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# English Literary History of the Eighteenth Century

## Part I

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Mokymo priemonė studentams  
(Paskaitų konspektas)

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## Pratarmė

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„XVIII anglų literatūros istorijos“ (*English Literary History of the Eighteenth century*) teorinės dalies mokymo priemonė parengta daugelį metų dėstomos dalyko medžiagos pagrindu. Šios mokymo priemonės žanras yra *paskaitos konspektas* – trumpas paskaitos išdėstymas, paskaitos santrauka/ metmenys. Mokymo priemonėje esančios temos nėra paskaitų metu dėstomos medžiagos išrašai. Dalyko medžiaga dėstoma bakalauro programos studentams.

Šioje mokymo priemonėje pateikiami teorinės dalyko dalies esminiai dėstomos medžiagos aspektai, kurie paskaitos metu yra papildomi tiek teorine, tiek vaizdo medžiaga pagal būtinybę; jie taip pat gilinami ir sutvirtinami diskusija-apibendrinimu paskaitos metu. Tekstų analizė ir interpretacija atliekama pasitelkus postkolonijinės kritikos, feministinės kritikos, idėjų istorijos, politinės filosofijos teorines atramas. Paskaitų konspekto medžiagos turinys sugrupuotas pagal pagrindines dalyko teorinės dalies temas.

Šioje mokymo priemonėje išskiriami probleminiai analizuojamos medžiagos aspektai, į kuriuos studentai kviečiami susitelkti tiek viso kurso dėstymo metu, tiek ir ruošiantis baigiamajai kurso pakopai – egzaminui. Be jau paminėtųjų dalykų šis paskaitų konspektas pagelbės užsienio studentams, atvykusiems studijoms pagal Erasmus programą, pasirinkusiems šį dalyką, dėstomą anglų kalba. Konspektas padės geriau perprasti dėstomos medžiagos turinį ir struktūrą, jis taip pat padės formuoti visuminį suvokimą apie XVIII a. anglų literatūros istoriją.

# Theme 1

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The literary canon is a 'body of approved works, comprising either (i) writings genuinely considered to be those of a given author; or (ii) writings considered to represent the best standards of a given literary tradition'<sup>1</sup>. The literary canon has been at the heart of the debate between the *conservative* critics who want to have literary canon almost intact and the *liberal* critics who expect the canon to be more representative of the diversity of society. The *liberal critics* – all under the heavy influence of the critical theory of German Marxism, French postmodernism, deconstruction – insist that the Western canon is suggestive of elitism, cultural hegemony, and ethnocentricism which is antithetical to the egalitarian nature of Western democracy.

Harold Bloom in *The Western Canon* (1994) speaks against the reduction of aesthetics to an ideology advocated by *liberal/* left-wing literary critics: 'Against this approach I urge a stubborn resistance whose single aim is to preserve poetry as fully and purely as possible'<sup>2</sup>. Bloom goes on to argue that 'we are destroying all intellectual and aesthetic standards in the humanities and social sciences, in the name of social justice'<sup>3</sup>; 'The Western Canon [...] exists precisely in order to impose limits, to set a standard of measurement that is anything but political and moral'<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Dinah Birch (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009, 190.

<sup>2</sup> Harold Bloom, *The Western Canon*, New York: Riverhead Books, 1994, 18.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

Bloom, though, denies that the Western canon stands as a moral promise for “social salvation”: ‘Whatever the Western Canon is, it is not a programme for social salvation’<sup>5</sup>. ‘If we read the Western Canon in order to form our social, political, or personal moral values, I firmly believe we will become monsters of selfishness and exploitation’<sup>6</sup>. Bloom also adds that ‘reading deeply in the Canon will not make one a better or a worse person, a more useful or more harmful citizen’<sup>7</sup>. Frank Kermode also thinks that the canon is ‘needed for describing, understanding, and reconstructing history, literary or otherwise. Because we haven’t enough memory to process everything’; he also adds that ‘canons are useful in that they enable us to handle otherwise unmanageable historical deposits’<sup>8</sup>.

The supporters of the idea of “opening the canon” assert that the Western canon is elitist, comprised of ‘dead, white, European males’. In *Loose Canons* (1992), Henry Louis Gates writes that the ‘teaching of literature is the teaching of values’<sup>9</sup>; therefore, ‘we must engage in this sort of canon deformation’ because in it ‘no women or people of color were ever able to discover the reflection of representation of their images, or hear the resonances of their cultural voices. The return of “the” canon, the high canon of Western masterpieces, represents the return of the order in which my people were the subjugated, the voiceless, the invisible, the unrepresented, and the unrepresentable’<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> Frank Kermode, “Canon and Period”, in *History and Value*, London: Clarendon Press, 1989, 115.

<sup>9</sup> Henry Louis Gates, *Loose Canons: Notes on the Culture Wars*, New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992, 35.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

### Questions to discuss:

Who/what forms the literary canon?

If the literary (Western) canon is authoritative and imperative, perpetuating the cultural and literary hegemony of the mainstream, would the “opening of the canon” not add to a higher degree of the uncertainty of the identity of the individual, to a loss of cultural consciousness, and would it not legitimize the “anything goes”?

Would canonical change not work in the service of the establishment, whether liberal or conservative? <sup>11</sup>

### What is Enlightenment? To what extent does it matter today?

The Enlightenment<sup>12</sup> stands out as a powerfully intellectual movement which spoke for human rationality and human benevolence, scientific method and progress, and “for the general human capacity for self-improvement through rational change”<sup>13</sup>. It advanced the ideals of liberty, progress, constitutional government, etc.

**The reception of (the project of) Enlightenment today:** In his book *The Enlightenment: And Why It Still Matters* (2013), Anthony Pagden says that the Enlightenment – a period in history which has caused so much controversy, and anger today – is accused of being responsible for Eurocentrism, modern imperialism, and racism<sup>14</sup>. The intellectuals of the Enlightenment – although they spoke and wrote in different languages, used different forms of expression – all contributed to “the Enlightenment project”. The phrase was coined by the Scottish philosopher Alasdair Macintyre (b. 1929), who in his work on virtue ethics *Af-*

<sup>11</sup> E. Dean Kolbas, *Critical Theory and the Literary Canon*, Oxford: Westview Press, 2001.

<sup>12</sup> Dan Edelstein, *The Enlightenment: A Genealogy*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010.

<sup>13</sup> Anthony Pagden, *The Enlightenment: And Why It Still Matters*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013, viii.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, ix.

*ter Virtue* (1981), says that “the Enlightenment project”, as it insisted on the primacy of reason, it neglected the concept of virtue. The concept of virtue had been the main support, since Aristotle, for moral and intellectual, and political lives<sup>15</sup>. Macintyre also adds that since the concept of virtue was erased, “the intellectual “light” of the Age of Enlightenment was, in fact, nothing other than moral darkness”<sup>16</sup>.

The horrific history of the first half of the twentieth century in Europe, therefore, only reinforced the view that the belief in improvement through reason could only lead to nationalism, pseudo-scientific racism, ‘scientific socialism’, and finally, to the gas-chambers of Auschwitz as *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1947) by Max Horkheimer (1895–1973) and Theodor W. Adorno (1903-1969) implicates. It also says that the tragedy with the Age of Enlightenment was that “the Enlightenment project” resulted in the collapse of the human sciences, the turn to neo-Darwinism<sup>17</sup>, eugenics<sup>18</sup>, and the like. In Horkheimer’s and Adorno’s view, all this was but the outcome of the eighteenth century choice to live by reason alone. ‘Reason was a specifically European form of tyranny’<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> James Schmidt (ed.), *What is Enlightenment?* Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1996, 80-81; 335-8.

<sup>17</sup> Theory of evolution that represents a synthesis of Charles Darwin’s theory in terms of natural selection and modern population genetics. (<https://www.britannica.com/science/neo-Darwinism>)

<sup>18</sup> The selection of desired heritable characteristics in order to improve future generations, typically in reference to humans. The term *eugenics* was coined in 1883 by British explorer and natural scientist Francis Galton who, influenced by Charles Darwin’s theory of natural selection, advocated a system that would allow “the more suitable races or strains of blood a better chance of prevailing speedily over the less suitable.” By World War I, many scientific authorities and political leaders supported eugenics. However, it ultimately failed as a science in the 1930s and ’40s, when the assumptions of eugenicists became heavily criticized and the Nazis used eugenics to support the extermination of entire races. ([https:// www.britannica.com/science/eugenics-genetics](https://www.britannica.com/science/eugenics-genetics))

<sup>19</sup> Anthony Pagden, *The Enlightenment: And Why It Still Matters*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Herbert Marcuse (1898-1979), in his book *One-dimensional Man* (1964), also reflects on the modernity and its condition: he says that human mind today is radically of one dimension, i.e. one-dimensional mind is an outcome of technological rationality. José Ortega y Gasset (1883-1955), a Spanish liberal philosopher, in his book *The Revolt of the Masses* (1930) reflects on modern society of mass-men; the modern society of mass-men is indeed the lobotomized society which carelessly undergoes its own dehumanization. In her book *The Human Condition* (1958), Hannah Arendt (1906-1975) says that today a project of (political) modernity – the alienation of a human being as the epitome of the modern world – is advanced and hastened. Therefore, it seems that the Age of Enlightenment is now charged as being responsible for bringing European civilization (directly or indirectly) to the Holocaust.

