidation of political power England in lieu of wealth followed the Spanish and the Portuguese. This led to flourishing British colonies in North America and West Indies by the seventeenth century. The process continued as there was a desire to establish trade relations with Africa and Asia.

Trade and Economy: Ideologies of Imperialism

J.A. Hobson:

The British economist Hobson explained the urge to imperialism as a real impulse of capitalistic greed for raw materials, markets, investments and new ways of exploitation and tapping resources. According to Hobson this taproot of imperialism was in reality an occurrence of excessive capital finding ways of investment. The excessive capital was the result of unequal distribution of wealth and thus giving rise to excessive saving. The solution to this problem lies in bringing about internal social reform and in distributing wealth equally. He said, "If the consuming public in this country raised its standard of consumption to keep pace with every rise of productive powers, there could be no excess of goods or capital clamouring to find markets" (Brady, Jr., 4). By the end of nineteenth century the search for profitable and safe investment in foreign lands urged the Europeans to expand their hold in other lands and establish colonies.

Lenin and Capitalist Imperialism:

V.I. Lenin (1870-1924) the follower of Karl Marx proved that imperialism was motivated economically and was associated with the demise of capitalism. In his

pamphlet “Imperialism the Highest Stage of Capitalism” (1916) he states that with capitalist system wealth gets concentrated in limited hands and the chances of investment at home ground also gets depleted. Therefore the capitalists have to find ways of investing in foreign countries, in establishing colonies and exploiting the small and weak countries. Lenin argued that in colonies capitalism could find new working class to exploit. Moreover, the profits generated out of such imperialism were used to suppress revolutionary fervour and to collaborate with the bourgeoisie in home ground. There could be no solution for imperialism apart from the destruction of capitalism. The destruction of the colonial empires is in reality involved with the unavoidable revolt against capitalism. It was agreed upon that the colonies assisted in bringing about social peace and also helped in preventing socialist revolution at home as it distracts the workers from their misery.

Robinson and Gallagher:

Robinson and Gallagher’s 1953 article “Imperialism of Free Trade” laced with controversy states that the prevalent indifferent attitude in the early nineteenth century towards the Empire was incorrect and that the mid-nineteenth century had remained crucial in the history of British overseas expansion. Their justification was on the basis of the fact that the Empire had increased its territory continuously and had dominated upon them on the basis of trade and not through annexation. But the construction of this Empire called as ‘Informal Empire’ was not through peaceful means only. It undoubtedly included certain amount of force. Post wars of independence in South America, the British had aspired to destroy the Spanish monopoly over trade and achieve power and supremacy through the use of commerce. Similarly, in Latin America, China and the Balkans, the Empire encouraged stability

in the government for safe investment in business and trade, to assure profit whereas in the instable and weaker states the Empire used force to formulate cooperation. Hence Robinson and Gallagher tried to explain the consequences of economic hegemony of Britain along with the rationale behind the disciplinary attacks in China, conquest battles in Indian provinces such as Sind and Punjab and in Burma and acquisitions in Oudh, Hong Kong and Kowloon. According to them the British government aimed to establish 'trade with informal control if possible; trade with rule if necessary' (Johnson, 2003: 45). Criticising Robinson and Gallagher, D.C.M. Platt stated that the British government never intervened in trade as it maintained impartiality over it. An informal Empire could also be created with no interference from the British government. With the change in the local economy brought about by the dominance of manufacturers and producers from Britain the economy could be made more dependent on Britain. The British influence got restricted in China and in Latin America only due to the native opposition for British products and due to the non-existence of any goods of value for them. Hence Robin-Gallagher and Platt suggested that the British government not only aimed for securing trading rights exclusively for themselves but also tried to fulfil British interests. According to Roger Louis, Robin-Gallagher believed that the British free trade had emerged as a global empire of mutual exchange on the basis of influence and dependency much before 1880s and also before the scramble for Africa, Asia and the Middle-East. Hence an emergence of capitalist world economy brought a revolution in British Imperialism and its historiography. Influenced by the Cold War, Robin-Gallagher stated that the Marshall Plan, an American programme for revitalization of European economy in 1945 was liable to lower the status of Britain. They were of the view that a nation may not lose its independence on being conquered on the basis of military power. It can

lose its freedom to a powerful economy through trade and investment. Hence they argued that capitalism is a world phenomenon which gets governed and controlled by the powerful and the ruling elite. According to P.J. Marshall, Robin-Gallagher did not give importance to the political and economic impediment rather gave priority to domination. Both of them considered the significance of resistance and the resulting financial loss while analysing Britain's Informal Empire. Their theories, which shows that the economic factors were in harmony with other factors, assisted in changing everyone's idea about the type of imperialism in Africa. They opened a debate regarding the importance of Informal Empire and of the British Empire in serving as an agency for globalization.

