

REV-00

SELF-LEARNING MATERIAL



MA ENGLISH

MEN 203 : ENGLISH PROSE

w.e.f Academic Session: 2024-25



CENTRE FOR DISTANCE AND ONLINE EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY MEGHALAYA

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Accredited 'A' Grade by NAAC

Techno City, 9th Mile, Baridua, Ri-Bhoi, Meghalaya, 793101

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Master of Arts in English (MEN)

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UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY MEGHALAYA

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COURSE INFORMATION

This is the third paper of MA English Second Semester. In this paper learners will be able to learn about the English prose writers. They will also be introduced to different essay styles and the society of that time. The essays will also showcase its types and how it evolved and flourished during its time.

Unit 1 deals with **Francis Bacon** (1561-1626) who was an English philosopher, statesman, and scientist. He is known for developing the empirical method and laying the groundwork for modern scientific inquiry. Bacon's work emphasized observation, experimentation, and the systematic collection of data, which became foundational to the scientific method. It also will deal with **Michel de Montaigne** (1533-1592) who was a French philosopher and writer, best known for popularizing the essay as a literary form. His works explore human nature, skepticism, and self-reflection. Montaigne's essays delve into his personal thoughts and experiences, often questioning the certainty of knowledge and the nature of truth.

Unit 2 will make the learners learn about **Joseph Addison and Richard Steele** were influential English writers and essayists in the early 18th century. They co-founded **The Spectator** in 1711, a periodical that played a key role in shaping public opinion and the development of English prose. Addison was known for his refined and moralistic style, while Steele brought a more lively and conversational tone. Together, they contributed significantly to the rise of modern journalism and the essay as a literary form.

Unit 3 deals with **William Hazlitt and Charles Lamb** who were prominent English essayists and literary figures of the early 19th century. Hazlitt was known for his passionate and insightful essays on literature, art, and human nature, often focusing on the complexities of human emotions and experiences. Charles Lamb, a close friend of Hazlitt, was celebrated for his warm, personal essays and his humorous, nostalgic reflections on life. Lamb is also known for his collaboration with his sister, Mary Lamb, on the famous retellings of Shakespeare's plays in **Tales from Shakespeare**. Both writers were central to the Romantic literary movement and contributed significantly to English literature.

Unit 4 deals with **George Orwell**, the pen name of Eric Arthur Blair, was a British writer and journalist known for his sharp critiques of totalitarianism, social injustice, and the misuse of power. His most famous works include **1984**, a dystopian novel depicting a future under oppressive government surveillance, and **Animal Farm**, an allegorical novella critiquing the corruption of socialist ideals. Orwell's writing is characterized by its clear prose, political engagement, and advocacy for democratic socialism. His works have had a lasting impact on political thought and literature.

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UNIT 1.1 FRANCIS BACON: “OF TRAVEL” AND “OF TRUTH”

Unit Structure

- 1.1.1 Learning Objectives
- 1.1.2 Introduction: What is an Essay?
- 1.1.3 The English Essay: A Historical Perspective
- 1.1.4 Francis Bacon: A Biographical Note
- 1.1.5 An Introduction to “Of Travel” and “Of Truth”
- 1.1.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 1.1.7 Further Reading
- 1.1.8 Answers to check your progress
- 1.1.9 Model Questions

1.1.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After a careful reading of this unit, you will be able to:

- define the essay as a literary form
- trace its origins and growth
- analyze Bacon's essays “Of Travel” and “Of Truth” with regard to its theme and prose style

1.1.2 INTRODUCTION

In this Unit, we shall first discuss the form of the essay and then give you a note on its history with special reference to its growth and development in England. Our focus will then shift to Bacon's essay “Of Travel” and “Of Truth”. A short biographical note on the author and an introduction precede the actual essay and a glossary succeeds it. After you have read the essay, we briefly discuss its theme and style. We shall also give you some exposure to writing explanations of passages from the essay. We have prepared some exercises for you. Please complete these before moving on to the answers provided by us at the end of the unit. You must have read many articles in the daily newspapers and found that they are prose compositions usually written on single subjects. The word 'essay' comes from the French word *essai* (first

used by the French writer Michel de Montaigne for his *Essais*, published in 1580), which means 'to attempt' or 'to try out'. This suggests that an essay is an individual's attempt to look at his/her subject in a personal way. Samuel Johnson (1709-1784) called an essay "a loose sally of the mind.. . not a regular and orderly performance". The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) defines it as 'a composition more or less elaborate in style, though limited in range'. Both definitions differ from each other. What is loose, irregular and disorderly for Johnson, is minutely worked out and highly developed for the OED. The latter definition, moreover, gives us some idea about the length of an essay but Johnson's definition does not. The essay is usually short and compact but it can, occasionally, also be of book length, like "Essay on the Human Understanding" written by John Locke (1632-1794). As stated above, essays are prose compositions. However, some have also been written in verse like "Essay on Criticism" (1711) and "Essay on Man" (1732-4), written by the English poet Alexander Pope (1688-1744). The essay is, thus, difficult to define as it is one of the most flexible and adaptable of literary genres. It can loosely be described as a composition, usually in prose, that attempts to discuss a subject. A further dimension was added by the nineteenth century English writer, Matthew Arnold (1822-1888), who said that an essayist humanizes knowledge, i.e; presents it in familiar terms, divesting it of all that is harsh, uncouth, abstract, exclusive, etc., so that it is of common interest, and is written in a style that appeals to us. Hence, we can conclude that an essay, as a literary form, is a short prose composition, treating a subject in a general manner, so that it can be of interest to many readers. Essays can be written in formal as well as in informal style, depending on the purpose they are meant to achieve. A formal essay tends to be serious in tone, objective in presentation, more expository in nature, giving the reader new perspectives on the subject, and even persuading him to a particular point of view. The informal essay, on the other hand, is written in a lighter vein, reading more like a conversation, affording pleasure in its reading, or at times, amusing the reader if the tone adopted by the essayist is humorous or even sarcastic. Of the three essays included for your study in this Block, Francis Bacon's "Of Great Place" is an example of a brief, formal and objective essay; "On Seeing England For The First Time" by Jamaica Kincaid illustrates both Doctor Johnson's definition of the essay being "a loose sally of the mind and the OED definition of it being 'limited in range'; Charles Lamb's essay "A Dissertation upon A Roast Pig" is a good example of an informal essay. Its style is conversational, subjective and humorous. While reading each essay, it will be helpful if you keep in mind its theme and style and relate it to the author's life and times.

1.1.3 THE ENGLISH ESSAY : A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The essay began with Montaigne (1533-1592) in France and with Francis Bacon (1561-1626) in England. Bacon is credited with giving the English essay the status of a literary art. Since

Bacon, the essay, as literary prose, has been used for a variety of purposes by seventeenth century writers like Abraham Cowley (1618- 1667), John Dryden (1631 - 1700), Daniel Defoe (1660-1731) and others. Alexander Pope (1688-1744), as mentioned earlier, added a new dimension to essay-writing by using verse to write his "Essay on Criticism" and "Essay on Man." The eighteenth century also saw the rise of the periodical essay of which the chief exponents were Richard Steele (1672- 1729) and Joseph Addison (1672-1719), who published their essays in their periodicals or magazines *The Tatler* (published by Steele) and *The Spectator* (published by Addison). Their essays hold a mirror to the eighteenth century social and political life of England, dealing with subjects like fashions of the day, superstitions, rural and urban manners, political rivalries etc. The English essay really came into its own in the early nineteenth century with the Romantic Revival in English Literature. As in romantic poetry, so also in the essay the individual became the measure of all things and there appeared a group of essayists such as William Hazlitt (1778-1830), Charles Lamb (1775-1834) and Thomas de Quincey (1785-1859), who are termed as personal essayists. The word 'personal' here may appear repetitive since the essay, by definition, is personal in character as stated earlier. But whereas in the eighteenth century, the essay became a vehicle of social, political, literary and cultural criticism, in the early nineteenth century, in the hands of the personal essayists, it became a record of the essayist's personal emotions and feelings and, sometimes, even his whims and fancies. Because of the quality of freshness in them, we still enjoy reading the personal essays of Hazlitt such as "On Going on a Journey" and "The Fight"; Lamb's "A Dissertation upon Roast Pig" and "Dream Children"; and de Quincey's "Confessions of an English Opium Eater" and "The English Mail Coach", to mention only a few of their many essays. Some other outstanding essayists of the early and late nineteenth century like S.T. Coleridge (1772-1834), Thomas Carlyle (1795- 1881), John Ruskin (1819-1900), Matthew Arnold (1822- 1888) and R.L. Stevenson (1850-1896), chose to employ the genre to write formal and objective pieces on literature, aesthetics, philosophy and history rather than for writing personal essays. The essay may not be as popular or dominant a literary form of expression today as it was in the early eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries, yet it has become indispensable to our times largely because of the extensive growth of knowledge and that of magazines, periodicals and newspapers. Twentieth century essayists like A.G. Gardiner (1865-1946), G.K. Chesterton (1874- 1936) and Robert Lynd (1879-1949) have delighted us with many of their instructive and entertaining essays such as "The Rule of the Road", "On Running After One's Hat" and "Forgetting", respectively, to mention one each of their many memorable essays. The great names of the twentieth century who have changed the essay into a highly organized and perfected literary form for presenting their points of view and arguments cogently and systematically, are Hilaire Belloc (1870- 1953), Lytton Strachey (1880- 1932), E.M. Forster (1879- 1970), D.H. Lawrence (1885-1930), T.S. Eliot

(1888- Non-Fictional Prose. Essays, Letters, Travelogues .I: 1965), Aldous Huxley (1894- 1964), George Orwell (1903- 1950) and Bertrand Russell (1872- 1969). The list of names is endless, but to know what an essay is and how it grew, and to enjoy its different flavours, it is best to read as many essays as you can from different periods.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- a. What is an essay?
- b. Name the chief exponents of the periodical essay.
- c. Who are the major personal essayists of the nineteenth century and why are they termed as such?
- d. Name four outstanding essayists of the twentieth century.