On the one hand, as the critics of the Age of Enlightenment understand it, the Age of Enlightenment aimed at a scientific account of human condition and its improvement through (instrumental) reason. In other words, as “the Enlightenment project” entrusted science to generate the morality that accounts for the rights of individual, it disregarded the Aristotelian notion of virtue, as A. Macintyre explains it in his book *After Virtue*. Yet, on the other hand, the eighteenth century has left us freedom of press, freedom of assembly, concern for human rights, and religious tolerance, etc.

### **Questions to discuss:**

Taking into account the criticism of the “Enlightenment project”, what is it that the Enlightenment had to say for itself? What does Immanuel Kant say in his “What is Enlightenment”?

Does the criticism of the Enlightenment refute the value of the age?

## The historical context of the rise of the novel in England

The English novel evolved together with the rise of capitalist economy and the dramatic increase in the population in cities such as Manchester (Elizabeth Gaskell's social novel *North and South* (1854-55)). In his book *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding*<sup>20</sup>, Ian Watt argues that the novel “rose” together with the “middle class”, a diverse social group that possessed income and leisure time (especially among women) – two key components to reading for pleasure. It seems that the novel was a middle class enterprise<sup>21</sup>.

## The nature of the eighteenth century novel

The eighteenth century ‘novel’ represents the ‘prehistory’ of the novel as a genre of prose fiction as we know it today. At the beginning of the century, the novel (as we know it today) does not really exist as ‘a coherent literary institution’<sup>22</sup>. The novel is brought forth by those eighteenth century fictional narratives which were otherwise called ‘histories’, ‘true histories’ or ‘secret histories’, ‘romances’, ‘adventures’, ‘lives’, ‘tales’, ‘memoirs’, ‘expeditions’, ‘fortunes and misfortunes’<sup>23</sup>. It seems that the boundaries between the everyday world of fact and event and the fictional world were fluid and uncertain. The eighteenth century novel played with this divide between fact and fiction, often presenting fiction as fact: the preface to D. Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* opens with the following: ‘The Story is told with Modesty, with Seriousness, and with a religious Application of Events to the Uses to which wise Men always apply them to the Instruction of others by this Example, and to justify

<sup>20</sup> Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1957, 60-92.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> John Richetti (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Eighteenth Century Novel*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, 1.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

and honour the Wisdom of Providence in all the Variety of our Circumstances, let them happen now how they will. The Editor believes the thing to be a just History of Fact; neither is there any Appearance of Fiction in it<sup>24</sup>.

### Questions to discuss:

Why would the postmodern literature play with the lines between fact and fiction? What in fact does it play with?

Throughout the first half of the eighteenth century there was no understanding about what a novel should be<sup>25</sup>. The eighteenth century novel has the world of everyday experience; its characters were people who were no different from the implied reader in an ordinary world of common sense. At the same time, the eighteenth century was a period in Western history which was a period of change in values: it saw a turn towards individualism as opposed to collectivism (and tradition); a turn towards individualism was largely influenced by the philosophy of René Descartes and John Locke as they argued for individual experience as the foundation of all knowledge.

**Daniel Defoe** (1659 – 1731) was a journalist, and author of histories, travel books, handbooks, and advice books. His non-fictional writing includes more than five hundred books, pamphlets, and journals on various topics (including politics, crime, religion, marriage, psychology).

In his book *The English Novel* (1963), Walter Allen writes of Daniel Defoe: ‘When, in the second decade of the eighteenth century, the novel

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<sup>24</sup> Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, London: Penguin Books, 1994, 7.

<sup>25</sup> John Richetti, *The Cambridge Companion to the Eighteenth Century Novel*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

really emerged it did so from a man to whom art and literary theory meant nothing, from a writer who was not a gentleman but a tradesman dealing in commodities. In a sense, the relation Defoe bears to the artist is that of a forger, but he was forging not works of art but transcripts of actual experience. We see him as a novelist after the event, as it were. A novelist was the last thing he wished to appear as; and by a paradox, it is exactly this that makes him the archetypal novelist<sup>26</sup>.

Defoe's *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* (1719) tells the story of one man's victorious survival on an uninhabited island. It is assumed that the origin of the novel in English coincided with the European colonial project at the beginning of the eighteenth century<sup>27</sup>.

**Inspiration:** It is most likely that Defoe had read *Hayy Bin Yaqzan* (*The Improvement of Human Reason: Exhibited in the Life of Hai Ebn Yokdhan*) by the Muslim philosopher Abu Bakr Ibn Tufail<sup>28</sup> of the twelfth century. Another source for *Robinson Crusoe* might have been the account of Alexander Selkirk (1676–1721), who lived on a desert island for five years; his story enjoyed a great interest back in England. As Walter Allen notes, 'the sources of the book have been hunted down to scholars, but his indebtedness to earlier writers cannot take away from Defoe's originality'<sup>29</sup>.

### The reception of the book:

*Robinson Crusoe* can be read as a spiritual autobiography, based on the biblical parable of the prodigal son; it can also be read as a social

<sup>26</sup> Walter Allen, *The English Novel*, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1963, 37.

<sup>27</sup> Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1957, 60-92.

<sup>28</sup> Lamia Mohamed Baeshan, *Robinson Crusoe and Hayy Bin Yaqzan: A Comparative Study*, 1986.

<sup>29</sup> Walter Allen, *The English Novel*, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1963, 38.

philosophical novel about the freedom of the individual who uses reason to overcome nature, who demonstrates that hard work and perseverance are productively inventive; it can also be read as the opposition between a civilized individual and a savage (the opposition was a dominant theme in the eighteenth century literature).

**The analysis** of *Robinson Crusoe* draws on post-colonial theoretical approach. As the narrative moves from the colonial center to the periphery, we observe the narrative of double movement – the empire is expanding together with the expanding self and vice versa<sup>30</sup>. In the narrative, Crusoe stands as a rational, stable and self-reflective subject; he is the subject whose mindset was the mindset that colonial project would require, and Crusoe, as a fictional character, ‘shows British self-assurance in a landscape that could easily overpower him’ (Ibid.). The analysis that follows draws heavily on Homi K. Bhabha’s concepts of hybridity, mimicry and ambivalence<sup>31</sup>; it also borrows some ideas from Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (1978) and Albert Memmi’s *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (1957), Frantz Fanon’s *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952).

The analysis of individualism in *Robinson Crusoe* focuses on the aspects of puritan individualism (religion), and ethical individualism (Protestant work ethic)<sup>32</sup>, etc. References are made to Max Weber’s *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. The lecture also reviews the historical and political context of Protestantism throughout the eighteenth century.

Defoe’s novel remains central to the canon of postcolonialism: it is not only a story which celebrates colonialism, it is itself a ‘vehicle

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<sup>30</sup> Brett C. Mcinelly, “Expanding Empires, Expanding Selves: Colonialism, the Novel, and “Robinson Crusoe”, in *Studies in the Novel*, Volume 35, No 1 (Spring 2003), 1-21.

<sup>31</sup> Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, London: Routledge, 1994.

<sup>32</sup> Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, London: Penguin Books, 2002.

of colonial imagination<sup>33</sup>. On the other hand, it is also read as a story about ‘an emergent cosmopolitan self of the early eighteenth century that typifies modernity. This newly and uniquely cosmopolitan selfhood emerges before the dominating English colonial project takes hold’<sup>34</sup>. Crusoe, to follow Ann Marie Fallon, ‘today is no longer as just a lone, struggling survivor, an individualist as Ian Watt has convincingly argued, but as a cosmopolitan figure of connection to and a representation of our own moment of anxiety around a rapidly globalizing world. The Crusoe that appears in twentieth-century literature is a warning against the dangers of individual isolation and colonial oppression’<sup>35</sup>.

### Questions to discuss:

How does D. Defoe enhance engagement with his fictions – fictions, as Robert James Merrett<sup>36</sup> puts it – as stories of failed integration (*Robinson Crusoe*, *Moll Flanders* etc.)?

What does it mean to be at home in the world?

How could we account for so many revisions of Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* in the late twentieth century? To give a few examples: Nadine Gordimer’s *Friday’s Footprint* (1960), Maxine Hong Kingston’s *China Men* (1989), Bessie Head’s *The Wind and a Boy* (1977), Derek Walcott’s *Pantomime* (1979), Elizabeth Bishop’s *Crusoe at Home* (1979), Jane Gardam’s *Crusoe’s Daughter* (1985), J. M. Coetzee’s *Foe* (1986), Marianne Wiggins’ *John Dollar* (1989).

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<sup>33</sup> Ann Marie Fallon, *Global Crusoe. Comparative Literature, Postcolonial Theory and Transnational Aesthetics*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2011, 28.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>36</sup> Robert James Merrett, *Daniel Defoe. Contrarian*, Toronto, London: University of Toronto Press, 2013.

## Theme 2

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The eighteenth century was not only an age of great scientific achievements and geographical discoveries, it was also the age which claimed that man's "rational nature" has the power to govern human behaviour; therefore, reason is needed to divert sin. However, Jonathan Swift (1667-1745) had little faith in man because man, as he thought, had a capacity for rational intellect, but failed to use it.

The Age of Enlightenment was also the age of satire. The political climate – as the British politics was represented by the two major political parties – Tories and Whigs – contributed much to its most active usage in literature. 'Satire, a mode of writing that exposes the failings of individuals, institutions, or societies to ridicule and scorn. Its tone may vary from tolerant amusement [...] to bitter indignation, as in the verse of Juvenal and the prose of Jonathan Swift'<sup>37</sup>. Swift satirizes the political representatives and social engineers of his time – political and military leaders, philosophers and scientists. In other words, he satirizes the figures of modern consciousness.