Imperialism: A Postcolonial Approach:

Said's idea was further analysed and extended to project other aspects of Imperialism. He created awareness of the lacunas in the vocabulary used; especially of its imperialist connotations. Therefore a language from literary critical circles was preferred giving rise to imperial discourse as a paradigm where each work was regarded as mere signifiers or signs. All knowledge was regarded as a relative construction and all cultures especially those of non-European were understood as something that was explained to the world from western point of view. Therefore texts—written documents, architecture as well as art was given a re-reading from post-modernist ideology and an attempt was made to project the methods of imperialist power through colonial language. To exemplify, masculinity was defined in terms of colonisers and colonised. Englishmen were projected as strong, brave and manly while natives were taken as weak, coward and effeminate. The colonial discourse had developed an inferiority complex in the colonised mind.

Postcolonial writers therefore rejected the existing history and acknowledged the marginal groups, their history that got sidelined in the history written by the Empire. Women, working class, Blacks, coloured, homosexuals, criminals and the militant group came to the fore front with their past that remain suppressed. Ranjit Guha with his 'Subaltern Studies' which is a collection of works that throws light upon the 'history from below,' attempts to strike a balance between the two groups minor as well as major and provide justice to the subjugated voice. In case of information related to the past of the minor groups, there remained a dearth of primary materials and sources. Most of the documentation was generally done by the higher class educated people whose material survived the test of time. Hence the available texts written by the elites were re-read keeping in mind the language that connotes oppression and supremacy, to get a subtext from within the major text. By the end of 1980s, the Subaltern Studies group rejected the historical narrations and the notions of class and individualism on the basis of being western constructions and therefore having no association with the real local society. The information as a result remained in fragments without any order. Both myth and fact received equal acknowledgement and validity. Foucault's idea that all writings are fiction got significance. Free of the constructions of western epistemology the subalterns were free to write their own history.

Leela Gandhi states the limitations of postcolonial theory, its politics and its divisions. But with further developments in postcolonial writings and studies, an inter-connection between imperialism and other subjugated and hidden histories have been reported. According to McClintock race, gender and class are not distinct from each

other but exist in relation to each other. Mrinalini Sinha emphasized upon the dynamic and continuously changing relationship between the coloniser and colonised and hence gives an idea that 'Orientalist discourse was neither monolithic nor unidirectional' (Johnson, 2003: 94).

Moreover, according to postcolonial theorists changing the very basis of the historical methods, there emerged a counter challenge. The variety of responses in the shape of imperial discourses from the imperial world seemed no more sympathetic towards imperialism. In spite of the fact that the postcolonial theorists blamed the Europeans for imagining and inventing concepts such as 'tribe,' 'caste,' etc., it was revealed through research that such terms were in vogue even before the arrival of the European colonisers. They simply made an attempt to translate those terms whereas the meaning of the words was not always a product of imagination and invention.

The weakness and limitation of the postcolonial approach lies in its assumption that western knowledge was an agent of oppression. Sheldon Pollock in case of India, states that local elites had similar ideology as that of the colonisers. Due to their similar ideology and cooperation, England could consolidate as well as maintain its domination and power over colonised Indians. While on the one hand the British Empire stood on the collaboration with the local elites, on the other contact with the colonisers could bring about change in social and political structures. These social and political structures were not British inventions rather a spontaneous outcome of the British invention with the local. Depending upon the prevailing local structures and its adoption by the coloniser, it was found that the British exhibited a diverse political systems ranging from a self-governing areas like Australia to despotism in the Pacific

Islands. According to John Mackenzie, the modern critic of Orientalism considers the reading back of contemporary attitudes and prejudices into historical periods, as the greatest historical mistake. He did not approve of its “ ‘a historical forms,’ its ‘moral condemnation befogging intellectual clarity,’ and its slavish need to pander to political correctness” (Johnson, 2003: 95). For Mackenzie a study of European Orientalism in literature and arts was significant of fusion of eastern styles with the western. But with the making of a monolithic and a binary vision of the by-gone days the post colonialists have in actuality destroyed the intercultural relations which are preferable in the future. Orientalism therefore is always in flux—sometimes has admiration and reverence while at others has criticism, devaluation and depreciation.