1.1.4 FRANCIS BACON: A BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Francis Bacon (1561-1626), the father of the English essay, was also one of the pioneers of modern philosophy and modern science. Born into an affluent family, Bacon studied law and took it up as his profession, making rapid progress in it. When twenty-three, he turned his thoughts to Parliament and entered it in 1584. Knighted in 1603, Bacon held many prominent offices in his public career. He became Solicitor-General in 1607, Attorney-General in 1613, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal in 1617, and, finally, Lord Chancellor of England in 1618. Within six months, he was elevated to nobility as Baron Verulam, and was made Viscount St. Albans in 1621. However, Bacon's career as Lord Chancellor came under a cloud with charges of bribery and corruption against him, leading to his removal from the post. Bacon died in 1626, five years after his disgrace and retirement from public life. Despite facing reverses in his public career, Bacon's literary career remained splendid and uninterrupted. His best known works on science and philosophy are: *Advancement of Learning* (1605), *Novum Organum* (1620), and *De Augmentis* (1623). He is also known for his *History of Henry VIII* (1621) and *New Atlantis* (1627), the latter being a kind of imaginary dreamland akin to Thomas More's *Utopia*. Bacon's fame, however, rests primarily on his work *Essays or Counsels Civil and Moral*. It may interest you to know that Bacon had a very poor opinion of the English language and was convinced that it would 'play the bankrupt with books'. He, therefore, took care to write all his serious works in Latin 'for greater permanence' as he put it. He used English for writing his essays because he considered them as being insignificant. In fact, Bacon referred to his essays as 'certain brief notes' or 'repositories of dispersed meditation' and 'receptacles for detached thoughts'. Their genesis lay in his jotting down, at random, any brilliant or suggestive thing he heard or any illuminating thought that came into his mind, and then putting these together into a book, constantly augmenting the stock. Ironically, it is the essays Bacon wrote in English that have

brought him lasting fame, while his Latin works are no more than historical curiosities today. Although equipped with great intellect and wisdom, Bacon sadly lacked moral principles. He did not hesitate to adopt unscrupulous means to rise in life or to betray the friends who helped him to rise. Perhaps Alexander Pope was right in calling Bacon "the wisest, the brightest and the meanest of mankind." Check Your Progress-II Fill in the blanks below with appropriate answers:- a. Bacon became Lord Chancellor of England in the year b. was the language Bacon used for writing all his serious works. c. Bacon is known today mainly for his work d. has called Bacon 'the wisest, the brightest and the meanest of mankind'.

1.1.5 PROSE STYLE

In this section we shall discuss Bacon's prose style and the literary devices he has used. Style is the manner in which a writer presents his theme. It involves the effective use of language and literary devices like similes, metaphors, parallels, anti-thesis, paired and triple constructions of sentences etc. One of the striking features of Bacon's style is his opening statements which immediately take up the subject and engage the reader's attention. You must have been intrigued by the dramatic opening of the present essay: 'Men in great places are thrice servants', and been compelled to read the sentences following it to get at its meaning. Let us consider some more examples: "Of Revenge" begins with the words: 'Revenge is a kind of wild justice'; the opening line of "Of parents and children" is: 'The joys of parents are secret; and so their griefs and fears'; the essay "Of Marriage and Single Life" starts with: 'He that hath wife and children hath given hostages to fortune'. Francis Bacon : "Of Great Place Each of the above statements also shows Bacon's ability to compress abundant thought in extremely small space. This quality is called terseness. A terse speaker, as you know, is one who delivers very short but weighty lectures. All Bacon's essays are short and made up of terse and epigrammatic or aphoristic statements that say a lot in a few words, like the ones quoted above. An epigram or aphorism is a short, sharp and amusing saying, usually making a general observation. Bacon's essays are replete with epigrams that have universal appeal. Some instances from "Of Great Place" are: 'It is a strange desire to seek power and to lose liberty'; 'The rising unto place is laborious; and by pains men come to greater pains'. Bacon seems to have a natural instinct for neat and elegant proverbial expressions that highlight his ideas and concepts in the fewest possible words. He has furnished the maximum number of proverbs to the English language. A proverb or maxim is a pithy saying expressing a supposed truth or moral lesson, or is a saying that requires an explanation. You may have heard the following proverbs which are often quoted from Bacon's Essay: Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested. ("Of Studies") Men fear death as children fear to go in the dark. . . ("Of Death) Suspicions amongst thoughts are like bats among birds, they ever fly by twilight. ("Of Suspicion") Severity breedeth fear, but roughness breedeth hate. ("Of Great Place")

Bacon avoids using abundant words and drops conjunctions and linking words in his essays and yet his prose is clear and lucid. Can you think of a good reason for this? This is so because his prose is well-aided by similes, metaphors, analogies and quotations. In the essay under study, Bacon uses an interesting analogy. He writes: "All rising to great place is by a winding stair." He means to say that high posts are not achieved through fair and straight means but through dubious means, which is akin to climbing up a winding stair. Another statement from the same essay - "Imitation is a globe of precepts" persuades us to look for a different level of meaning suggested by the analogy. You must have also come across quotations, some of them in Non-Fictional Prose-I: Latin, which Bacon has used to elaborate his statements. He has quoted from Essays, Letters, various sources - the Bible, Tacitus, Solomon etc. Travelogues Although Bacon's essays emerge out of his own varied experiences in life, he is never subjective or personal in his expression. Sentences like "All rising to great place is by a winding stair" may hint at his own rapid rise in public life through questionable means, yet he adopts an objective and impersonal tone to convey it. Bacon's unit of structure is generally a short clause. Sentences are sometimes short, at other times they consist of a number of connected clauses, but they are always loose rather than periodic and 'come down like the strokes of a hammer' as Dean Church so aptly put it. After reading "Of Great Place" a few times, you must have observed that Bacon's sentences are symmetrically arranged in paired and triple constructions with their parallels and anti-thesis. Anti-thesis is a thesis or proposition opposing another. In other words, it is a statement in which thoughts or words are balanced in contrast. Read carefully the examples given below from a few of Bacon's essays, to understand how he arranges his sentences: Studies serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability. ("Of Studies") Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested. ("Of Studies") Travel, in the younger sort, is a part of education; in the elder, a part of experience. ("Of Travel") Certainly virtue is like precious odours, most fragrant when they are incensed, or crushed for prosperity doth best discover vice, adversity doth best discover virtue. ("Of Adversity")

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- e. Bacon became Lord Chancellor of England in the year?
 - f. _____ was the language Bacon used for writing all his serious works.
 - g. Bacon is known today mainly for his work_____.
 - h. _____ has called Bacon 'the wisest, the brightest and the meanest of mankind'.
-

1.1.6 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have learnt that: an essay is a short prose composition dealing with a subject in a general manner so as to interest many readers; the essay began with Montaigne in France in the sixteenth century, while Francis Bacon is called the father of the English essay: the essays of Bacon reflect his practical wisdom; Bacon's prose style is terse, epigrammatic and lucid, well aided by similes, metaphors, analogies and quotations; and explanation of a passage focuses attention on its relative importance and contribution to the unity of the whole essay.

1.1.7 FURTHER READING

You would benefit by reading the following essays of Bacon:

Of Religion, Of Truth, Of Virtue, Of Studies, Of Friendship, Of Parents and Children, Of Marriage and Single Life Of Plantations

1.1.8 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- a. An essay is a short piece of writing that presents the author's own argument, perspective, or analysis on a particular topic. Essays can be formal or informal, structured or free-flowing, and they typically seek to inform, persuade, entertain, or express the author's thoughts and feelings. The form is characterized by its use of personal reflection, critical analysis, and often a conversational tone.
- b. The chief exponents of the periodical essay are Joseph Addison and Sir Richard Steele. They pioneered this form of writing in the early 18th century with their publications, *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*.
- c. Charles Lamb, William Hazlitt, Leigh Hunt, Ralph Waldo Emerson
- d. George Orwell, E.M. Forster, D.H. Lawrence, T.S. Eliot, Bertrand Russell.
- e. 1618
- f. Latin
- g. Essays or Counsels Civil and Moral
- h. Alexander Pope

1.1.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

1. In "Of Truth," Francis Bacon begins his essay by referencing Pilate's question, "What is truth?" How does Bacon use this question to frame his exploration of the nature and value

of truth? Discuss the significance of this reference and how it sets the stage for his subsequent arguments about the importance of truth in human life and society.

2. Bacon discusses the decline of the English language and its impact on political discourse. Analyze how Bacon connects the state of language with the moral and intellectual decay he observes in society. How does he argue that the misuse of language can lead to manipulation and corruption, and what solutions does he propose to address this issue?
3. What arguments does Bacon present about the impact of the misuse of language on society and politics?
4. Discuss Bacon's views on the ethical implications of truth versus falsehood.
5. How does Bacon use metaphors and analogies to convey his ideas about truth? Provide examples.
6. How do Bacon's ideas in "Of Truth" reflect the intellectual trends of the early 17th century, such as the rise of empiricism?
7. What strategies does Bacon recommend for overcoming personal biases in the pursuit of truth?
8. Why does Bacon believe that travel is an essential aspect of education and personal growth?
9. How does Bacon recommend preparing for a journey in foreign lands?
10. What advice does Bacon give regarding the selection of travel companions?
11. Discuss the importance of language learning according to Bacon in the context of travel.
12. What does Bacon suggest travellers should observe and learn from the governments and institutions of other countries?
13. How does Bacon advise travellers to handle their interactions with local people and cultures?
14. What are Bacon's views on the benefits of journaling or keeping a diary while traveling?
15. Why does Bacon emphasize the importance of seeking out good company and knowledgeable guides during travel?

UNIT 1.2 MICHEL DE MONTAIGNE: OF IDLENESS, OF PEDANTRY

Unit Structure

1.2.1 Learning Objectives

1.2.2 Michel de Montaigne: A Biographical Note

1.2.3 An Introduction to “Of Idleness” and “Of Pedantry”

1.2.4 Explanation of the essays

1.2.5 Let Us Sum Up

1.2.6 Further Reading

1.2.7 Answers to check your progress

1.2.8 Model Questions

1.2.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

In this unit, learners will be able to learn about:

- Montaigne’s perspective on the nature of the human mind and its tendency to become restless when idle.
- how idleness can lead to negative consequences, such as self-destructive thoughts and behaviors.
- Reflecting on how Montaigne’s insights on idleness can be applied to contemporary life.
- strategies for combating idleness and maintaining mental and emotional well-being in today’s fast-paced world.
- Explore Montaigne’s views on education and how they contrast with the pedantic approach.
- Identify the qualities Montaigne believes are essential for a well-rounded and effective education.