*Gulliver's Travels* has been defined as a Menippean satire, a form of satire whose name comes from Menippus, who was a Greek philosopher and a cynic of the 3<sup>rd</sup> BCE. This kind of satire satirizes different (intellectual) attitudes (follies) and postures rather than people; it addresses abstract ideas and theories embodied in characters who serve as mouthpieces to all the ideas<sup>38</sup>. 'The humor in these works is more

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<sup>37</sup> Chris Baldick, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

cheerfully intellectual and less aggressive than in those works which we would usually call satires, although it holds up contemporary intellectual life to gentle ridicule<sup>39</sup>.

Swift belonged to the *Scriblerus Club* which wrote satires aimed at many aspects of modernity, including religion: the *Scriblerians* satirized Epicurean atomism (denied the divine design of the universe) and Deism (a belief that reason was a more certain guide to moral behaviour than the teaching of the Christian Church).

The critic W. Allen says that ‘Gulliver’s Travels’ is a work of fiction but not a novel, though in it Swift uses circumstantial detail after the manner of Defoe in order to persuade us of the truth of his Lilliputians and Brobdignagians. And great as his genius was, one feels that Swift could never have been a novelist. Satire can only be part of the novelist’s make-up; in Swift’s it was everything<sup>40</sup>.

Apart from satire, Swift’s major writing tool is irony. ‘Irony is a subtly humorous perception of inconsistency, in which an apparently straightforward statement or event is undermined by its context so as to give it a very different significance’<sup>41</sup>. Swift uses situational irony. In situational irony, the conclusion/ the aftermath of an action is nothing like what it was intended or expected initially. For example, the scholars are expected to be knowledgeable and intelligent. But at the Academy of Lagado, everyone, it seems, lacks not only knowledge of the world but also empirical logic and simple common sense.

**Reception:** *Gulliver’s Travels* enjoyed a great success, since at the beginning of the eighteenth century travel writing was welcomed and

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<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> Walter Allen, *The English Novel*, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1963, 42.

<sup>41</sup> Chris Baldick, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

well-liked, and it appealed to readers' curiosity about faraway places and people.

**Philosophical Context:** The analysis of *Gulliver's Travels* draws heavily on the political philosophy of Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) and philosophical empiricism of John Locke (1632-1704). According to Locke, human nature is determined by reason and tolerance<sup>42</sup>. According to Hobbes (*Leviathan*), all humans are selfishly motivated: 'every human being is capable of killing any other'<sup>43</sup>.

**Book I, "A Voyage to Lilliput"** is a political satire of England in the 1720s when England was going through major political transformation: after the death of Queen Anne (1665-1714), George I (1660-1727) had ascended the British throne in 1714 (until his death in 1727).

In the lecture, the analysis of "A Voyage to Lilliput" draws on the accounts of literary historians on George I and Queen Ann, and Robert Walpole (1676-1745); it discusses the political aspect of the court hierarchy, the political dispute within Lilliput between the high and low heels (the Tories and the Whigs); the analysis also considers the (religious) disagreement between Lilliput and Blefuscu.

The analysis of the problem of education draws on John Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* and *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*. Some educational practices in the Lilliputian nurseries are fictional projections of Locke's educational guidance. For example, as regards all food and clothing, John Locke explains: 'As for his diet, it ought to be very plain and simple; and, if I might advise, flesh should

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<sup>42</sup> John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1996. John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1996.

<sup>43</sup> Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Seattle: Pacific Publishing Studio, 2011.

be forborne as long as he is in coats, or at least till he is two or three years old. But whatever advantage this may be to his present and future health and strength, I fear it will hardly be consented to by parents, misled by the custom of eating too much flesh themselves, who will be apt to think their children, as they do themselves, in danger to be starv'd, if they have not flesh at least twice a-day'<sup>44</sup>. In Lilliput, Gulliver also learns about a political ideology based on morality that is, too, a fictional projection of Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Locke says that morality is an essential quality of human life. However, it is absent in the pompous country of Lilliput.

The theme of slavery: in Lilliput, Gulliver's freedom is restricted, it is only granted "upon certain conditions". The Enlightenment thinkers opposed to the institution of slavery; on the other hand, they failed to oppose to slavery: 'reform-minded planters insisted that a more humanitarian management of slaves was in the economic interest of the planter; healthier and happier slaves would work harder'<sup>45</sup>.

**Book II: A Voyage to Brobdingnag:** In this book, like in "A Voyage to Lilliput", Swift engages with the concept of size to enhance the criticism of modernity and demean Gulliver (an individual of the Age of Enlightenment) who takes pride in his individualism (subjectivity) and in his accomplishments: after becoming a Nardac in Lilliput, Gulliver is diminished in size and deprived of his pride and dignity by the Brobdingnagians; Gulliver is no longer a steady, manly figure, for he is forced to fight against rats and insects<sup>46</sup> which, in turn, are bigger and

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<sup>44</sup> John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company Inc., 1996.

<sup>45</sup> Justin Roberts, *Slavery and the Enlightenment in the British Atlantic, 1750-1807*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013, 28.

<sup>46</sup> For more: Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 1986.

stronger than he is. Gulliver is further belittled by the maids of honor who treat him like a pet.

Swift's analysis of human nature also takes a form of, what Middleton Murry calls, "The Excremental Vision"<sup>47</sup>. Swift's disgust for the body and its anal function has a philosophical significance in the narrative of the book as they hinder the grandeur of modernity. Swift also wrote scatological poetry<sup>48</sup>. In fact, Swift's scatological imagery engages with the epistemology of his age – scatological images are suggestive of the misperception of human grandeur; they also highlight the epistemological split between imaginative fictions and reality itself.

The political philosophy of the Brobdingnagian society, it seems, draws on Thomas Hobbes's ideas on civil society, human vices, theory of sovereignty, and the doctrine of legal positivism.

**Book III:** A Voyage to Laputa, Balnibarbi, Luggnagg, Glubbudrib and Japan. The inhabitants of Laputa (a mechanical structure, a flying island) are scientists who excel in mathematics, measurement, and astronomy; however, they lack common sense: one of the projectors in the Academy of Lagado has been working for eight years on a project for extracting sunbeams from cucumbers. Another projector is assigned a project on how to reduce human excrement to its original food: 'When I was presented to him, he gave me a close Embrace, (a Compliment I could well have excused.) His Employment from his first coming into the Academy was an Operation to reduce human Excrement to its original Food, by separating the several Parts, removing the Tincture which it receives from the Gall, making the odour exhale, and scumming off the Saliva. He had a weekly Allowance from the Society,

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<sup>47</sup> J.M. Murry, *Jonathan Swift: A Critical Biography*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1954, 432-448.

<sup>48</sup> Donald Greene, "On Swift's "Scatological" Poems," in *The Sewanee Review*, Vol. 75. No. 4 (Autumn, 1967), 672-689.

of a Vessel filled with human Ordure, about the Bigness of a *Bristol Barrel*<sup>49</sup>. Swift was critical of modern science and its projects: ‘Swift’s satires charge the scientific impulse with failing to account for the complexity of life, simplifying all to mechanism and the material realm’<sup>50</sup>. “A Voyage to Laputa” ‘suggests that science can be a threat to life itself.

Swift is also critical of linguistic projects which sought to reject ‘all the amplifications, digressions, and swellings of style’; and instead sought to turn back to ‘a language of ‘primitive purity’ in which ‘men deliver’d so many *things*, almost in an equal number of words’<sup>51</sup>.

Swift reflects on life and death in the description of the immortal Struldbrugs who are a race ‘cursed with gift of deathlessness’: “The Reader will easily believe, that from what I had heard and seen, my keen Appetite for Perpetuity of Life was much abated”<sup>52</sup>. Swift is implicating that the human body has no power to change the natural laws of physical death.

“A Voyage to Laputa” is the voyage to the world of illusion and delusion, misconception and misapprehension. In this book, Gulliver assumes the mechanic function of the one who is there to describe what he sees. Gulliver disappears from the narrative altogether.

**Book IV: A Voyage to the Land of the Houyhnhnms:** The fourth voyage brings Gulliver to the land of rational horses and excrement-smearing yahoos. Swift had no faith in man as someone who was rational, he said that man was only capable of reason (“rationis capax”)<sup>53</sup>.

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<sup>49</sup> Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005, 167-168.

<sup>50</sup> Gregory Lynall, *Swift and Science. The Satire, Politics and Theology of Natural Knowledge, 1690-1730*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, 144.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>52</sup> Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005, 198-199.

<sup>53</sup> Roger D. Lund (ed.), *Jonathan Swift's Gulliver's Travels. A Sourcebook*, New York: Routledge, 2006, 13.

The question of human rationality was the object of a debate over what could be said to define our humanity: is it our shape, our intelligence, or something else?<sup>54</sup> Swift was familiar with the argument that reason does not belong exclusively to man but at the same time he was aware of the argument, formulated by René Descartes, that ‘animals are purely material automatons that cannot think, whereas humans have a body and a thinking soul’<sup>55</sup>. In Book II, when the scholars of Brobdingnag first see Gulliver, they assume that he is an automaton, or perhaps a piece of clockwork: ‘The King, although he be as learned a Person as any in his Dominions and had been educated in the Study of Philosophy, and particularly Mathematicks; yet when he observed my Shape exactly, and saw me walk erect, before I began to speak, conceived I might be a piece of Clock-work, (which is in that Country arrived to a very great Perfection) contrived by some ingenious Artist’<sup>56</sup>.