Washbrook is of the opinion that the postcolonial approach derives the idea of resistance towards the west from the philosophy of Romanticism. Romantics conserved old forms of authority with an intention to provide legitimacy to the new rule of the West. Postcolonial attempt to prove western culture to have monolithic episteme is incorrect because European culture has been a result of whole world’s influence over many centuries. Languages, alphabets, concepts, academic disciplines and technologies have had foreign impact along with the very native European influence.

For Washbrook postcolonial theory does not intend to displace Enlightenment theory rather to replace it in the hierarchy i.e., the Europeans are shifted from their highest position to the lowest. Said too made such a point in *Orientalism* where on the basis of Enlightenment ideals he not only criticised but also de-historicised the western history. Hence if it was true according to the fact that all interpretations are based on

language, in culture, institutions and the political conditions of the representer, it suggests that Said's work too faces similar change. Therefore, Washbrook goes on to conclude: "In practice, discourse theory—like the Romanticism gave rise to it—appears inextricably bound to the Enlightenment which it cannot entirely "reject" without silencing itself" (Johnson, 2003: 96).

Gayatri Spivak on the other hand is defensive of postcolonial theory. She supports and justifies the theory's stand on the grounds that it refers to its own forms of representation which also empowers the marginal groups with the methods of Enlightenment. Thus postcolonial theorists fall back on their 'counter-constructions' with the help of tools that have no evidence as is accepted by the historians. Studies that reject historical information on the basis of being erroneous, give evidences in favour of humane suggestions. Washbrook further argues that postcolonial theory is appropriate and best suited for the modern because it denounces race and ethnicity and is supportive of multi-culturalism. Multi-culturalism in turn provides power to emphasize upon the societies that were ignored once. It provides voice and epistemology to a minor group to form a history of their own and hence serves as a modern mechanism of imperialism.

Guardians of postcolonial theory point towards the term 'dialogues' instead of 'discourse.' The focus was more upon cultural-intermingling and inter-connectedness between language, forms and societies rather upon European domination. As a result Creole, hybrid or mixed culture generated more curiosity. With a re-reading and re-examination the critics of post colonialism who had pointed their fingers on Europe

and its culture can be answered. European culture in reality was an outcome of hybridity and other influences through time.

Moreover, the intention of postcolonial theorists always is to represent any specific group. But in case of historians their attempt to observe and document remains objective and unprejudiced. Hence post colonialism is ideological and like post modernism mostly focuses upon the location of power and is based upon 'ideology.' Although the aim of the postcolonial theorists was to examine the colonial history, to unearth the sorrowful and insulting memory of the history of race and to reveal of consistent colonial violence, yet they opposed the employment of Marxist vocabulary.

Dane Kennedy acknowledges both the positive as well as the negative side of the postcolonial theory. Speaking of the positive side, Kennedy believes that the postcolonial theory has had a better impact on the history of imperialism. The theory assisted in re-assessment of the basic ideas regarding the 'epistemological structures of power and the cultural foundations of resistance' (Johnson, 2003: 98). Besides this the postcolonial theory explains the effects of imperialism, its methods of maintenance, significance of race and tribe in providing an identity to a group of people and inter-dependency of the centre and the marginal. It further studies how language and thoughts helped in structuring the colonial policies. C.A. Bayly also pointed out the fact that postcolonial theory has both pros and cons. Postcolonial theorists were prejudiced against the colonizers. They only searched for events where the colonisers had created the notion of the 'other' or 'the inferior.' They ignored trade, commerce, politics and virtues that resulted with imperialism. The plight of oppression undergone by the Asians, Africans and Polynesians under the domination

of the European culture was projected more. Postcolonial theory has focussed mostly on nationalist movements and to give a glorious picture of the achievement of freedom on the part of the colonised. It just seems to be a play of shifting the blame and responsibility for political failures in a state.