1.2.2 MICHEL DE MONTAIGNE: A BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592) was a French philosopher, writer, and statesman, best known for popularizing the essay as a literary form. His work, "Essais" (Essays), is a profound collection of thoughts, reflections, and explorations of human nature, morality, and philosophy. Montaigne's essays are characterized by their personal tone, self-examination, and the use of anecdotes and quotations from classical authors.

Key Aspects of Montaigne's Work and Thought

1. *Essays as a Literary Form:*

- Montaigne is credited with inventing the essay as a literary genre, a form that allows for personal reflection and exploration of various topics. His essays cover a wide range of subjects, from friendship and education to death and the human condition.
- The essays are notable for their conversational style, digressions, and the blending of personal anecdotes with philosophical insights.

2. *Skepticism and Relativism:*

- Montaigne was a skeptic, often questioning the certainty of knowledge and the ability of humans to understand the world with absolute clarity.
- He emphasized the importance of recognizing one's own ignorance and the limitations of human reason. His motto, "Que sais-je?" (What do I know?), reflects his skeptical approach to knowledge.
- Montaigne's relativism is evident in his discussions of cultural practices and beliefs. He argued that what is considered normal or acceptable varies greatly across different societies and that one should be cautious in judging others.

3. *Human Nature and Self-Examination:*

- Montaigne's essays are deeply introspective, focusing on the examination of his own thoughts, feelings, and experiences. He believed that by understanding himself, he could gain insights into human nature more broadly.
- He explored themes such as the complexity and inconsistency of human behavior, the interplay of body and mind, and the ways in which personal experiences shape one's worldview.

4. *Influence of Classical Authors:*

- Montaigne was heavily influenced by classical philosophers and writers such as Seneca, Plutarch, Cicero, and Socrates. He frequently quoted and engaged with their works, using them as a foundation for his own reflections.
- His admiration for the classical ideal of a well-rounded, virtuous life is evident throughout his essays.

5. *Individuality and Personal Freedom:*

- Montaigne championed the idea of individual freedom and the importance of living according to one's own values and principles rather than conforming to societal expectations.

- He advocated for a life of moderation, balance, and self-awareness, encouraging readers to cultivate their own thoughts and experiences.

Impact and Legacy

Montaigne's essays have had a lasting impact on literature, philosophy, and the development of the modern self. His emphasis on personal reflection and the exploration of the human condition has influenced writers and thinkers across centuries. The essay form that he popularized remains a powerful tool for personal and philosophical expression.

In summary, Michel de Montaigne's contributions to literature and philosophy lie in his creation of the essay as a literary form, his skeptical and relativistic approach to knowledge, his introspective examination of human nature, and his engagement with classical authors. His work continues to be celebrated for its depth, insight, and the unique voice that he brought to the exploration of human experience.

1.2.3 AN INTRODUCTION TO “OF IDLENESS” AND “OF PEDANTRY”

Michel de Montaigne's essays "Of Idleness" and "Of Pedantry" are insightful explorations of human behavior and the nature of intellectual activity. These essays, like much of Montaigne's work, blend personal reflection with broader philosophical musings.

Of Idleness

In "Of Idleness," Montaigne examines the consequences of a mind left without occupation. He reflects on how an idle mind can lead to negative thoughts and distractions, emphasizing the importance of keeping oneself engaged in meaningful activities.

Key Themes and Ideas:

1. The Danger of an Idle Mind:

- Montaigne begins by acknowledging that after retiring from public life, he found himself with an abundance of free time. This sudden shift led to a sense of idleness, which he found troubling.
- He argues that an idle mind tends to wander aimlessly, often leading to unproductive or even harmful thoughts. Montaigne likens this to a field left untended, where weeds quickly overtake the fertile ground.

2. The Importance of Occupation:

- Montaigne stresses the importance of engaging the mind with useful and productive activities. He believes that keeping the mind active prevents it from becoming a breeding ground for negative thoughts.
- He suggests that regular intellectual and physical activities can help maintain a balanced

and healthy state of mind.

3. Personal Reflection:

- Montaigne uses his own experience to illustrate his points. He candidly discusses how his own mind, when not occupied, led him to dwell on trivial and nonsensical matters.
- This self-examination serves as a cautionary tale, urging readers to avoid the pitfalls of idleness by staying engaged and purposeful.

Of Pedantry

In "Of Pedantry," Montaigne critiques the excessive focus on formal education and scholarly knowledge at the expense of practical wisdom and common sense. He explores the limitations of a purely academic approach to learning and the importance of applying knowledge to real-life situations.

Key Themes and Ideas:

1. Critique of Scholarly Excess:

- Montaigne criticizes scholars who are overly concerned with displaying their knowledge and erudition. He finds fault with those who prioritize pedantic displays of learning over practical understanding.
- He argues that true wisdom comes from the application of knowledge rather than the mere accumulation of facts and figures.

2. The Limitations of Formal Education:

- Montaigne points out that formal education often emphasizes rote memorization and the mastery of obscure subjects, which may have little relevance to everyday life.
- He believes that education should focus more on developing critical thinking, judgment, and the ability to navigate real-world challenges.

3. The Value of Practical Wisdom:

- Montaigne advocates for a balanced approach to learning that combines scholarly knowledge with practical wisdom. He emphasizes the importance of life experiences and common sense in shaping a well-rounded individual.
- He suggests that practical wisdom is often more valuable than theoretical knowledge in making sound decisions and leading a fulfilling life.

4. Personal Reflection:

- Montaigne uses examples from his own education and observations of others to support his arguments. He reflects on the limitations of his own schooling and the importance of learning from real-life experiences.

- His personal anecdotes and reflections add depth to his critique and make his arguments more relatable to readers.

"Of Idleness" and "Of Pedantry" are representative of Montaigne's style and approach in his essays. Through personal reflection and philosophical inquiry, he explores the intricacies of human nature and the importance of balancing intellectual pursuits with practical wisdom. These essays highlight Montaigne's belief in the value of self-examination, continuous learning, and the mindful engagement of one's mind and abilities.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- a. Who was Michel de Montaigne?
- b. What is Montaigne best known for?
- c. What is a notable characteristic of Montaigne's essays?
- d. How did Montaigne contribute to the literary genre of the essay?
- e. What is Montaigne's motto, and what does it reflect?
- f. How does Montaigne's relativism manifest in his essays?
- g. What classical authors influenced Montaigne's work?
- h. What does Montaigne advocate for in terms of personal freedom?
- i. What does Montaigne examine in "Of Idleness"?
- j. What metaphor does Montaigne use to describe an idle mind?
- k. What does Montaigne suggest to avoid the pitfalls of idleness?
- l. What does Montaigne critique in "Of Pedantry"?
- m. What does Montaigne argue about true wisdom?
- n. What does Montaigne believe about the limitations of formal education?
- o. How does Montaigne suggest balancing intellectual pursuits with practical wisdom?

1.2.4 EXPLANATION OF THE ESSAYS “OF IDLENESS” AND “OF PEDANTRY”

Of Idleness

Montaigne begins "Of Idleness" by sharing his personal experience after retiring from public duties. He intended to lead a tranquil life but found his mind becoming restless and unruly. Montaigne describes how, after retreating from active public life, he expected to find peace. Instead, he discovered that an idle mind tends to drift towards unproductive and even harmful thoughts. He uses the metaphor of a field left uncultivated, where wild weeds grow unchecked, to illustrate how the mind, when not engaged, becomes overrun with erratic and sometimes troubling thoughts. Montaigne argues that it is crucial to keep the mind actively engaged. He suggests that regular

intellectual or creative activities can help maintain mental discipline and prevent negative thoughts. He advocates for a balance between rest and activity, emphasizing that some form of mental engagement is necessary to prevent the mind from wandering into harmful territory. Montaigne shares his personal struggle with idleness to connect with the reader on a relatable level. He admits that his own mind, when not occupied, led him to ponder trivial or nonsensical matters, which he found unsettling. This candid reflection serves as a cautionary tale, urging readers to find ways to keep their minds occupied and productive.

Montaigne concludes that while leisure and rest are important, one must be wary of complete idleness. An engaged and active mind is essential for maintaining mental health and well-being.

Of Pedantry

In "Of Pedantry," Montaigne critiques the excessive focus on scholarly knowledge and the academic display of learning. He contrasts this with the importance of practical wisdom and common sense. Montaigne criticizes those who prioritize the accumulation and display of academic knowledge over practical understanding. He believes that an overemphasis on scholarly achievements can lead to pedantry, where individuals become more concerned with showcasing their erudition than with practical application. He observes that such individuals often lack the ability to apply their knowledge effectively in real-world situations. Montaigne points out that formal education often emphasizes memorization and mastery of subjects that may have little practical relevance. He argues that this type of education can produce individuals who are knowledgeable but lack common sense and practical judgment. He believes that education should aim to develop critical thinking, judgment, and the ability to navigate life's challenges. Montaigne advocates for a balanced approach to learning that integrates scholarly knowledge with practical wisdom. He emphasizes that life experiences and common sense are essential components of true wisdom. He suggests that practical wisdom often proves more valuable than theoretical knowledge in making sound decisions and leading a fulfilling life. Montaigne uses examples from his own education and observations to support his arguments. He reflects on the limitations of his own schooling and the importance of learning from real-life experiences. His personal anecdotes and reflections add depth to his critique and make his arguments more relatable to readers.

Montaigne concludes that while scholarly knowledge is valuable, it should not overshadow the importance of practical wisdom and common sense. He urges for a more holistic approach to education that prepares individuals for the complexities of real life.

1.2.5 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we have learnt about Michel de Montaigne's essays "Of Idleness" and "Of

Pedantry" which offer timeless reflections on the nature of the human mind and the value of education. Through personal anecdotes and philosophical musings, Montaigne explores the dangers of an idle mind and the limitations of a purely academic approach to learning. His advocacy for mental engagement and practical wisdom remains relevant, encouraging readers to seek a balanced and meaningful approach to life and education.