Swift also problematizes the equation between reason and horses; the nature of this equation is present in the logic textbooks that dominated the British universities during the seventeenth and the eighteenth century, and which Swift would have read at Trinity College. The logical taxonomy, known as “porphyry’s tree” (a scale of being), divided phenomena into animate and inanimate, rational and irrational, reaching the conclusion that only man was a truly rational animal<sup>57</sup>. In opposing man, as ‘rational’ to other irrational brutes, Porphyry chose the horse as his example<sup>58</sup>. For Porphyry’s followers, in the seventeenth and the eighteenth century, this distinction between man and horse became a logical commonplace<sup>59</sup>.

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<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver’s Travels*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005, 93.

<sup>57</sup> Roger D. Lund (ed.), *Jonathan Swift’s Gulliver’s Travels. A Sourcebook*, New York: Routledge, 2006, 13.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 13-14.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

As the race of horses cultivates reason as the superior virtue, in their marriages, the Houyhnhnms are careful of colours so as ‘not to make any disagreeable Mixture in the Breed’<sup>60</sup>, in their language, they have no words to express love. In their economics, they have no money; in their politics, they lack the desire for power. In their culture, they have no writing system, etc. Gulliver wants to stay here in exile from humanity – ‘When I thought of [...] human Race in general, I considered them as they really were, Yahoos in Shape and Disposition [...] but making no other Use of Reason, than to improve and multiply those Vices [...]’<sup>61</sup> – but he is not given the choice: ‘In the Midst of all this Happiness, when I looked upon my self to be fully settled for Life, my Master sent for me one Morning a little earlier than his usual Hour. [...] The Assembly [...] did therefore exhort him, either to employ me like the rest of my Species, or command me to swim back to the Place where whence I came’<sup>62</sup>.

Swift attacks rational intellect as it guides the debate of the Houyhnhnm Grand Assembly on the extermination of all the Yahoos, and it is rational intellect that the Houyhnhnms are guided by when have their marriages arranged, and by switching their children so that they can have the “perfect” family.

The (further) analysis of the yahoos in *Gulliver’s Travels* draws on Thomas Hobbes’s ideas on the state of nature and the absence of authority. The lecture also discusses the narrative techniques used in the book (for example, decentering, etc.).

*Gulliver’s Travels* is a complex book: it is a satire of the political, the intellectual, the physical and the moral. ‘The surface of the book is comic, but at its center is tragedy, transformed through style and tone

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<sup>60</sup> Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver’s Travels*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005, 250.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 260.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 261.

into icy irony<sup>63</sup>. Written in opposition to the Age of Enlightenment, the height of European civilization, Swift, as a Christian and humanist, was concerned for the moral and spiritual qualities which distinguish men from beasts. *Gulliver's Travels* is a journey into the heart of darkness of humanity. It is a journey which begins in simplicity, and ends in madness (which is never cured)<sup>64</sup>.

### **Questions to discuss:**

For many critics, *Gulliver's Travels* is 'a tragic work in that it is the narrative of man's collapse before his corrupt nature and of his defiance in face of the collapse'<sup>65</sup>. What is it that Swift leaves us with? What is the overall irony of the book?

What do *Robinson Crusoe* and *Gulliver's Travels* stand for? *Robinson Crusoe* is a celebration of human nature. Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, as the critic Nigel Dennis suggests<sup>66</sup>, is a book 'in which man is the measure of all things'<sup>67</sup>; it is a book whose character is in all his human weakness – in his vanity, fear, shame<sup>68</sup>.

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<sup>63</sup> Samuel Holt Monk, "The Pride of Lemuel Gulliver" in *The Writings of Jonathan Swift* (ed. by Robert A. Greenberg and Williams B. Piper), New York: W.W.Norton & Company, Inc. 1973, 632.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> Bonamy Dobree, *English Literature in the Early Eighteenth Century*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959.

<sup>66</sup> Nigel Dennis, "Swift and Defoe", in *The Writings of Jonathan Swift* (ed. by Robert A. Greenberg and Williams B. Piper), New York: W.W.Norton & Company, Inc. 1973, 666.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

# Theme 3

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**Henry Fielding** (1707–1754) was an English novelist and playwright. ‘Fielding was by birth and education an aristocrat; he was by temperament gregarious and by experience widely acquainted with men and women of many ranks. And he is the first writer in English, excepting only Chaucer and Shakespeare, to communicate the sense of the whole sweep of English society’<sup>69</sup>.

Fielding’s *Joseph Andrews* or *The History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews and of his Friend Mr. Abraham Adams* (1742) is a story about a journey home.

**The genre of the book:** The critic W. Allen notes that Fielding ‘saw himself as a moralist and satirist, but he was much more besides. What he besides was, as it were, the fine flower of his didactic purpose. [...] he did more than he knew. This is plain from his preface to *Joseph Andrews*. He knew that he was doing something new in English prose fiction’<sup>70</sup>. *Joseph Andrews* was initially intended as a burlesque<sup>71</sup> of Richardson’s *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded*, its situations and values, but as the nar-

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<sup>69</sup> Andrew Wright, *Henry Fielding. Mask and Feast*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966, 146.

<sup>70</sup> Walter Allen, *The English Novel*, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1963, 55.

<sup>71</sup> Burlesque, in literature, is a comic imitation of a serious literary or artistic form that relies on an extravagant incongruity between a subject and its treatment. In burlesque the serious is treated lightly and the frivolous seriously; genuine emotion is sentimentalized, and trivial emotions are elevated to a dignified plane. Burlesque is closely related to parody, in which the language and style of a particular author, poem, or other work is mimicked, although burlesque is generally broader and coarser. <https://www.britannica.com/art/burlesque-literature>

rative unfolds, it evolves into a comprehensive artistic account of the early eighteenth century England with its people, and human nature in general.

In the “Preface” to *Joseph Andrews*, Fielding claimed that he founded a new genre of writing: ‘it may not be improper to premise a few words concerning this kind of writing, which I do not remember to have seen hitherto attempted in our language’<sup>72</sup>. Fielding merged the ‘comic epic’ and the ‘prose epic’ so as to produce what he defined as a ‘comic epic poem in prose’: ‘its action being more extended and comprehensive; containing a much larger circle of incidents, and introducing a greater variety of characters’<sup>73</sup>.

In ‘a comic epic’, unlike classical epic, a hero is an ordinary man. In *Joseph Andrews*, Joseph is a footman of Lady Booby. As Joseph does not reciprocate the sexual advances of Lady Booby (and Mrs. Slipslop), he is forced to leave the Booby household. He takes a journey to see Fanny Goodwill, and eventually together with his mentor Parson Adams, Joseph pursues his journey home in Somerset. Through their journey home, Fielding exposes the society of the day; as the critic Walter Allen says, ‘Fielding saw it as his task to reform the manners of the age’<sup>74</sup>.

The setting in ‘a comic epic’ is the countryside, its local roads (Somerset road) and highways, woods and inns, and houses of different people. In a heroic epic, the element of war/battle is essential; the element of battle is also present in *Joseph Andrews* – Joseph and Adams, not once, would get into mock-wars in inns: ‘Upon these words, Adams fetched two strides across the room; and snapping his fingers over his head, muttered aloud, He would excommunicate such a wretch for a farthing, for he believed the devil had more humanity. These words

<sup>72</sup> Henry Fielding, *Joseph Andrews*, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 2001, ix.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, x.

<sup>74</sup> Walter Allen, *The English Novel*, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1963, 44-45.

occasioned a dialogue between Adams and the host, in which there were two or three sharp replies; till Joseph bade the latter know how to behave himself to his betters. At which the host (having first strictly surveyed Adams) scornfully repeating the word 'betters', flew into a rage, and, telling Joseph he was as able to walk out of his house as he had been to walk into it, offered to lay violent hands on him; which perceiving, Adams dealt him so sound a compliment over his face with his fist, that the blood immediately gushed out of his nose in a stream. The host, being unwilling to be outdone in courtesy, especially by a person of Adams's figure, returned the favour with so much gratitude, that the parson's nostrils began to look a little redder than usual. Upon which he again assailed his antagonist, and with another stroke laid him sprawling on the floor<sup>75</sup>. The comic is given an important moral and ethical function in the book, i.e. the comic in the narrative is aimed at reforming the (moral) character.

The source of Fielding's comedy is *affectation* (artificiality and pretence), which, according to Fielding, arises out of vanity or hypocrisy<sup>76</sup>. In the "Preface" to *Joseph Andrews*, Fielding writes: "The only source of the true Ridiculous (as it appears to me) is affectation. Affectation proceeds from one of these two causes, vanity or hypocrisy: for as vanity puts us on affecting false characters, in order to purchase applause; so hypocrisy sets us on an endeavor to avoid censure, by concealing vices under an appearance of their opposite virtues<sup>77</sup>. The subject of Fielding's comedy is 'the Ridiculous' in human nature, 'which has its source in affectation which manifests itself in vanity or hypocrisy<sup>78</sup>."