Language and Power: An Imperialist Debate

Disappointed with the approach towards the history of the British Empire, academicians took up the task of exposing the realities of imperialism through its texts and discourse. By applying reason they intended to expose the universal truths of human behaviour and condition in human society. Knowledge was regarded as relative and it was acknowledged that there is no objective truth. It was projected that the world was seen through European interpretations of the Universe. The Europeans constructed certain devices such as literary and language devices to make its views convincing and acceptable throughout. Such views gave rise to hidden agenda of the Europeans where they imagined and invented truths with an intention to construct and authenticate their positions of power over other people / non-Europeans. Europeans coined a range of vocabulary associated with the term 'natives'—savage, tribal, mob behaviour, ill-educated, irrational, child-like, criminal, excessively sexual, filthy, amoral and irreligious. Non-Europeans were considered in comparison to the Europeans and hence lost their individuality. Their identity and their ways of living were ignored and relegated in terms of 'the other.' Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger stated that with the invention of certain institutions and protocols in Europe and its supply to the colonies, the natives were denied of reform and of development. According to Michel Foucault, most of the academic writing on Imperialism by the West takes additional care to suppress its ideas from criticism. Scrutiny of colonial

discourse revealed that the language used in it is the language of power i.e., it serves imperialism. Races were divided according to European interests. The Europeans wrote of the historical past of those races. People of different races were taught of their own past through the prejudiced histories written by the Europeans. Hence the native history containing foreign motives and interests was made by the Europeans.

Said in his work brought to the fore the works on literary theory and the arguments of Foucault. Thus by projecting all the prevalent ideas on colonial discourse he accused liberal historians of the West for preserving Imperialistic model. He used Jacques Derrida's deconstruction technique of texts and argued that Europe's portrayal of Islam and the Orient was based upon its imagination and creation which has no similarity with reality of the Middle Eastern society, its people and religion. Said blamed the philosophy of the Enlightenment period—"of reason"—to have brought about 'oppression,' the very idea behind imperialism. As Europe portrays the Oriental as 'the other' it produces a picture opposite to that of the virtuous and the rightful West. It authenticated the western model of progress and that all other methods followed in the Oriental world were outdated and inferior.

Gender, Race and Class:

Gender, Race and Class are not distinct from each other rather their existence is inter-related. This three dimensional theme is apparent in the study of Imperialism.

In Henry Rider Haggard's novel *King Solomon's Mines*, the physical map shows diamond mines. The diamond mines symbolic of female reproduction gives a picture of female sexuality. Being a source of wealth it is a source of economy. Fertility of

such a place attracts for and gives rise to imperial contest. Jose da Silvestre a Portuguese trader, in the novel is the one who had drawn the map in 1590. His phallic cleft bone is representative of male insemination and patriarchal authority. Gender includes in its purview sexuality, suppressed labor and imperial exploitation. Similarly, race too is not limited to skin color rather includes labor power as well as gender running parallel to each other. Hence with race and gender having a complementary as well as contradictory relationship de Silvestre's condition too projected this emphatically. He not only stood for patriarchal power but also for racial dispossession.

Imperialism and invention of race are fundamental to western modernism. The invention of race by the centre becomes significant in identification of different classes of people—middle class, working class, prostitutes, homosexuals, Jews, Irish, feminists, etc. In addition with Imperialism, domesticity could not be considered irrelevant rather of significance which again contributes to gender identities. European men being the agents of the empire who by the nineteenth century captured and dominated over 85% of the earth, their relationship between their gender counterparts remained either concealed or in the dark. The experience of imperialism varied from men to women. Imperialism has been a violent struggle with the traditional and existing hierarchies of authority and power. It has emerged as a shrewd opportunistic method of achieving power. The period of conflict brought in changes in the gendered dynamics of native cultures to give a regular and acceptable shape of imperialism throughout the world. Colonised women before imperial rule were unfortunate souls in their own societies. Being a slave, agricultural worker, servant, prostitute, concubine and mother, she would struggle to maintain balance with their

native men along with facing the violence due to hierarchical rules implemented upon them by imperial men and women. Whether sent to penal settlement as convicts or taken into sexual or house-hold service, or serve indirectly in maintaining rule of the Empire (collaborating through welfare activities with the indigenous people) or in bearing children of the Empire as wives of local officers, or in running missionary schools or hospitals or in assisting their husbands in farmland or shops, women were never provided with an opportunity to contribute in economic and military decisions of the Empire. Most of the legal laws such as marriage laws, land laws or property laws also gave them a secondary status. With white men making, implementing and enforcing laws and policies of their interests in the imperial Empire, women had no share in its formulations. It was only the white women because of their privileged race who could enjoy the power to a little extent over colonised men and women alike. Hence the white women not being direct owners of power had to depend on the Empire—both as a coloniser and colonised, controller and controlled.