1.2.6 FURTHER READING

- *Michel de Montaigne. The Complete Works. Essays, Travel Journal, Letters, tr. by Donald M. Frame, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1958, renewed 1971 & 1976.*
- Ulrich Langer, 2005, *The Cambridge Companion to Montaigne*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (ed.), 2016, *The Oxford Handbook of Montaigne*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

1.2.7 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- a. Michel de Montaigne was a French philosopher, writer, and statesman known for popularizing the essay as a literary form.
- b. Montaigne is best known for his work "Essais" (Essays), a collection of thoughts, reflections, and explorations of human nature, morality, and philosophy.
- c. Montaigne's essays are characterized by their personal tone, self-examination, and the use of anecdotes and quotations from classical authors.
- d. Montaigne is credited with inventing the essay as a literary genre, a form that allows for personal reflection and exploration of various topics.
- e. Montaigne's motto is "Que sais-je?" (What do I know?), reflecting his skeptical approach to knowledge and recognition of human ignorance.
- f. Montaigne's relativism is evident in his discussions of cultural practices and beliefs, arguing that what is considered normal or acceptable varies greatly across different societies.
- g. Montaigne was influenced by classical philosophers and writers such as Seneca, Plutarch, Cicero, and Socrates.
- h. Montaigne advocates for individual freedom and the importance of living according to one's own values and principles rather than conforming to societal expectations.
- i. In "Of Idleness," Montaigne examines the consequences of a mind left without occupation and the importance of keeping oneself engaged in meaningful activities.
- j. Montaigne likens an idle mind to a field left untended, where weeds quickly overtake the fertile ground.
- k. Montaigne suggests that regular intellectual and physical activities can help maintain a balanced and healthy state of mind.

- l. In "Of Pedantry," Montaigne critiques the excessive focus on formal education and scholarly knowledge at the expense of practical wisdom and common sense.
- m. Montaigne argues that true wisdom comes from the application of knowledge rather than the mere accumulation of facts and figures.
- n. Montaigne believes that formal education often emphasizes rote memorization and the mastery of obscure subjects, which may have little relevance to everyday life.
- o. Montaigne suggests a balanced approach to learning that combines scholarly knowledge with practical wisdom, emphasizing the importance of life experiences and common sense.

1.2.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

1. What are Montaigne's main arguments regarding the nature of idleness in "Of Idleness"?
2. How does Montaigne describe the effects of idleness on the human mind?
3. In what ways does Montaigne suggest that idleness can lead to negative thoughts and behaviors?
4. How does Montaigne differentiate between productive leisure and harmful idleness?
5. What are Montaigne's main arguments regarding the nature of idleness in "Of Idleness"?
6. How does Montaigne describe the effects of idleness on the human mind?
7. In what ways does Montaigne suggest that idleness can lead to negative thoughts and behaviors?
8. How does Montaigne differentiate between productive leisure and harmful idleness?
9. What is Montaigne's definition of pedantry in "Of Pedantry"?
10. How does Montaigne critique pedantic behaviour, and what examples does he provide?

UNIT 2.1 JOSEPH ADDISON: THE AIMS OF THE SPECTATOR

Unit Structure

- 2.1.1 Learning Objectives
- 2.1.2 Joseph Addison: A Biographical Note
- 2.1.3 An Introduction to *The Spectator*
- 2.1.4 Explanation of the essay
- 2.1.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 2.1.6 Further Reading
- 2.1.7 Answer to Check your Progress
- 2.1.8 Model Questions

2.1.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

In this unit learners are going to

- Learn the primary objectives behind Joseph Addison's creation of 'The Spectator'.
- Recognize how Addison aimed to improve the moral and intellectual standards of his readers.
- Identify specific societal issues Addison addressed through his essays.
- Discuss the long-term effects of Addison's work on journalism and literature.
- Engage with Addison's arguments and develop personal viewpoints on the topics discussed.

2.1.2 JOSEPH ADDISON: A BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Joseph Addison (1672-1719) was an English essayist, poet, playwright, and politician. He is best known for his contributions to the periodical essays in "The Spectator," which he co-founded with Richard Steele. Addison's work had a significant impact on English literature and culture during the early 18th century.

Early Life and Education

Joseph Addison was born on May 1, 1672, in Milston, Wiltshire, England, to Lancelot Addison, a clergyman and writer, and Jane Addison. He was educated at the Charterhouse School, where he met his lifelong friend and future collaborator, Richard Steele. Addison later attended Queen's College, Oxford, where he excelled in classical studies and became known for his Latin verse.

Early Career

Addison's early career was marked by his scholarly achievements and his skill as a poet. In 1699, he received a government pension to travel in Europe, which allowed him to immerse himself in various cultures and languages. During his travels, he wrote his "Letter from Italy," a poem that gained him considerable acclaim upon his return to England.

Political Career

Addison's literary talents soon opened doors in the political sphere. In 1704, he wrote "The Campaign," a poem celebrating the Duke of Marlborough's victory at the Battle of Blenheim. This work earned him a position as Commissioner of Appeals in the government. He went on to hold several other public offices, including Under-Secretary of State and Secretary of State for the Southern Department.

Contributions to Journalism

In 1711, Addison and Steele launched "The Spectator," a daily publication that sought to provide commentary on contemporary manners, literature, and society. Addison's essays in 'The Spectator' are characterized by their wit, clarity, and moral insight. He often used the persona of "Mr. Spectator," an observer of London society, to express his views on a wide range of topics. The essays were highly influential and helped shape public opinion and taste during the period.

Later Works and Legacy

In addition to his essays, Addison wrote several plays, including the tragedy "Cato" (1713), which was a great success and praised for its political themes and dramatic quality. He also authored numerous poems and contributed to other periodicals. Addison married the Dowager Countess of Warwick in 1716, though the marriage was reportedly not a happy one. He continued to write and serve in various political roles until his health began to decline.

Death and Influence

Joseph Addison died on June 17, 1719, at the age of 47. He was buried in Westminster Abbey. His legacy as a writer and thinker endures, with his works continuing to be read and appreciated for their elegant prose, insightful observations, and moral depth. Addison's collaboration with Steele and his contributions to 'The Spectator' played a crucial role in the development of the modern essay and periodical literature.

2.1.3 AN INTRODUCTION TO *THE SPECTATOR*

'The Spectator' was a daily periodical published in London from March 1, 1711, to December 20, 1712. It was founded by Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, two prominent figures of early 18th-century English literature. The periodical was known for its commentary on contemporary manners, morals, and society, and it played a significant role in shaping public opinion and cultural discourse during its time. It covers a wide range of topics, including politics, culture, and current affairs, and is

known for its insightful commentary and analysis. The magazine is often associated with a conservative viewpoint, though it publishes a variety of perspectives.

It was originally founded as a periodical with a focus on literary and philosophical topics, but over time, its scope broadened to include more diverse subject matter. Its contributors include prominent journalists, writers, and thinkers, and it has a reputation for being a thought-provoking publication.

Objectives and Purpose

‘The Spectator’ was created with the aim of improving and refining public taste and manners. Its founders sought to address the moral and social issues of the time by providing a platform for discussing contemporary life, offering reflections on human nature, and promoting virtue and civility. The publication was designed to appeal to a broad audience, including the burgeoning middle class and intellectuals of London.

Format and Content

1. Daily Essays:

- The periodical featured a daily essay, which typically consisted of around 1,000 to 1,500 words. These essays were written in a conversational and accessible style, often incorporating wit and humor.
- The essays were signed with the pseudonym "Mr. Spectator," a persona created by Addison and Steele to provide a detached and observational perspective on society.

2. Topics:

- The essays covered a wide range of topics, including manners, morals, literature, politics, and fashion. They often included observations on everyday life, social customs, and the behavior of different social classes.
- Each essay was designed to entertain as well as to educate, with a focus on improving the reader's understanding of social and ethical issues.

3. Characters:

- ‘The Spectator’ introduced several recurring characters who were used to illustrate various social types and moral lessons. These included:
 - Sir Roger de Coverley: A country squire and a traditionalist, whose anecdotes and opinions often served as a means to discuss broader social issues.
 - Will Honeycomb: A dandy and a socialite, representing the fashionable and often superficial aspects of urban life.
 - The Spectator: The narrator and observer of the essays, whose role was to provide commentary and analysis on the observations of everyday life.

Impact and Influence

1. Literary Influence:

- ‘The Spectator’ was highly influential in the development of the modern essay. Its style and format set a precedent for later periodicals and literary forms.
- The periodical's emphasis on clarity, humor, and moral reflection contributed to the evolution of English prose and the essay genre.

2. Social Impact:

- The essays addressed contemporary social issues and offered moral guidance, reflecting the concerns and values of early 18th-century English society.
- By engaging with readers on topics such as manners, ethics, and social behavior, ‘The Spectator’ played a role in shaping public opinion and promoting social reform.

3. Legacy:

- ‘The Spectator’ is considered one of the most significant literary contributions of the 18th century. Its impact on English literature and journalism is still recognized today.
- The publication's approach to social commentary and its innovative use of character and narrative have continued to influence writers and editors in the centuries since its publication.

Overall, ‘The Spectator’ stands as a landmark in English literature, exemplifying the blend of entertainment and moral reflection that characterized the early modern essay. Its enduring legacy is a testament to the vision and skill of its founders, Joseph Addison and Richard Steele.

2.1.4 EXPLANATION OF THE ESSAY

In the essay titled "The Aims of the Spectator," which was written by Joseph Addison and published in ‘The Spectator’ on March 1, 1711, the author outlines the objectives and intentions behind the periodical. This essay serves as an introduction to the publication’s goals and sets the tone for the content and purpose of ‘The Spectator’. Here’s a detailed explanation of the essay and its aims:

Introduction to the Spectator’s Purpose:

Addison begins the essay by explaining the rationale behind the creation of ‘The Spectator’. He emphasizes the need for a periodical that could address the contemporary issues of manners, morals, and society in a manner that is both engaging and instructive. He identifies the purpose of ‘The Spectator’ as providing readers with reflections on their daily lives, aiming to improve their behavior and understanding through wit, observation, and moral guidance.

Improving Public Taste and Manners:

A primary aim of the periodical is to refine and elevate public taste. Addison argues that many people are influenced by poor examples in society, which leads to a decline in manners and morality. Through 'The Spectator', Addison and Steele aim to counteract these negative influences by offering more virtuous and refined examples. The periodical seeks to encourage readers to aspire to higher standards of behavior and taste.

Commentary on Contemporary Society:

Addison describes how 'The Spectator' will offer a commentary on various aspects of contemporary life, including fashion, social customs, and behavior. The aim is to provide readers with insights into their own society and to encourage self-reflection. By discussing current trends and social phenomena, the periodical aims to shape public opinion and promote a more thoughtful and considerate approach to social interaction.