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<sup>75</sup> Henry Fielding, *Joseph Andrews*, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 2001, 92.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, ix.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, xii.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

Henry Fielding sought to theorize the nature of laughter and to define the uses that comedy might serve. In *On the Benefit of Laughing* (1728), Fielding suggested that laughter, with its therapeutic properties, is to serve a moral purpose by correcting folly and vice<sup>79</sup>.

The nature and function of laughter is theorized in the “Preface” to *Joseph Andrews* where Fielding offers the definition of ‘the Ridiculous’: ‘Mirth and Laughter . . . are probably more wholesome Physic for the Mind, and conduce better to purge away Spleen, Melancholy and ill Affections, than is generally imagined. Nay, I will appeal to common Observation, whether the same Companies are not found more full of Good-Humour and Benevolence, after they have been sweeten’d for two or three Hours with Entertainments of this kind, than when soured by a Tragedy or a grave Lecture’<sup>80</sup>. Fielding says that laughter serves a function which is analogous to the catharsis experienced in tragedy.

**The structure of *Joseph Andrews*:** The four books are like four acts: 1) the ‘exposition’ and the 2) knot of the problem, the 3) ‘peripeteia’ or incidents, and the fourth (4) gives the *denouement*”<sup>81</sup>. Throughout the first chapters of the book, ‘the scene opens itself by small degrees,’ says the author. Fielding does it moderately and methodically. Fielding follows Cervantes’s *Don Quixote* (1605/1615): the novel’s structure is episodic as the adventures of the characters are scarcely bound together. Particularly important is the opening chapter of Book III, in which Fielding distinguishes the histories written by (politically biased) histo-

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<sup>79</sup> Martin C. Battestin, *A Henry Fielding Companion*, London: Greenwood Press, 2000, 247.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>81</sup> Andrew Wright, *Henry Fielding. Mask and Feast*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966, 59.

rians, whom he calls mere “Topographers or Chorographers”, from the fiction of his great model Cervantes, who gave us in *Don Quixote* the true and timeless “History of the World in general”<sup>82</sup>. Both *Joseph Andrews* and *Don Quixote* are tales of adventures along the road.

**The characters:** Henry Fielding wrote in the classical tradition: ‘I declare here once for all, I describe not Men, but Manners; not an Individual, but a Species. Perhaps it will be answered, Are not the Characters then taken from Life? To which I answer in the affirmative; nay, I believe I might aver, that I have writ little more than I have seen’<sup>83</sup>. Fielding’s characters are not real human beings, i.e. Fielding says that his characters are not representations of individuals “but a Species”; in other words, his characters are universal types, although they are taken ‘from life’<sup>84</sup>. This method of characterization is didactic. Mr. Adams and Joseph may be (partial) exceptions to this rule. The critic W. Allen notes: ‘yet the most splendid character in Joseph Andrews, indeed in all Fielding, is Parson Adams, and he is a creation of pure humour. Perhaps he owes something to Don Quixote, but he is every sense an original character, one of the archetypal characters in English fiction [...] Adams, with his absent-mindedness, his small pedantries and vanities, his naïve trust in human goodness, which is always being betrayed, is the heart of the novel’<sup>85</sup>

**The moral ideals:** in the lecture, the analysis of the moral ideals (of goodness) in *Joseph Andrews* draws on the philosophical ideas of

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<sup>82</sup> Henry Fielding, *Joseph Andrews*, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 2001, 126.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 128.

<sup>84</sup> Andrew Wright, *Henry Fielding. Mask and Feast*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966, 146.

<sup>85</sup> Walter Allen, *The English Novel*, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1963, 56.

British Moralists (the Cambridge Platonists<sup>86</sup> and Latitudinarians<sup>87</sup>), who in their sermons taught that man was capable of moral goodness and social charity, and altruism. They objected to Thomas Hobbes's view of human nature (man is evil by nature).

Of the British Moralists, the critic John K. Sheriff writes: 'Writers often referred to as British Moralists (the Cambridge Platonists, Anglican Latitudinarians, and certain lay moral philosophers) tried to integrate science and religion. They sought to establish a science of ethics, a moral creed whose authority rested on nature. They, for the most part, thought themselves to be confirming, not replacing Scripture. Deism, of course, was the position that reason alone, unaided by Scripture, was sufficient for a correct understanding of religion and morality. But the Cambridge Platonists and the Latitudinarians, though they talked much about natural morality and natural religion in their effort to show Christianity to be consistent with nature, never believed the doctrines of Christianity to be superfluous<sup>88</sup>.

To understand the ethical concerns of *Joseph Andrews* is essential to understand the Good-Natured Man as a character in the book and English literature of the period.

**Charity:** Fielding's moral and religious thought is grounded within the tradition of Christian humanism: it draws on the classical philoso-

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<sup>86</sup> Cambridge Platonists, group of 17th-century English philosophic and religious thinkers who hoped to reconcile Christian ethics with Renaissance humanism, religion with the new science, and faith with rationality. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Cambridge-Platonists>

<sup>87</sup> Latitudinarians were any of the 17th-century Anglican clerics whose beliefs and practices were viewed by conservatives as unorthodox or, at best, heterodox. After first being applied to the Cambridge Platonists, the term was later used to categorize churchmen who depended upon reason to establish the moral certainty of Christian doctrines rather than argument from tradition. Limiting that doctrine to what had to be accepted, they allowed for latitude on other teachings. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/latitudinarian>

<sup>88</sup> John K. Sheriff, *The Good-natured Man: The Evolution of a Moral Ideal, 1660-1800*, AL: University of Alabama, 1982, x.

phers of Greece and Rome (Aristotle and Plato, Cicero and Seneca); it also acknowledges the higher wisdom revealed in the New Testament. Fielding was influenced by Cambridge Platonists and Latitudinarians who spoke for the essential virtues of man, i.e. ‘charity with respect to others and chastity with respect to ourselves’<sup>89</sup>.

All the good-natured and good-humored characters in *Joseph Andrews* are inherently benevolent and charitable; they are endowed with what Cambridge Platonists and Latitudinarians called the quality of good-nature in man: in itself, good nature is not enough; ‘it must manifest itself in deeds, in the relief of the distressed and the promotion of their happiness’<sup>90</sup>: “‘Sir,” said Adams, “you can indulge yourself with many fine prospects of that kind.”--”I thank God I have a little,” replied the other, “with which I am content, and envy no man: I have a little, Mr Adams, with which I do as much good as I can.” Adams answered, “That riches without charity were nothing worth; for that they were a blessing only to him who made them a blessing to others.”--”You and I,” said Peter, “have different notions of charity. I own, as it is generally used, I do not like the word, nor do I think it becomes one of us gentlemen; it is a mean parson-like quality; though I would not infer many parsons have it neither.”--”Sir,” said Adams, “my definition of charity is, a generous disposition to relieve the distressed [..]’<sup>91</sup>. In Fielding’s view, charity has as a ‘profound implication for the individual who practices it’<sup>92</sup>. The maxim of St. James, ‘Faith without works is dead,’ was a text repeated in sermons by the Latitudinarian divines whom Fielding admired<sup>93</sup>. Parson Adams in *Joseph Andrews* says that

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<sup>89</sup> Martin C. Battestin, *A Henry Fielding Companion*, London: Greenwood Press, 2000.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 247.

<sup>91</sup> Henry Fielding, *Joseph Andrews*, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 2001, 191-92.

<sup>92</sup> Martin C. Battestin, *A Henry Fielding Companion*, London: Greenwood Press, 2000, 223.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

active social benevolence is true goodness; individual goodness is a contribution to the betterment of the condition of mankind.

**Clergy:** Fielding was convinced that the Christian religion was imperative to the moral health of society. Therefore, Fielding satirizes stingy and mean clergymen (Parson Trulliber who is more concerned with pigs than human souls), the good priests of the novel become, in what they do and say, Fielding's spokesmen<sup>94</sup>. Parson Adams, as W. Allen suggests, is the one who believes that 'Christianity is to be practiced as well as preached'<sup>95</sup>.

**Education:** education was one of the most important subjects to Fielding: *Joseph Andrews* satirizes the disregard the gentry has for the education of their children: their daughters, schooled in vanities but hardly able to read and write, and their sons: 'At the age of twenty his mother began to think she had not fulfilled the duty of a parent; she therefore resolved to persuade her son, if possible, to that which she imagined would well supply all that he might have learned at a public school or university--this is what they commonly call travelling; which, with the help of the tutor, who was fixed on to attend him, she easily succeeded in. He made in three years the tour of Europe, as they term it, and returned home well furnished with French clothes, phrases, and servants, with a hearty contempt for his own country; especially what had any savour of the plain spirit and honesty of our ancestors. His mother greatly applauded herself at his return [...]'<sup>96</sup>. Fielding insisted that education should serve for moral improvement<sup>97</sup>.

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<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 225-29.

<sup>95</sup> Walter Allen, *The English Novel*, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1963, 56.

<sup>96</sup> Henry Fielding, *Joseph Andrews*, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 2001, 168-169.

<sup>97</sup> Martin C. Battestin, *A Henry Fielding Companion*, London: Greenwood Press, 2000.

Henry Fielding's heroes epitomize the philosophical and religious climate of the age, especially the influence of Cambridge Platonists and Latitudinarians. Fielding wrote a modern epic. "The reader who comes to Fielding's fiction with some acquaintance already with the nineteenth-century novel may sometimes feel that he had read it before. In a sense he has. Fielding is the great original in English fiction, and, one way or another, more than half our novelists for more than a hundred years are packed away in him"<sup>98</sup>.