To understand imperialism, theory of gender power needs to be considered. Gender dynamics has been fundamental in providing security and also in maintaining the imperial rule. But it was only in the 970s that with the idea of construction of power by Foucault and Gramsci, projection of the role of knowledge by Edward Said and challenge of Eurocentric power (both imperial and white feminist) by women of colour, the role of sexual identity was given priority in the study of the ideology of imperialism.

Hazel Carby one of the early critics of white feminists criticises and writes, “their herstory and call it the story of women but ignore our lives and deny their relation to

us” (McClintock, 1995: 7). She argues that the white feminists write history while being within the boundaries of racism. bell hooks too criticising white feminists emphasizes upon the recognition of diversity and differences in race among women. She asks for bringing to the fore the politics of alliance between the white and black women. White women were accused of ignoring the benefits and privileges they earned at the cost of Black people—both men and women. Gender, taking into account women, sex, class, work and money focuses upon both the issues of masculinity as well as femininity.

Women as the boundary markers of Empire:

Women served as intermediary and gateway figures upon which men could adjust their positions as agents of knowledge and power. The images of imperial conquest issued by Columbus and Haggard, is suggestive of its eroticism.

According to Mary Douglas societies at the fringes of a nation are generally in a vulnerable position and are persistently at risk. Men who sail beyond the national limits into the seas for exploration turn ambiguous. In the transition space—between known and the unknown they feel insecure and hence to vent it out take recourse to violence. Their separation from the old status of known / secure in their nation from the new status of unknown / insecure in the new land is ritualized by feminising the new land (as virgin territory) in the imperial discourse. Hence the male invader wards off his fear and his narcissistic attitude by re-stating it as ‘natural and excess of gender hierarchy’ (McClintock, 1995: 24).

Victorian patriarchal tradition projects woman as a split personality; split into whore and Madonna, nun and sorceress, maid and medusa, wife and mermaid and mother and witch. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar in the article “The Mad Woman in the Attic” investigate the literary causes of this doubled image of Victorian womanhood. In addition “The Woman and the Demon” by Nina Auerbach too explores the reason behind the rampant use of alliances for women in male Victorian beliefs and thoughts. With a projected aim to elevate women to angels, Victorians could find alliances for women in creatures like goblin, mermaids, etc., who remain slithering on earth. According to Auerbach, woman and her double image of monster shows of the acceptance of mythic power of woman hood. The doubled image of women the critic believes emerges due to “archetypal doubling in consciousness that can be transcended by a defiant act of aesthetic will” (McClintock, 1995: 95). Male Victorian texts abound with this doubled image of woman. The images of goblins and faeries as woman’s alliances are created from the historical image of women as kitchen workers, working class nurses and maids who bring in picture of faery into the minds of middle-class children. The pictures of monsters and mermaids are taken by oral / folk tradition created by working-class women. These images are symbols of female power that results from the female working-class power and are deeply ingrained in “class divisions and historical mutability” (McClintock, 1995: 96). Image of female demons masked with reflections of Madonna is a picture of contradiction between the repressed power of earning female domestic worker and the lack of power of a wife who does not earn. Foreseeing the strategies for political change it seems to be an important fact. But the critics do not recognize the economic and material basis of the female doubling. To escape from the boundaries of patriarchal text women need to break the boundaries and get themselves free from the image of a demon or of an

angel. This emancipation can be brought through literary means. The maker's text or male text to be specific can be revised by female writer. This willingness for emancipation and creating self through literary means has been the idea of the nineteenth century middle-class who is conscious and anxious of creating a discourse to legitimize their class without falling back upon the traditional or historical means or ideas.