The Role of the Spectator:

The figure of "Mr. Spectator," a persona created by Addison and Steele, is introduced as the observer and commentator of the essays. Mr. Spectator is portrayed as a detached and thoughtful observer who provides a balanced perspective on the issues of the day. Addison explains that Mr. Spectator's role is to present observations in a manner that is both entertaining and instructive, guiding readers towards greater self-awareness and improved social conduct.

A Balanced and Gentle Approach:

Addison emphasizes that the tone of *The Spectator* will be gentle and moderate. The periodical is not intended to be harsh or critical but rather to offer suggestions and reflections in a friendly and approachable manner. This approach is intended to make the periodical more accessible and appealing to a wide audience, encouraging readers to engage with its content and reflect on its messages.

The Aims of Social Reform:

Ultimately, Addison presents 'The Spectator' as a vehicle for social reform. The periodical's goal is to contribute to the betterment of society by promoting virtue, civility, and intellectual engagement. By addressing the deficiencies in manners and morals, Addison hopes to foster a more refined and enlightened society.

In "The Aims of the Spectator," Joseph Addison articulates a clear vision for the periodical. He describes its role as a means to improve public taste and manners, provide insightful commentary on contemporary society, and promote social reform through gentle and thoughtful reflections. The essay serves as an introduction to the values and objectives of 'The Spectator', setting the stage for

the periodical's continued influence on 18th-century English literature and social thought.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- a. What was the primary purpose of *The Spectator*?
- b. Who co-founded *The Spectator* with Joseph Addison?
- c. Which literary techniques did Addison frequently use in *The Spectator*?
- d. Name a fictional character created by Addison in *The Spectator*.
- e. What did Addison aim to critique in society through *The Spectator*?
- f. How did Addison make his essays engaging?
- g. What was Addison's approach to addressing serious issues?
- h. Which social issues did *The Spectator* address?
- i. What was the impact of *The Spectator* on contemporary society?
- j. How did *The Spectator* influence future journalism and literature?

2.1.5 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, learners have learned about the essay, "The Aims of the Spectator," by Joseph Addison from his periodical 'The Spectator'. He explains that the publication aims to address contemporary issues related to manners, morals, and society in an engaging and instructive way. The periodical seeks to refine public taste and manners, offer insightful commentary on social customs, and provide readers with reflections that promote self-improvement. Through the persona of "Mr. Spectator," Addison intends to present observations in a gentle and balanced manner, fostering social reform and encouraging higher standards of behavior and thought. This essay sets the tone for 'The Spectator's mission to enhance public discourse and contribute to a more enlightened society.

2.1.6 FURTHER READING

1. Addison, Joseph (1837). *The Works of Joseph Addison*, Vol. I, p.31. Harper & Brothers.
2. *Henry W. Kent* (1903). "*Spectator*". *Bibliographical Notes on One Hundred Books Famous in English Literature*. NY: *Grolier Club*.
3. "*Joseph Addison & Richard Steele*". *The Open Anthology of Literature in English*. Retrieved 19 September 2017.

2.1.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- a. To provide moral and intellectual improvement to its readers.
- b. Richard Steele
- c. Humor, satire, and wit.
- d. Sir Roger de Coverley
- e. Vanity, affectation, ignorance, and social pretensions.
- f. By using humor and relatable fictional characters.
- g. Using gentle humor and satire.
- h. Treatment of women, importance of education, and follies of fashion.
- i. Shaped cultural and intellectual discourse, influencing manners and social behavior.
- j. By establishing the periodical essay as a respected literary form.

2.1.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the primary objectives Joseph Addison and Richard Steele aimed to achieve with the publication of *The Spectator*. How did these aims reflect the social and cultural context of the early 18th century?
2. Examine the role of humor, satire, and wit in *The Spectator*. How did Addison and Steele use these literary techniques to engage their readers and convey their messages? Provide specific examples from the essays.
3. Analyze the character of Sir Roger de Coverley in *The Spectator*. How does Addison use this fictional character to critique and reflect upon the social norms and values of the time?
4. In what ways did *The Spectator* address issues related to the treatment and roles of women in society? Discuss how Addison and Steele's perspectives on gender roles were both progressive and limited by the standards of their time.
5. Evaluate the impact of *The Spectator* on contemporary society. How did the periodical influence the cultural and intellectual discourse of the early 18th century, and what lasting effects did it have on future journalism and literature?
6. Discuss how *The Spectator* aimed to educate and morally improve its readers. What topics and themes were frequently addressed to achieve this goal, and how were they presented to ensure accessibility and appeal to a wide audience?
7. Analyze Addison and Steele's critique of social pretensions and affectation in *The Spectator*. How did they use specific essays to highlight and satirize these behaviors, and what were their underlying messages about authenticity and virtue?
8. Explore the ways in which *The Spectator* addressed the importance of education. What were Addison and Steele's views on education, and how did they propose to improve it through their writings?
9. How did *The Spectator* use fictional narratives and characters to convey its themes and

objectives? Discuss the effectiveness of this approach in engaging readers and promoting moral and intellectual reflection.

10. Compare and contrast *The Spectator* with other periodicals of its time. What set *The Spectator* apart in terms of its content, style, and objectives, and how did it influence or differ from its contemporaries?

UNIT 2.2 RICHARD STEELE: THE SPECTATOR CLUB

Unit Structure

2.2.1 Learning Objectives

2.2.2 Richard Steele: A Biographical Note

2.2.3 An Introduction to The Tatler

2.2.4 Explanation of the essay

2.2.5 Let Us Sum Up

2.2.6 Further Reading

2.2.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

In this unit, learners will be able to learn about,

- the social, cultural, and literary context of early 18th-century England, in which The Spectator was published.
- how Joseph Addison and Richard Steele create and develop the fictional members of The Spectator's Club to reflect and critique societal norms and values.
- the use of humor, satire, and wit in The Spectator and understand how these techniques serve to engage readers and convey the authors' messages.
- the moral and ethical lessons Addison and Steele intended to impart to their readers through the stories and essays of The Spectator's Club.
- Understand Addison and Steele's perspectives on education and self-improvement, and how they sought to promote intellectual growth among their readership through The Spectator's Club.

2.2.2 RICHARD STEELE: A BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Sir Richard Steele, born on March 12, 1672, in Dublin, Ireland, was an influential essayist, playwright, journalist, and politician. Best known for his collaborative work with Joseph Addison on the periodicals 'The Tatler' and 'The Spectator', Steele played a significant role in shaping 18th-century English literature and journalism.

Early Life and Education

Steele was born to a wealthy family; his father was a lawyer. After his father's death, Steele was sent to England for his education. He attended the Charterhouse School in London, where he met and befriended Joseph Addison. Steele later went to Merton College, Oxford, but left without completing his degree to join the army.

Military and Early Literary Career

Steele's military career began when he enlisted in the Horse Guards, and he later obtained a commission as a captain. His time in the army provided him with experiences that influenced his later writings. Seeking to make a name for himself in the literary world, Steele wrote several plays, the most notable being 'The Conscious Lovers' (1722), which was well-received and showcased his knack for sentimental comedy.

Journalism and Collaboration with Addison

In 1709, Steele founded 'The Tatler', a periodical that published thrice weekly and covered a range of topics, from politics to society. The publication's blend of news and essays made it popular, and it provided Steele with a platform to express his views on contemporary issues. Addison soon joined Steele, contributing to 'The Tatler' and enhancing its reputation.

Following the success of 'The Tatler', Steele and Addison launched 'The Spectator' in 1711. This daily publication aimed to improve public manners and morals through essays on various subjects, including literature, politics, and society. Steele's lively style complemented Addison's more polished prose, and together they created a periodical that left a lasting impact on English literature and journalism.

Later Life and Political Career

Steele's later life saw him becoming more involved in politics. He was elected to Parliament in 1713 and was knighted in 1715. His political career, however, was marked by controversies and financial difficulties. Steele's outspoken nature often put him at odds with others, leading to a turbulent political life.

Despite these challenges, Steele continued to write and contribute to literary and political discourse until his death on September 1, 1729, in Carmarthen, Wales.

Legacy

Richard Steele's contributions to literature and journalism are significant. His collaboration with Addison on 'The Tatler' and 'The Spectator' set new standards for periodical writing, blending entertainment with moral and social instruction. Steele's lively and engaging style, along with his commitment to addressing contemporary issues, ensured that his works remained influential long after

his death.

2.2.3 AN INTRODUCTION TO ‘THE TATLER’

‘The Tatler’ was a pioneering periodical launched by Richard Steele in London on April 12, 1709. Its publication marked a significant moment in the history of journalism and literature, setting the stage for the development of the modern essay and the social commentary magazine. ‘The Tatler’ blended news, gossip, and essays on a variety of topics, from politics and fashion to literature and manners, reflecting the vibrancy and complexity of early 18th-century London society.

Origins and Purpose

Richard Steele, writing under the pseudonym "Isaac Bickerstaff, Esq.," conceived ‘The Tatler’ as a thrice-weekly publication with the aim of providing readers with an engaging mix of news and reflective essays. The choice of the name "Tatler" suggested a light, conversational tone, implying both the delivery of current news and the sharing of informal, anecdotal observations.

The primary purpose of ‘The Tatler’ was to inform and entertain its readership while offering insights into the social, political, and cultural issues of the day. Steele's vision was to create a publication that could engage a broad audience, combining serious commentary with wit and humor. This approach allowed him to address various aspects of daily life in a manner that was both instructive and enjoyable.

Structure and Content

Each issue of ‘The Tatler’ was structured around reports from different locations in London, such as coffeehouses, theaters, and other public venues. These reports provided a fictionalized account of the latest news and gossip, serving as a framework for the essays and observations that followed. This structure gave the publication a dynamic and varied character, mirroring the bustling and diverse life of the city.

The content of ‘The Tatler’ was diverse, covering topics such as:

- Politics: Commentary on current political events and public figures, often infused with satire and critique.
- Literature and the Arts: Reviews and discussions of books, plays, and other cultural productions, helping to shape public taste and opinion.
- Fashion and Manners: Observations on the latest trends in dress and behavior, reflecting and influencing the social norms of the time.
- Moral and Ethical Reflections: Essays on virtues, vices, and the conduct of life, aimed at promoting moral improvement among readers.