### **Questions to discuss:**

How powerful is sentimental ethics in the narrative in bringing about a change in attitude towards human nature?

Why does the Good-Natured Man usually appear in comic narratives? Why is the Good-Natured man usually a minor comic character (rustics, country bumpkins, etc.)?

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<sup>98</sup> Walter Allen, *The English Novel*, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1963, 67.

# Theme 4

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**Tobias (George) Smollett** (1721-1771) was a Scottish novelist, satirist, poet, and dramatist. ‘Smollett belonged to the glorious company of English hack-writers who have turned their hands to anything. Verse, drama, travel, political writing, a treatise on midwifery, translation – he translated Cervantes, Le Sage, and Voltaire – and a history of England in many volumes poured from his pen’<sup>99</sup>. Smollett’s (last) novel, *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* (1771) is an epistolary novel. It is a genre of fiction which first gained popularity in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; the epistolary novel is a form in which most or the entire plot is advanced by the letters or journal entries of one or more of its characters<sup>100</sup>. As the epistolary novel relies on the subjective point of view, it offers proximity to the characters’ internal perspective without any authorial interference. In Mikhail M. Bakhtin’s words, the seventeenth and the eighteenth century epistolary novel ‘had a great stylistic significance for the subsequent history of the novel’ and representations of consciousness<sup>101</sup>.

The eighteenth century culture was, among many other things, a culture of letter-writing; letters were an essential part not only of daily life but also travel writing<sup>102</sup>. Letters infer a geographical distance between writer (addresser) and recipient (addressee) as ‘the letter writer

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<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> Joe Bray, *The Epistolary Novel. Representations of Consciousness*, London and New York: Routledge, 2003, 1-3.

<sup>102</sup> For more: Clare Brant, *Eighteenth-Century Letters and British Culture*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.

is always travelling, explicitly through time and either explicitly or implicitly across space<sup>103</sup>. The correspondence between letter-writer and addressee tests their identity, i.e. letters were a medium that allowed writer and reader redefine the borders of the self. Letters also empowered letter-writers – travelers to renegotiate the outward and the inward, public and private<sup>104</sup>.

In *Humphry Clinker*, through their letters the characters provide different points of view of their travels (a tour of England and Scotland) and of each other. We learn about the personality of each letter-writer directly through what they say, but also through what the other writers (addressees) say about him or her. We also learn about those who are absent, i.e. their correspondents. We learn about them through their – hypothetical – letters. Hypothetical letters, as a form or elliptical presentation of reality, appeals to the imagination of the reader: the reader is forced to reconstruct the elements that he is not directly given, to understand what is implicated. To all this, Walter Allen adds saying that *Humphry Clinker* ‘recounts a tour of England and Scotland in the form of letters; but the letters are used in a way quite different from that of Richardson. They aim at a direct revelation of character – or in most instances of caricature – but they also serve to show a single incident, a place, a person from different and conflicting points of view’<sup>105</sup>.

**Epistolary travel writing and national character:** *Humphry Clinker* is engaged in an epistolary form of travel writing: the traveler writes letters to correspondents back home. Epistolary travel writing provides a detailed account of the topography of the journey, it also reflects on the customs of the places visited; and provides observations on the

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<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 213.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>105</sup> Walter Allen, *The English Novel*, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1963, 73.

different aspects of character, both individual and national. Smollett draws on the philosophy of David Hume (1711-1776) who, in *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1748), says that humanity is made of 'the diversity of characters, prejudices, and opinions' evident in the world<sup>106</sup>. In *Humphry Clinker*, national character is given thoughtful reflection in the Scottish leg (aspect) of Bramble's tour: it serves to outline the differences within Great Britain itself. The Scots, as Jery observes, 'are far from being servile imitators of our modes and fashionable vices. All their customs and regulations of public and private economy, of business and diversion, are in their own stile. This remarkably predominates in their looks, their dress and manner, their music, and even their cookery. Our 'squire declares, that he knows not another people upon earth, so strongly marked with a national character'<sup>107</sup>.

The characters in the book observe the (individual) character of the characters they travel with: in his letters to his friend in Oxford, Jery Melford creates the verbal portraits of what he repeatedly calls 'originals', including Sir Ulic Mackilligut and his half-blind, half-lame dancing master. Of Squire Bramble himself, Jery writes: 'Mr. Bramble's character ... opens and improves upon me every day. — His singularities afford a rich mine of entertainment; his understanding, so far as I can judge, is well cultivated; his observations on life are equally just, pertinent, and uncommon. He affects misanthropy, in order to conceal the sensibility of a heart which is tender, even to a degree of weakness'<sup>108</sup>.

**Characters:** Smollett's 'original genius' in sketching character has been acknowledged: 'Many of the characters are drawn with a free but

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<sup>106</sup> David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1977.

<sup>107</sup> T.G.Smollett, *The Expedition of Humphrey Clinker*, London: Penguin Books, 2008, 248.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

a masterly hand; in some particulars perhaps they are exaggerated, but are not therefore the less entertaining or instructive: Some appear to be pictures of particular persons, but others of human nature, represented indeed in individuals peculiarly distinguished, but drawn from imagination rather than life ... In this part of the work consists its principal excellence, and its principal defect is the want of events'<sup>109</sup>. Indeed, *Humphry Clinker* is a novel about character (the book has got about 233 characters); action in it is subordinated to character: the action of the plot is episodic, interrupted by accidents, detours, flashbacks, and interpolations.

### Public spaces

The group visits cities and towns: Bath, London, and Edinburgh, etc. Smollett sees them as the urban spaces of filth. At the same time, thematically, Smollett extends those urban spaces beyond the city, i.e. he extends them into to diverse forms of social and political discourse:

‘Now, mark the contrast at London--I am pent up in frowzy lodgings, where there is not room enough to swing a cat; and I breathe the steams of endless putrefaction; and these would, undoubtedly, produce a pestilence, if they were not qualified by the gross acid of sea-coal, which is itself a pernicious nuisance to lungs of any delicacy of texture: but even this boasted corrector cannot prevent those languid, sallow looks, that distinguish the inhabitants of London from those ruddy, swains that lead a country-life-I go to bed after mid-night, jaded and restless from the dissipations of the day--I start every hour from my sleep, at the horrid noise of the watchmen bawling the hour through every street, and thundering at

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<sup>109</sup> Lionel Kelly (ed.), *Tobias Smollett. The Critical Heritage*, London, New York: Routledge, 2005, 206.

every door; a set of useless fellows, who serve no other purpose but that of disturbing the repose of the inhabitants; and by five o'clock I start out of bed, in consequence of the still more dreadful alarm made by the country carts, and noisy rustics bellowing green peas under my window. If I would drink water, I must quaff the maukish contents of an open aqueduct, exposed to all manner of defilement; or swallow that which comes from the river Thames, impregnated with all the filth of London and Westminster--Human excrement is the least offensive part of the concrete, which is composed of all the drugs, minerals, and poisons, used in mechanics and manufacture, enriched with the putrefying carcasses of beasts and men; and mixed with the scourings of all the wash-tubs, kennels, and common sewers, within the bills of mortality' <sup>110</sup>.

Although T.G.Smollett sees urban spaces as the spaces of (scatological) filth (it is by some critics defined as inclusive realism), Smollett does raise "the contemporary city" (London, Edinburgh, Bath) to the level of a major theme in literature: he closely examines the intricate economies of the cities that he visits: while in Bath, he scrutinizes the dynamics of its public places: 'You must know, I find nothing but disappointment at Bath; which is so altered, that I can scarce believe it is the same place that I frequented about thirty years ago. [...] --But, I believe, you will not deny, that this place, which Nature and Providence seem to have intended as a resource from distemper and disquiet, is become the very center of racket and dissipation. Instead of that peace, tranquillity and ease, so necessary to those who labour under bad health, weak nerves, and irregular spirits; here we have nothing but noise, tumult, and hurry; with the fatigue and slavery of maintaining a ceremonial, more stiff, formal, and oppressive, than the etiquette of a German elec-

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<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 135.

tor. A national hospital it may be; but one would imagine, that none but lunatics are admitted'<sup>111</sup>; whereas Lydia Melford, his niece, draws a completely different contour of the city:

'Bath is to me a new world--All is gayety, good-humour, and diversion. The eye is continually entertained with the splendour of dress and equipage; and the ear with the sound of coaches, chaises, chairs, and other carriages. The merry bells ring round, from morn till night. Then we are welcomed by the city-waits in our own lodgings: we have musick in the Pump-room every morning, cotillions every fore-noon in the rooms, balls twice a week, and concerts every other night, besides private assemblies and parties without number'<sup>112</sup>

The Enlightenment discourse is firstly a public discourse, i.e. the advent of public discourse was defined by historical context. According to Jürgen Habermas, 'capitalist relations' brought a flow of 'traffic in commodities and news'. With this phase came an explosion of social spaces for public dialogue and information exchange: 'Around the middle of the seventeenth century', states Habermas, 'not only tea—first to be popular—but also chocolate and coffee had become the common beverages of at least the well-to-do strata of the population, the coachman of a Levantine merchant opened the first coffee house. By the first decade of the eighteenth century London already had 3,000 of them, each with a core group of regulars'<sup>113</sup>.