Imperialism: A Challenge

After World War I the British Empire began to avoid further expansion as a result of enlarged economy and strategy. The empire had to face internal aggression and provide safety and security against such threats. By 1930s the strict approach of the Empire towards India, Iraq and Ireland got minimized. With the involvement of the League of Nations in the colonial world it was advised to reduce military interventions thereby lowering the defence cost incurred by the Empire. But with the dominions gaining greater autonomy there was apprehensions of anarchy and communal riots in India. The threat of large scale revolution led the British Empire to loosen its hold over India. The mis-utilization of power especially in Amritsar Massacre leading to questioning of British morality gave a jolt to the stability of the Empire in India. As a result, a compromise upon the arrangement of constitution and its implementation broke down miserably.

In the Middle East, the strife between the Arabs and the Jews created problems for the British who could only extract benefits from the short term arrangements done at the time of the World War I. According to David Fromkin, the destruction of the old order during the Ottoman Empire by the British had led to the "crisis of political

civilization that the Middle East endures today” (1989, 19). However due to political disturbances during pre and post war suggested of the large scale violence in the Middle East. This idea was contradictory to what Britain projected. Britain believed in the idea that war was the ultimate means to stop infiltration and to keep self-determination in Europe but in case of the Middle East, this liberty was not provided to the nationalist leaders. Later in 1920, when the Labour Party advised for colonial self-government, it was not paid heed to. Certain areas like Ireland, Egypt and Iraq were given independence and in case of India it was the conservatives who brought licence for liberty. It was only after the World War II that the Labour Party was convinced to give independence to India.

Moreover, during the inter-war years the Empire was vigilant and thoughtful. But still the Empire laid emphasis on maintaining stability in spite of financial slump down as a result of collapse in British trade. With London struggling to maintain its supremacy over financial services it can be concluded that there was no reluctant imperialism rather was self-interested and self-motivated imperialism. However, with the changing political scenario of the world imperialistic rules gives way for the rule of partnership.

End of Imperialism:

In the 1950s, the term ‘Decolonisation’ did the rounds. As the term implies to relinquish power it was severely criticised. Nationalists therefore expressed it with the phrases as ‘liberation struggle’ or ‘resumption of independence’ According to Paul Kennedy, the destruction of European empires lie within its own policies. The loss of Indian empire in 1947 was a crucial moment in the history of British Imperialism. For

George Boyce, British were flexible and were the best adapters. They did not act upon any fixed theoretical rules and could adapt easily to changing political conditions. As a result it became easier for them to come out of destructive wars unscathed. Decolonisation was brought about by a number of factors. In the nineteenth century even though it was propagated that, colonies were financial burdens yet they were not abandoned as it was also associated with the prestige of the king or a nation. Territory was given priority and it stood as a symbol of power. The speculations that the nations with large territory would dominate over the world in future created unrest within European nations. Moreover, in the imperial conference held in 1907 the idea that those colonies which had made progress to certain extent would get the status of dominions, was supported. But such dominions were to be consulted in cases of foreign policy. India could attain self-government on the basis of Montagu Declaration (1917). The British had to give away the Indian empire to provide proper representation to the minorities. Refusing to comply with the agitators and their demands, British declared that they were more concerned for the minority representation and hence would leave India with the declaration of its status of self-government. British decided to provide India with self-government in the Montagu Declaration of 1917.

In case of the Middle East, it was shared and controlled over by the League of Nations. It received autonomous status before World War II. In 1932, Iraq achieved freedom. In Palestine, the independence got delayed due to two opposing forces—the Jews and the Arabs. Egypt being an independent nation suffered military occupation of British forces to control over strategic naval bases in Suez Canal and over the major revenue earning sources in Egypt. But in 1936 the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty was

signed in order to stop the British intervention. But in 1939, Egypt was forced into anti-German stance as a means to safeguard North Africa. In 1919, the responsibility of certain German colonies based in Africa and the Pacific were handed over to France, Britain and the dominions which posed as an impediment for their independence. The colonies were under the supervision of the League of Nations and thus give an end to imperialism.

With imperialism both colonisers and the colonised are left with a legacy. In spite of the embarrassing and humiliating history, at the end, both get influenced by long contact with each others' culture and ideas. The mutual advantage because of the close intermingling might in future prove to be of great value in progress and development of the nations in the world.

Questions:

- Q-1. Discuss imperialism from postcolonial theoretical aspect.
- Q-2. Discuss the impact of imperialism on gender, race and class.
- Q-3. Discuss economic theories behind imperialism
- Q-4. Discuss the challenges of imperialism.
- Q-5. How did imperialism come to an end?

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