Collaboration with Joseph Addison

One of the most significant aspects of 'The Tatler' was Richard Steele's collaboration with his friend and fellow writer, Joseph Addison. Addison contributed numerous essays to the periodical, bringing his polished prose and keen intellect to the publication. The synergy between Steele's lively style and Addison's refined approach created a distinctive voice that resonated with readers.

Addison's involvement not only enhanced the literary quality of 'The Tatler' but also helped establish the format and tone that would be further developed in their subsequent collaboration on 'The Spectator'.

Impact and Legacy

'The Tatler' ran until January 2, 1711, producing 271 issues during its lifespan. Despite its relatively short run, the publication had a profound impact on English literature and journalism. It introduced the essay as a popular form of social and cultural commentary, influencing later periodicals and writers.

The blend of news, humor, and moral reflection found in 'The Tatler' set a precedent for future publications, including 'The Spectator', which Steele and Addison launched shortly after 'The Tatler' ceased. The success and influence of 'The Tatler' can be seen in its enduring legacy, as it laid the groundwork for the evolution of periodical literature and the modern essay.

In summary, 'The Tatler' was a groundbreaking publication that combined news, essays, and social commentary in a novel and engaging way. Its blend of entertainment and instruction, along with the collaborative genius of Steele and Addison, ensured its place as a seminal work in the history of English journalism and literature.

2.2.4 EXPLANATION OF THE ESSAY

"The Spectator Club" is an essay by Joseph Addison, published in the first issue of 'The Spectator' on March 1, 1711. In this essay, Addison introduces readers to the fictional members of the Spectator Club, who serve as the primary characters and contributors to the periodical. Each member represents different aspects of contemporary society, providing a broad and humorous commentary on various social classes, professions, and personalities. The essay sets the stage for the types of observations and reflections that *The Spectator* will offer its readers.

Overview of the Characters

Addison describes six main members of the Spectator Club, each with unique characteristics and perspectives:

1. Sir Roger de Coverley:

- A kindly and eccentric country gentleman, Sir Roger is a baronet who embodies the virtues and foibles of the English squire. He is portrayed as generous, well-meaning, and somewhat old-fashioned, reflecting the traditional values of rural England.

- Sir Roger's character provides a humorous and affectionate critique of the landed gentry, highlighting both their strengths and their eccentricities.

2. **Sir Andrew Freeport:**

- A wealthy and industrious merchant, Sir Andrew represents the rising commercial class. He is pragmatic, shrewd, and advocates for the benefits of trade and commerce.

- Sir Andrew's character offers insights into the mercantile mindset, emphasizing the importance of business acumen and economic progress.

3. **Captain Sentry:**

- A retired military officer and Sir Roger's nephew, Captain Sentry is a model of modesty and integrity. He embodies the virtues of honor and duty, contrasting with the more self-interested motivations of other characters.

- Through Captain Sentry, Addison explores themes of honor, valor, and the role of the military in society.

4. **Will Honeycomb:**

- A charming and fashionable man-about-town, Will Honeycomb is the epitome of the urban dandy. He is knowledgeable about fashion, social etiquette, and the latest trends in London.

- Will Honeycomb's character serves as a satire of the superficiality and affectations of urban high society, providing a lens through which to critique contemporary social norms.

5. **Mr. Spectator:**

- The central figure and narrator of the essays, Mr. Spectator is a detached and observant gentleman. He is described as a man of few words who prefers to watch and reflect rather than participate actively in social life.

- Mr. Spectator's character represents the ideal observer, providing objective and thoughtful commentary on the world around him.

6. **The Clergyman:**

- An unnamed member of the clergy, he is respected for his wisdom and piety. He provides moral and ethical guidance, reflecting the religious values of the time.

- The Clergyman's presence underscores the importance of religion and morality in the discussions of the Spectator Club.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- a. In what year and issue was "The Spectator Club" published?
- b. Who is the central figure and narrator in "The Spectator"?
- c. Describe the character of Sir Roger de Coverley.
- d. What does Sir Andrew Freeport represent?
- e. What is Captain Sentry known for?
- f. Who is Will Honeycomb?
- g. What role does the unnamed Clergyman play in "The Spectator Club"?
- h. What is the primary purpose of introducing the characters in "The Spectator Club"?
- i. How does "The Spectator Club" use humour and satire?
- j. What themes are explored through the characters in "The Spectator Club"?

Themes and Purpose

1. Character Sketches:

- By introducing these diverse characters, Addison provides readers with a microcosm of 18th-century English society. Each character's background, profession, and personality offer a window into different social classes and occupations.

2. Social Commentary:

- The Spectator Club members allow Addison to explore and critique various aspects of contemporary life, including the landed gentry, commerce, the military, urban society, and religion. Through their interactions and perspectives, Addison can address broader social issues in a relatable and engaging way.

3. Humor and Satire:

- The essay uses humor and satire to highlight the absurdities and contradictions within each character's behavior and beliefs. This lighthearted approach makes the social critique more palatable and entertaining for readers.

4. Moral and Ethical Reflection:

- The inclusion of characters like the Clergyman and Captain Sentry allows for discussions on virtue, honor, and morality. Addison aims to inspire readers to reflect on their own conduct and aspire to higher ethical standards.

5. Setting the Tone for ‘The Spectator’:

- By establishing the Spectator Club and its members, Addison sets the tone for the periodical. The characters provide a consistent framework for the essays that follow, ensuring that readers can relate to the observations and reflections presented in each issue.

2.2.5 LET US SUM UP

"The Spectator Club" is a foundational essay that introduces the main characters of ‘The Spectator’ and outlines the periodical’s approach to social commentary. Through these fictional members, Addison creates a rich tapestry of 18th-century English life, using humor, satire, and moral reflection to engage and instruct his readers. The essay establishes the tone and structure of ‘The Spectator’, ensuring its enduring appeal and influence in the world of literature and journalism.

2.2.6 FURTHER READING

1. Addison, Joseph (1837). [*The Works of Joseph Addison*](#), Vol. I, p.31. Harper & Brothers.
2. [Henry W. Kent](#) (1903). ["Spectator"](#). *Bibliographical Notes on One Hundred Books Famous in English Literature*. NY: [Grolier Club](#).
3. ["Joseph Addison & Richard Steele"](#). *The Open Anthology of Literature in English*. Retrieved 19 September 2017.

2.2.7 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- a. March 1, 1711, first issue.
- b. Mr. Spectator.
- c. A kindly and eccentric country gentleman who embodies traditional values.
- d. The rising commercial class.
- e. Modesty and integrity, representing honor and duty.
- f. A charming and fashionable man-about-town.
- g. Provides moral and ethical guidance.
- h. To offer a microcosm of 18th-century English society.
- i. To highlight absurdities and contradictions within each character’s behaviour and beliefs.
- j. Social commentary, humour and satire, moral and ethical reflection.

2.2.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

1. Describe Sir Roger de Coverley's character and his role in the Spectator Club.
2. What does Sir Andrew Freeport represent in "The Spectator Club"?
3. How does Captain Sentry contrast with other characters in "The Spectator Club"?
4. What are the main characteristics of Will Honeycomb in "The Spectator Club"?
5. What role does the Clergyman play in "The Spectator Club"?
6. How does Addison use the characters in the Spectator Club to reflect 18th-century English society?
7. In what ways does Addison employ humour and satire in "The Spectator Club"?
8. What themes does "The Spectator Club" explore through its characters?

UNIT 3.1 WILLIAM HAZLITT: ON GOING A JOURNEY

Unit Structure

- 3.1.1 Learning Objectives
- 3.1.2 William Hazlitt: A Biographical Note
- 3.1.3 Explanation of the essay
- 3.1.4 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.1.5 Further Reading
- 3.1.6 Answers to check your progress
- 3.1.7 Model Questions

3.1.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

In this unit learners will be able to learn about

- Analyzing the protagonist’s experiences and growth throughout the journey.
- Identifying and discussing key themes such as self-discovery, the significance of travel, and the impact of new experiences.
- Examining Bond’s use of descriptive language, narrative style, and symbolism in conveying the story’s message.
- Gaining insight into the cultural and geographical setting described in the story.
- Encouraging readers to reflect on their own experiences and perspectives related to travel and personal growth.

3.1.2 WILLIAM HAZLITT: A BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

William Hazlitt (1778-1830) was an influential English essayist, critic, and social commentator. Renowned for his perceptive insights and eloquent prose, Hazlitt made significant contributions to literary criticism and essay writing during the Romantic era. His work, characterized by its clear, conversational style and deep engagement with literature, politics, and human nature, continues to be celebrated for its intellectual rigor and emotional depth.

Early Life and Education

William Hazlitt was born on April 10, 1778, in Maidstone, Kent, England. His father, also named William Hazlitt, was a Unitarian minister, which significantly influenced Hazlitt's intellectual development. The family moved frequently due to his father's preaching assignments, which exposed Hazlitt to various intellectual and cultural environments during his formative years.

Hazlitt received his early education at the Unitarian College in Hackney, where he studied

classical literature, philosophy, and theology. Despite his initial intention to follow in his father's footsteps and become a minister, Hazlitt's growing interest in philosophy and literature led him to pursue a different path.

Career and Major Works

Philosophy and Early Writing:

Hazlitt initially focused on philosophy, influenced by the works of John Locke, David Hume, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. In 1805, he published his first major work, 'An Essay on the Principles of Human Action', which explored the nature of human will and motivation. This work established Hazlitt's reputation as a serious thinker and laid the foundation for his later essays.

Literary Criticism and Essays:

Hazlitt's career as a literary critic and essayist took off in the early 19th century. He wrote for several periodicals, including 'The Morning Chronicle', 'The Edinburgh Review', and 'The Examiner'. His essays covered a wide range of topics, from literature and art to politics and society.

- Characters of Shakespeare's Plays (1817):

This collection of essays solidified Hazlitt's reputation as a leading Shakespearean critic. His insightful analyses of Shakespeare's characters and themes demonstrated his deep understanding of the playwright's work and his ability to convey complex ideas in accessible prose.

- Lectures on the English Poets (1818) and Lectures on the English Comic Writers (1819):

These lecture series, delivered at the Surrey Institution, showcased Hazlitt's breadth of knowledge and his engaging style. They were later published and remain important works in literary criticism.

- Table-Talk (1821-1822) and The Plain Speaker (1826):

These collections of essays covered a wide range of topics, reflecting Hazlitt's diverse interests and keen observations. His conversational tone and incisive wit made these essays popular among contemporary readers and ensured their lasting appeal.