In *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1962), Jürgen Habermas developed the concept of the public sphere (*Öffentlichkeit*), which emerged in the eighteenth century in Europe; the public sphere was a democratic space of critical discussion; it was outside of the con-

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<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>113</sup> Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: the MIT Press, 1991, 32.

trol by the state, where ‘individuals exchanged views and knowledge’<sup>114</sup>. Habermas argues that prior to the eighteenth century European culture had been dominated by a ‘representational’ culture. In Habermas’s view, the growth in newspapers (*The Times* 1785; *The Sunday Times* 1821), journals, reading clubs, and coffee-houses in eighteenth century Europe marked the gradual replacement of ‘representational’ culture with *Öffentlichkeit* culture<sup>115</sup>. In one of her letters, Lydia Melford speaks about such public places in Bath: ‘Hard by the Pump-room, is a coffee-house for the ladies; but my aunt says, young girls are not admitted, inasmuch as the conversation turns upon politics, scandal, philosophy, and other subjects above our capacity; but we are allowed to accompany them to the booksellers shops, which are charming places of resort; where we read novels, plays, pamphlets, and news-papers, for so small a subscription as a crown a quarter; and in these offices of intelligence, (as my brother calls them) all the reports of the day, and all the private transactions of the Bath, are first entered and discussed’ and toy-men; and commonly stop at Mr. Gill’s the pastry-cook, to take a jelly, a tart, or a small bason of vermicelli. There is, moreover, another place of entertainment on the other side of the water, opposite to the Grove; to which the company cross over in a boat--It is called Spring Garden [..]’<sup>116</sup>. Public discourse brought people together, consolidating the diverse community.

### **Capitalism and self-sufficiency, the city and the country:**

During the first half of the eighteenth century, new commodities in the form of oriental produce (sugar, rum, tea, chocolate, and coffee, etc.) entered England. Their arrival was followed by the anxiety of

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<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

otherness: they challenged England's idea of itself as a homogeneous society. Such imports undermined England's claim to national self-sufficiency, especially during the period in which *Humphry Clinker* was written: 'Between 1765 and 1774 homegrown supplies [of food] were insufficient to meet the needs of a growing population'<sup>117</sup>. The problem of how to assimilate, or acculturate, other cultures was driven into a problem of consumption: 'to avoid becoming the other, one must simply avoid eating the other'<sup>118</sup>. *Humphry Clinker* holds on to an ideal of cultural self-sufficiency as it comes in the form of "pure" English food. Syntactically, Bramble's reiteration of possession—'my veal ... my salads ... my desert ... my pigs'—reinforces domesticity as a refuge from the Other which comes in many forms:

'Shall I state the difference between my town grievances, and my country comforts? At Brambleton-hall, I have elbow-room within doors, and breathe a clear, elastic, salutary air--I enjoy refreshing sleep, which is never disturbed by horrid noise, nor interrupted, but in a-morning, by the sweet twitter of the martlet at my window --I drink the virgin lymph, pure and crystalline as it gushes from the rock, or the sparkling beverage, home-brewed from malt of my own making; or I indulge with cyder, which my own orchard affords; or with claret of the best growth, imported for my own use, by a correspondent on whose integrity I can depend; my bread is sweet and nourishing, made from my own wheat, ground in my own mill, and baked in my own oven; my table is, in a great measure, furnished from my own ground; [..]'<sup>119</sup>.

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<sup>117</sup> Charlotte Sussman, *Consuming Anxieties: Consumer Protest, Gender and British Slavery*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>119</sup> T.G.Smollett, *The Expedition of Humphrey Clinker*, London: Penguin Books, 2008, 133.

**The journey narrative and healing:** As an epistolary travel novel, *Humphry Clinker* adds a new – healing – aspect to the journey (road) narrative of the eighteenth century English literature: Mr. Bramble thinks he feels ill, therefore, his doctor orders him to take a tour for his health. The healing aspect of the journey is reflected on through the theme of mind and body, a theme which is examined through the relationship between a physician and a patient, between Dr. Lewis and the hypochondriacal Matthew Bramble: ‘THE pills are good for nothing--I might as well swallow snowballs to cool my reins --I have told you over and over, how hard I am to move; [///] Prithee send me another prescription--I am as lame and as much tortured in all my limbs as if I was broke upon the wheel: indeed, I am equally distressed in mind and body—’<sup>120</sup>.

In the book, an individual’s physical and moral health is the physical and moral health of the state as the *social body*, which is diseased and in need of a cure. Bramble is an acute observer of social evils, he is emotionally indignant over them. Smollett’s clearly voices his political assessment of the abuse of the liberty of the press, the menace of an unthinking mob, etc.: ‘As for *the liberty of the press*, like every other privilege, it must be restrained within certain bounds; for if it is carried to a breach of law, religion, and charity, it becomes one of the greatest evils that ever annoyed the community. If the lowest ruffian may stab your good-name with impunity in England, will you be so uncandid as to exclaim against Italy for the practice of common assassination? To what purpose is our property secured, if our moral character is left defenseless? People thus baited, grow desperate; and the despair of being able to preserve one’s character, untainted by such vermin, produces a total neglect of fame; so that one of the chief incitements to the practice of virtue is effectually destroyed’<sup>121</sup>.

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<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 118.

Overall, the fictional epistolary travel form enabled Smollett to engage his reader in the polemics on such subjects as moral observation, the description of customs and manners, and reflections on human nature, and (national) ‘character’. *Humphry Clinker* deals with social, economic, and political history of the specific topographical settings (Bath, London, Edinburgh, and the Scottish Highlands) described in the letters of Mr. Bramble, Jerry Melford, and others in the family expedition of Welsh tourists. On one level, *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* presents its readers with one family, including the tatterdemalion Humphry Clinker himself; on the other hand, it provides an eighteenth-century portrait of England as a ‘body politic’, which, as the narrative implicates, is in need of a cure.

### **Questions to discuss:**

If travel puts identity both in motion and question, how are letter-writing, travel and identity related?

What did travelers’ letters show? How did they test/contextualize/confirm prejudice and the established normativity?

How does writing letters order the experience of the traveler?

How did letter-writers stimulate political and religious debate?

# Theme 5

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**Laurence Stern** (1713 –1768) was an Irish-born English novelist and humorist. He believed in the innate goodness of man, and was concerned with ‘instinctive and emotional reactions of his fellow men rather than their intellectual pretensions’<sup>122</sup>.

**(Literary/ philosophical) sentimentalism: political context:** Sentimentalism entered British literature at a time when European colonial dominions were expanding across the globe<sup>123</sup>. Why did sentimentalism enter British literature just when Europeans were building colonial empires? Why did sentimentalism become the mode of writing at the time? Sentimental writing is a response to colonial expansion; it is a response to the emergence of the relation between the self-possessed individual and the dispossessed slave<sup>124</sup>. The sentimental heroes are ‘anti-conquest heroes’ (Yorick, Primroses), they defend traditional hierarchies, idealize patriarchy<sup>125</sup>.

**Literary/Philosophical/ historical context:** Sentimentalism, as it entered a literary and ethical-philosophical discourse, presented an un-

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<sup>122</sup> W.B.C. Watkins, *Perilous Balance*, Cambridge: Princeton University Press, 1939.

<sup>123</sup> “Slave trade flourished: the British alone transported more than 3.4 million slaves from Africa to the Americas between 1662 and 1807. By 1800, Europeans controlled more than 35 percent of the total land area of the globe; by 1815, the British empire embraced one-fifth of the earth’s inhabitants” (Lynn Festa, *Sentimental Figures of Empire in Eighteenth Century Britain and France*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006, 3.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*

derstanding of human nature which gave primacy to feeling over thinking, sentiment over reason. ‘Sentiment’ is a ‘feeling which gives rise to approval or disapproval based upon the judger’s perception of the morally significant features of an object of evaluation’<sup>126</sup>. Literary historians agree on that the British Moralists (Anglican Latitudinarians, the Cambridge Platonists) and the moral philosophy of David Hume (1711-1776) served as the foundation for sentimentalism in literature. Hume claimed that moral judgments must never be based on reason alone. Reason deals with facts and draws conclusions from them, but reason cannot lead us to choose one option over the other; only our sentiments can do this, according to Hume. Hume writes that morality is determined by sentiment<sup>127</sup>: it is through our sentiments—our sentiments are our feelings of approval and disapproval – that we know moral truths<sup>128</sup>. Historically, sentimentalism was a response to both Thomas Hobbes’s philosophy of egoism (morality is based on self-interest) and Moral Rationalism (morality is based on reason alone)<sup>129</sup>. Sentimentalists held that human condition is not confined to reason alone, reason is not something that has the power to motivate our moral actions (Anthony Ashley Cooper, the Third Earl of Shaftesbury)<sup>130</sup>.

**The sentimental novel:** Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s philosophy of the natural goodness of man and Samuel Richardson’s sentimental novel *Pamela* (1740) nourished the birth of the sentimental novel. The sen-

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<sup>126</sup> Julia Driver, “Moral Sense and Sentimentalism”, in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Ethics*, ed. Roger Crisp, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013, 359.