Political Writing:

Hazlitt was also a passionate political commentator. He was an ardent supporter of radical causes and frequently criticized the conservative politics of his time. His political essays, often published in periodicals, were known for their sharp criticism and eloquent advocacy for reform and individual liberty.

Personal Life and Legacy

Hazlitt's personal life was marked by financial difficulties and turbulent relationships. He married Sarah Stoddart in 1808, but their marriage was unhappy and ended in separation. He later had a scandalous affair with a maid named Sarah Walker, which he chronicled in his controversial memoir 'Liber Amoris' (1823).

Despite these challenges, Hazlitt remained a prolific writer until his death on September 18, 1830. His work had a profound influence on subsequent generations of writers and critics, including Charles Lamb, Leigh Hunt, and later figures such as George Orwell and Christopher Hitchens.

Contribution and Impact

William Hazlitt's essays are celebrated for their clarity, depth, and humanism. He brought a unique personal voice to his writing, blending rigorous intellectual analysis with vivid, often lyrical, prose. His ability to engage readers on a personal level, combined with his critical acumen, has ensured his place as one of the foremost essayists in the English language. His works continue to be studied and admired for their enduring insights into literature, society, and the human condition.

3.1.3 EXPLANATION OF THE ESSAY

"On Going a Journey" is one of William Hazlitt's most celebrated essays, in which he explores the pleasures and philosophical benefits of solitary travel. Published in 1822 as part of his collection 'Table-Talk', the essay delves into the reasons why Hazlitt prefers to travel alone and the unique joys and freedoms that such journeys bring.

The Joy of Solitude

Hazlitt begins the essay by asserting that he enjoys traveling alone. He values solitude because it allows him to escape the constraints of social interactions and enjoy a sense of freedom. For Hazlitt, traveling alone means not having to accommodate someone else's schedule, preferences, or moods. This solitude provides an opportunity for introspection and self-discovery.

Freedom from Social Obligation

One of the central themes of the essay is the contrast between the burdens of social life and the liberating nature of solitary travel. Hazlitt argues that when traveling with companions, one is often preoccupied with maintaining conversation and social harmony. This can detract from the experience of the journey itself. In contrast, traveling alone allows him to immerse himself fully in his surroundings and thoughts, free from the need to engage in constant social interaction.

Immersion in Nature and the Senses

Hazlitt extols the virtues of immersing oneself in nature during a solitary journey. He describes the joy of experiencing the landscape, the changing weather, and the natural world without the distractions of human company. The solitary traveler can appreciate the scenery more deeply and connect with it on a more personal level. This immersion in nature is therapeutic and rejuvenating for Hazlitt, offering a respite from the demands of daily life.

The Role of Imagination

Another key aspect of Hazlitt's essay is the role of imagination in solitary travel. When alone, he can let his mind wander freely, indulging in daydreams and fantasies. This mental freedom is an essential part of the journey for Hazlitt, as it allows him to explore new ideas and perspectives. The solitude fosters creativity and introspection, making the journey a rich and fulfilling experience.

The Contrast with Urban Life

Hazlitt contrasts the serenity and simplicity of rural travel with the noise and complexity of urban life. He finds that the countryside offers a sense of peace and tranquility that is often missing in cities. The slower pace of rural travel allows him to reflect and appreciate the beauty of the natural world, which stands in stark contrast to the hustle and bustle of city life.

The Value of Ephemeral Experiences

In his essay, Hazlitt emphasizes the value of ephemeral experiences during travel. He enjoys the fleeting nature of the sights and encounters he experiences on his journeys. These transient moments are precious because they are unique and unrepeatable. Hazlitt finds beauty in the impermanence of these experiences, which add to the richness of his solitary travels.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- a. What is the main theme of Hazlitt's essay?**
- b. How does Hazlitt describe the feeling of leaving home?**
- c. What does Hazlitt find valuable about journeys?**
- d. According to Hazlitt, how does travel affect our perception of life?**
- e. How does Hazlitt view the destination in the context of travel?**

3.1.4 LET US SUM UP

"On Going a Journey" is a reflection on the joys and benefits of solitary travel. Hazlitt celebrates the freedom, introspection, and connection with nature that come with traveling alone. He contrasts these pleasures with the constraints of social interactions and the distractions of urban life. Through his eloquent prose, Hazlitt captures the essence of the solitary travel experience, highlighting its potential for personal growth, creativity, and profound enjoyment. The essay remains a timeless exploration of the value of solitude and the unique pleasures of journeying alone.

3.1.5 FURTHER READING

- *The Collected Works of William Hazlitt*. 13 vols. Edited by A. R. Waller and Arnold Glover, with an introduction by W. E. Glover. London: J. M. Dent, 1902–1906
- *New Writings by William Hazlitt*. Edited by P. P. Howe. London: Martin Secker, 1925
- *The Letters of William Hazlitt*. Edited by Herschel Moreland Sikes, assisted by Willard Hallam Bonner and Gerald Lahey. London: Macmillan, 1979

3.1.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- a. The joy and philosophical reflection of traveling.
- b. As a mix of excitement and nostalgia.
- c. The opportunity for self-reflection and new experiences.
- d. It refreshes and expands our perspective on life.
- e. He considers the journey itself more important than the destination.

3.1.6 MODEL QUESTIONS

1. What reasons does Hazlitt give for preferring to travel alone in "On Going a Journey"?
2. How does Hazlitt describe the significance of nature in his travel experiences?
3. Discuss Hazlitt's views on the relationship between memory and travel.
4. How do Hazlitt's references to specific locations and personal anecdotes enhance his argument about the pleasures of travel?
5. Compare Hazlitt's descriptions of traveling alone versus traveling with a companion.

6. How do Hazlitt's ideas in "On Going a Journey" reflect the values of the Romantic era?
7. William Hazlitt's essay "On Going a Journey" is a celebration of the joys and benefits of solitary travel. Discuss Hazlitt's arguments in favor of traveling alone. How does he justify his preference for solitude, and what specific advantages does he believe it offers over traveling with companions?
8. Nature plays a significant role in Hazlitt's essay "On Going a Journey." Analyze how Hazlitt describes his interactions with the natural environment and the significance it holds for him. How does he use his experiences in nature to illustrate his broader philosophical reflections on travel and personal freedom?
9. In "On Going a Journey," Hazlitt explores the relationship between memory and travel. Discuss his views on how past experiences shape and enrich the act of journeying. How does he balance the interplay between memory and the present moment, and what does this reveal about his understanding of the purpose and value of travel?

UNIT 3.2 CHARLES LAMB: DREAM CHILDREN

Unit Structure

- 3.2.1 Learning Objectives
- 3.2.2 Charles Lamb: A Biographical Note
- 3.2.3 Explanation of the essay
- 3.2.4 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.2.5 Further Reading
- 3.2.6 Answers to check your progress
- 3.2.7 Model Questions

3.2.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The learning objectives for this unit are:

- Identify and analyze the structure of the essay, noting its use of narrative and reflective elements.
- Explore the main themes, such as the nature of dreams, the idealization of family life, and the impact of imagination on reality.
- Assess the portrayal of the narrator and the dream children, including their roles and symbolic significance in the narrative.
- Investigate Lamb's use of language, imagery, and stylistic devices to convey emotions and ideas.
- Discuss how the essay evokes feelings of nostalgia, longing, and melancholy, and how these emotions contribute to the overall message.
- Place the essay within the context of Lamb's life and the Romantic era, considering how personal and historical factors influence the text.

3.2.2 CHARLES LAMB: A BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Charles Lamb (1775-1834) was a renowned English essayist, poet, and antiquarian, best known for his essays collected under the title 'Essays of Elia'. Lamb's work is characterized by a personal, reflective style that combines wit, warmth, and melancholy. He is celebrated for his insightful and humorous observations on everyday life and his deep appreciation for literature and history.

Early Life and Education

Charles Lamb was born on February 10, 1775, in London, England. He was the youngest child of John and Elizabeth Lamb. Lamb attended Christ's Hospital, a charity boarding school in

London, where he formed a lifelong friendship with Samuel Taylor Coleridge, a fellow poet and philosopher.

Career and Literary Work

- Clerkship:

After completing his education, Lamb began working as a clerk at the East India Company in 1792. He remained in this position for 33 years, which provided him with a stable income and the means to support his literary pursuits.

- Early Poetry:

Lamb's first literary efforts were in poetry, but his verse did not gain much recognition. His collaboration with Coleridge on the 1796 collection 'Poems on Various Subjects' marked his initial foray into the literary world.

- Prose and Essays:

Lamb's true genius emerged in his prose works, particularly his essays. His best-known work, 'Essays of Elia', was published in two series (1823 and 1833). These essays, originally contributed to 'London Magazine', are celebrated for their charm, wit, and personal touch. Essays such as "A Dissertation Upon Roast Pig" and "Old China" are exemplary of his style.

Personal Struggles and Relationships

- Family Tragedy: Lamb's life was marked by personal tragedy. In 1796, his sister Mary, in a fit of madness, killed their mother. Lamb took on the responsibility of caring for Mary, who suffered from recurring bouts of mental illness. This event profoundly affected Lamb and shaped much of his outlook on life.

- Friendships: Despite his personal struggles, Lamb maintained close friendships with many prominent literary figures of his time, including William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and William Hazlitt. These relationships enriched his intellectual and literary life.

Legacy and Death

- Literary Contributions: Lamb's essays have had a lasting impact on English literature, influencing subsequent generations of essayists and writers. His ability to infuse mundane topics with humor and pathos has endeared him to readers for over two centuries.

- Death: Charles Lamb died on December 27, 1834, from complications related to a fall. His sister Mary survived him by more than a decade, passing away in 1847.

Significance

Charles Lamb's work remains significant for its unique blend of personal reflection, literary critique,

and gentle humor. His essays continue to be read and appreciated for their insight into human nature and their eloquent expression of the complexities of everyday life. Lamb's ability to transform personal experiences into universal reflections has cemented his place as one of the great essayists of English literature.

3.2.3 EXPLANATION OF THE ESSAY

"Dream Children: A Reverie" is one of Charles Lamb's most famous essays, originally published in 1822 in the 'London Magazine' as part of his 'Essays of Elia' series. The essay is notable for its blend of whimsical imagination and deep pathos, revealing Lamb's mastery in exploring themes of memory, loss, and longing.