<sup>127</sup> David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, Indiana: Hackett Publishing Company, 1983.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>129</sup> Julia Driver, “Moral Sense and Sentimentalism”, in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Ethics*, ed. Roger Crisp, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*

timental novel speaks for the belief in the innate goodness of man, but sentimentalism does not say that man is by nature good. What the Man of Sensibility aspires to discover is good nature in himself and others; the Man of Sensibility thinks that the outward expression of emotion is proof of his good nature ('I sat down close by her; and Maria let me wipe them away as they fell with my handkerchief.– I then steep'd it in my own – and then in hers – and then in mine – and then I wiped hers again – and as I did it, I felt such undescribable emotions within me, as I am sure could not be accounted for from any combinations of matter and motion' <sup>131</sup>). Sentimentalism in the eighteenth century had a pejorative connotation.

**Historical context:** Laurence Sterne's novel *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy* consists of various episodes of a journey by Mr. Yorick, a clergyman who travels through France. Journeys through France and Italy (the so-called "Grand Tour") were commonplace in the upper class between the middle of the seventeenth century and the middle of the nineteenth century. Foreign travel was viewed as a prerequisite to complete the education of an English gentleman.

**The structure:** The book consists of the episodes of a journey that Mr. Yorick takes through France (and Italy). In the book, the order of events is unpredictable; its unpredictability lies in the unpredictability of feeling. Place names head many of the sections of the novel:

### **The Monk-Calais**

"I HAD scarce uttered the words, when a poor monk of the order of St. Francis came into the room to beg something for his convent. [..]

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<sup>131</sup> Laurence Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey and Other Writings*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, 95.

The moment I cast my eyes upon him, I was predetermined not to give him a single sou; and accordingly I put my purse into my pocket -- button'd it up --set myself a little more upon my center, and advanced up gravely to him: [...]

-- He was certainly sixty-five; and the general air of his countenance, notwithstanding some thing seem'd to have been planting wrinkles in it before their time, agreed to the account. [...]<sup>132</sup>.

### The Wig-Paris

“WHEN the barber came, he absolutely refused to have any thing to do with my wig: ‘t was either above or below his art: I had nothing to do, but to take one ready made of his own recommendation.

-- But I fear, friend! said I, this buckle won’t stand. -- You may immerge it, replied he, into the ocean, and it will stand – [...]<sup>133</sup>.

This novel’s focus on (seemingly nonsensical) details reveals more about the character of the French than the accounts of traditional travel writers. Defamiliarization as the narrative strategy in the book subverts the reader’s expectations, and agitates and captivates his imagination. Therefore, the narrative of the novel is a journey through Sterne’s mind, as Woolf put it, rather than through the historical France. In her essay called *The ‘Sentimental Journey’* (1928), Virginia Woolf writes:

‘He has no valuable information to give, no reasoned philosophy to impart. He left London, he tells us, “with so much precipitancy that it never enter’d my mind that we were at war with France”. He has nothing to say of pictures or churches or the misery or well-being of the countryside. He was travelling in France indeed, but

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<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 4-6.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 41-42.

the road was often through his own mind, and his chief adventures were not with brigands [brigands] and precipices but with the emotions of his own heart.

.He is after all telling a story, pursuing a journey, however arbitrary and zigzag his methods. [...] His choice is capricious and individual, but no realist could be more brilliantly successful in rendering the impression of the moment. *A Sentimental Journey* is a succession of portraits—the Monk, the lady, the girl in the bookshop—it is a succession of scenes. And though the flight of this erratic mind is as zigzag as a dragon-fly's, one cannot deny that this dragon-fly has some method in its flight, and chooses the flowers not at random but for some exquisite harmony or for some brilliant discord. We laugh, cry, sneer, sympathize by turns. We change from one emotion to its opposite in the twinkling of an eye. [...] Thus in *A Sentimental Journey* we are never allowed to forget that Sterne is above all things sensitive, sympathetic, humane; that above all things he prizes the decencies, the simplicities of the human heart.

[...] Indeed *A Sentimental Journey* is based upon something fundamentally philosophic. It is true that it is a philosophy that was much out of fashion in the Victorian age—the philosophy of pleasure; [...]

One must pirouette about the world, peeping and peering, enjoying a flirtation here, bestowing a few coppers there, and sitting in whatever little patch of sunshine one can find. One must crack a joke, even if the joke is not altogether a decent one. Even in daily life one must not forget to cry “Hail ye, small, sweet courtesies of life, for smooth do ye make the road of it!” One must—but enough of must; it is not a word that Sterne was fond of using<sup>134</sup>.

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<sup>134</sup> Virginia Woolf, *The Second Common Reader*, New York, London: A Harvest Book, 1986, 78-86.

**Narrative technique:** As the critic Walter Allen writes, Sterne ‘was writing in accord with Locke’s theory that the association of ideas in the mind was an irrational process [...] Indeed, he uses the theory with a very definite end. Some of the feelings aroused by the flux of ideas are better, more worth having, than others; for him, the moments to be seized and dwelt upon were those that were charged with the comic, the pathetic, and the sentimental. The valuable moments are those that isolate oddity – the foibles, hobby-horses, idiosyncrasies of behaviour of his characters – and pathos’<sup>135</sup>.

**Intertext:** Yorick is the King’s jester in William Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* (1599-1602). Exhumed by the gravedigger, the sight of Yorick’s skull evokes Hamlet’s monologue on mortality: ‘Alas, poor Yorick! I knew him, Horatio; a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy; he hath borne me on his back a thousand times; and now, how abhorred in my imagination it is! My gorge rises at it. Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now, your gambols, your songs, your flashes of merriment that were wont to set the table on a roar?’ (*Hamlet*, Act V, Scene I)<sup>136</sup>.

**The character:** The further part of the lecture discusses the character of Yorick as man of sentiment: a figure that becomes ‘heroic’ because of the depth of feeling rather than through a courageous deed on the battlefield. Through the character of York, Sterne explores the mechanism of the self, with all its benevolence (Cambridge Platonists) and also with all its appetites and vanities—the mechanism described by Thomas Hobbes in *Leviathan*.

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<sup>135</sup> Walter Allen, *The English Novel*, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1963, 79.

<sup>136</sup> Williams Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, London: Collins Classics, 2011.

**Sexuality:** Sterne thought that it is our sexual nature that ‘makes us come out of our caverns and hiding-places.’ Yorick is a ‘connoisseur’ of women because he believes that ‘*Eros* is the instrument of charity and fellow-feeling.’ As Yorick later explains, it is the hearts of women, not the *Palais Royal* or the Louvre, are the temples he ‘would rather enter in.’ ‘But if the Sentimental Traveler begins in sexual desire, its goal is something finer and more generous: eventually, his sexual Epicureanism is transmuted into disinterested benevolence’ (the episode with Maria of Moulines).

Sterne thought that it is through feelings that we get out of the self (‘I can’t get out—I can’t get out’). Sterne thought of the feelings as the revelations of the divine: ‘Eternal fountain of our feelings!--’tis here I trace thee--and this is thy *divinity which stirs within me*. . . All comes from thee, great--great Sensorium of the world! which vibrates if a hair of our heads but falls upon the ground in the remotest desert of thy creation<sup>137</sup>.

### **Questions to discuss:**

How does the writer match his sentimentality with the offensiveness of indecency?

How does emotional responsiveness partake in the instruction of moral behaviour in Sterne’s *Sentimental Journey*?

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The eighteenth century is the century of the ‘pre-history’ of the novel and diverse travel narratives. These narratives – as they would come out disguised under different names (‘histories,’ ‘true histories,’ ‘expe-

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<sup>137</sup> Laurence Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey and Other Writings*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, 98.

ditions, etc.) – would blend fact and fiction. Through the ambiguous (artistic) presentation of a (historical) fact and fiction – through their epistemological and generic borders – these narratives not only used but also critiqued early modern historiographical practice.

Throughout this course, we have read various fictional journey narratives: some were the narratives in search of either *adventure* or need to reach home eventually (*Robinson Crusoe*, *Gulliver's Travels*, *Joseph Andrews*), others were the journeys taken as they were prescribed by the doctor for the purpose of the patient's health (*Humphry Clinker*), yet others – in search of desire and feeling (*Sentimental Journey*).

The eighteenth century novel is a rich map of the genre: it has acts of spiritual biography and biblical allegory (*Robinson Crusoe*); it also has testimonies of the novel of adventure, a satire, a political and moral allegory, utopia and dystopia (*Gulliver's Travels*). *Gulliver's Travels* is also an imitation of travel books. It also saw the entrance of the comic epic poem in prose as a composite of genres in *Joseph Andrews*: as Henry Fielding wrote in “The Preface”, it contains ‘five out of six features of the classical epic, namely fable, action, characters, sentiments and diction, and is deficient in metre only’<sup>138</sup>. *Joseph Andrews* celebrates a picaresque novel, and a burlesque romance. Digressions are a powerful narrative agency in *A Sentimental Journey*. *Humphry Clinker*, as an epistolary novel, written in the form of letters, is an early sign of the arrival of the stream of consciousness novel of the twentieth century. As Blanton notes, the purpose of the travelers was ‘to introduce us to the other’, and to ‘dramatize an engagement between the self and the world’<sup>139</sup>. At times, this form of engagement is problematic as the other threatens the self in its identity.

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<sup>138</sup> Henry Fielding, *Joseph Andrews*, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 2001, ix-xiv.

<sup>139</sup> Casey Blanton, *Travel Writing: The Self and the World*, New York and London: Twayne Publishers, 1997, xi.

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## **English Literary History of the Eighteenth Century**

### **Part I** .....

Mokymo priemonė studentams  
(Paskaitų konspektas)