The essay begins with the narrator, Elia, recounting a fantastical evening where he imagines telling stories to his two children, Alice and John. The stories revolve around his own childhood and family memories, particularly focusing on his brother John (referred to as "John L.") and his grandmother Field.

1. Setting and Imagined Children:

- The essay opens with a serene domestic scene where Elia is entertaining his children with stories of his past. This sets the tone for a reflective and nostalgic narrative.

2. Stories of the Past:

- Elia narrates stories about his childhood home, a grand old mansion that belonged to his grandmother Field. He describes the house and its surroundings with vivid detail, painting a picture of a place filled with history and personal significance.
- He then shifts to reminisce about his brother John, portraying him as a larger-than-life figure who was full of vigor and life but who ultimately died young. This section is tinged with both admiration and sorrow.

3. Grandmother Field:

- Elia speaks fondly of his grandmother Field, a kind and gentle woman who took care of the family estate. He recounts her piety, strength, and the deep respect he had for her.
- The narrative then delves into the eventual decline and death of Grandmother Field, marking the passage of time and the inevitable losses that come with it.

4. Revelation and Emotional Shift:

- As Elia concludes his stories, there is a sudden shift in tone. The children, Alice and John, begin to fade away, revealing that they are mere figments of Elia's imagination.
- The essay closes with a poignant revelation: Elia, in reality, never had children. The imagined

children symbolize his unfulfilled desires and the life he might have lived.

Themes and Analysis

1. Memory and Nostalgia:

- Lamb explores the power of memory to shape our present emotions. The essay reflects a deep longing for the past and the people who once inhabited it.

2. Imagination vs. Reality:

- The blending of imagination and reality in the essay highlights the human tendency to create idealized versions of life and relationships. The imagined children serve as a poignant contrast to Lamb's real, childless existence.

3. Loss and Longing:

- Central to the essay is the theme of loss—loss of loved ones, of childhood, and of unrealized dreams. Lamb uses the format of a reverie to express the melancholy that accompanies these losses.

4. Familial Love and Admiration:

- The affection Lamb expresses for his family members, especially his brother and grandmother, underscores the importance of familial bonds. Despite the pain of loss, these memories are cherished and honored.

5. The Passage of Time:

- The essay poignantly captures the passage of time and the changes it brings. The transformation of the once-grand estate into a place of memory reflects the inevitable changes that life undergoes.

"Dream Children: A Reverie" is a masterful essay that encapsulates Charles Lamb's ability to evoke deep emotion through personal reflection. It serves as a meditation on the interplay between memory and imagination, and the profound impact of love and loss. The essay remains a timeless piece, resonating with readers for its honest and heartfelt exploration of the human condition.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- a. Who is the narrator of "Dream Children"?**
- b. What are the names of the children in the essay?**
- c. Who was the grandmother mentioned in the essay?**
- d. What was Mrs. Field known for?**
- e. What does the narrator reveal at the end of the essay?**

f. What theme is central to the essay?

3.2.4 LET US SUM UP

"Dream Children: A Reverie" by Charles Lamb, published in 1822 as part of his 'Essays of Elia' series, is a poignant and reflective essay. It explores themes of memory, loss, and longing through a blend of whimsical imagination and deep pathos.

The essay begins with the narrator, Elia, imagining an evening where he tells stories to his two children, Alice and John. He recounts memories of his childhood, focusing on his brother John and his grandmother Field. Elia vividly describes the family estate and reminisces about his brother's vibrant life and untimely death, and his grandmother's piety and strength.

As the stories conclude, there's a shift in tone as the children fade away, revealing they are figments of Elia's imagination. The essay ends with the revelation that Elia, in reality, never had children, symbolizing his unfulfilled desires and the life he might have lived.

The essay examines the power of memory, the blend of imagination and reality, and the themes of loss, familial love, and the passage of time. It is a meditation on the interplay between memory and imagination, and the profound impact of love and loss.

3.2.5 FURTHER READING

- *Charles Lamb and the Lloyds*, edited by E.V. Lucas, Smith, Elder & Company, London, 1898.
- *Charles Lamb and His Contemporaries*, by [Edmund Blunden](#), Cambridge University Press, 1933.
- *Companion to Charles Lamb*, by Claude Prance, Mansell Publishing, London, 1938.
- *Dream-Child: A Life of Charles Lamb* by Eric G. Wilson, Yale University Press, 2022.

3.2.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- a. The narrator is Charles Lamb.
- b. The children's names are John and Alice.
- c. The grandmother was Mrs. Field.
- d. Mrs. Field was known for her piety and care of the great house in Norfolk.
- e. The narrator reveals that the children were only a dream.
- f. The theme of nostalgia and loss is central to the essay.

3.2.7 MODEL QUESTIONS

1. How does Charles Lamb use the motif of memory in "Dream Children" to explore the themes of nostalgia and loss?
2. Discuss the significance of the relationship between Charles Lamb and his grandmother, Mrs. Field, as depicted in the essay. How does this relationship shape Lamb's reflections?
3. Analyse the role of the children, John and Alice, in "Dream Children." How do they serve as a reflection of Lamb's unfulfilled desires and imaginary family life?
4. In "Dream Children," how does Charles Lamb blend reality and imagination to convey the emotional depth of his personal experiences?
5. Examine the use of Gothic elements in "Dream Children." How does Lamb incorporate these elements to enhance the atmosphere of the essay?
6. What is the significance of the revelation at the end of "Dream Children" that the children were merely a dream? How does this affect the reader's understanding of Lamb's emotional state?
7. How does Charles Lamb's portrayal of childhood in "Dream Children" contrast with the realities of his own life?
8. Discuss how "Dream Children" reflects Lamb's literary style, particularly his use of personal essays to explore intimate and emotional themes.

UNIT 4 GEORGE ORWELL: POLITICS AND THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Unit Structure

- 4.1 Learning Objectives
- 4.2 George Orwell: A Biographical Note
- 4.3 Explanation of the essay
- 4.4 Let Us Sum Up
- 4.5 Further Reading
- 4.6 Answers to check your progress
- 4.7 Model questions

4.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Here in this unit, learners will be able to learn about:

- Students will be able to explain Orwell's argument that the decline of language is both a cause and effect of political and economic deterioration.
- Students will learn to recognize and identify examples of the poor language habits Orwell criticizes, such as vagueness, dying metaphors, and pretentious diction.
- Students will analyze how Orwell connects the misuse of language to the manipulation of thought and political control.
- Students will evaluate Orwell's six rules for writing clearly and effectively, and apply these rules to their own writing.
- Students will be able to discuss the implications of Orwell's claim that language can be used as a tool for political manipulation and control.
- Students will reflect on the ethical responsibility of writers to use clear and honest language, as emphasized by Orwell.

4.2 GEORGE ORWELL: A BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

George Orwell, the pen name of Eric Arthur Blair, was a prominent English writer known for his critical views on politics and society. His work spans various genres, including novels, essays, and journalism, and his influence extends into contemporary discussions on totalitarianism, freedom, and social justice.

Key Aspects of George Orwell's Life and Work

1. Early Life and Education:

- Born on June 25, 1903, in Motihari, Bengal, British India.

- Educated at St Cyprian's School and Eton College. His experiences of poverty and class distinctions deeply influenced his later work.

2. Early Career:

- Joined the Indian Imperial Police in Burma, an experience that sparked his anti-imperialist views.
- After returning to England, Orwell struggled with poverty and began his career as a writer.

3. Major Works:

- "Down and Out in Paris and London" (1933): A semi-autobiographical account of poverty and social inequality.
- "Burmese Days" (1934): A novel reflecting his experiences in Burma and his critique of colonialism.
- "Homage to Catalonia" (1938): An account of his participation in the Spanish Civil War, highlighting the complexities of political conflict.
- "Animal Farm" (1945): A satirical novella critiquing the corruption of revolutionary ideals in Soviet Russia.
- "Nineteen Eighty-Four" (1949): A dystopian novel exploring themes of surveillance, propaganda, and totalitarianism, profoundly impacting cultural and political discourse.

4. Political Views:

- Orwell was a democratic socialist who opposed totalitarianism, fascism, and communism.
- His political and social critiques are evident in his essays, journalism, and fiction.

5. Personal Life:

- Married Eileen O'Shaughnessy in 1936; she passed away in 1945.
- Married Sonia Brownell shortly before his death.

6. Death and Legacy:

- Died on January 21, 1950, from tuberculosis.
- Orwell's works continue to be influential in discussions on political theory, surveillance, and personal freedom. His writings are celebrated for their clarity, moral engagement, and critical insight into contemporary issues.

4.3 EXPLANATION OF THE ESSAY

"Politics and the English Language" is an influential essay by George Orwell, first published in 'Horizon' in 1946. The essay critiques the state of contemporary English prose and argues that

vague, imprecise language reflects and perpetuates bad thinking and corrupt politics. Here's a detailed explanation of the essay:

1. Introduction:

- Orwell begins by discussing the decline of the English language and its impact on political discourse. He asserts that the decay of language is both a symptom and a cause of political corruption and misleading rhetoric.

2. The Decline of Language:

- Orwell argues that English has become increasingly vague, imprecise, and overly complex. He attributes this decline to several factors, including laziness, lack of precision, and the influence of political and economic forces.

3. Examples of Bad Writing:

- Orwell provides examples of poor writing from contemporary sources, including political speeches and academic prose. These examples are characterized by clichés and jargon, which he argues obscure meaning and hinder clear communication.

4. The Connection Between Language and Thought:

- The essay posits that bad language reflects and reinforces bad thinking. Orwell emphasizes that unclear language leads to unclear thinking and, consequently, contributes to political and social manipulation.

5. Recommendations for Improvement:

- Orwell offers several practical guidelines for improving writing:
 - Avoid using clichés and stale phrases.
 - Opt for concrete, specific language rather than abstract terms.
 - Simplify sentence structure to enhance clarity.
 - Prefer active voice over passive voice.
 - Be precise and avoid unnecessary jargon.

6. The Role of Language in Politics:

- Orwell explores how political language is used to obscure truth and manipulate public opinion. He argues that political language often uses euphemisms and abstract terms to mask harsh realities and justify dubious policies.

Themes and Analysis

1. Language and Power:

- Orwell argues that language is a powerful tool for shaping political thought and maintaining control. Clear, precise language is necessary for genuine democratic discourse and accountability.

2. The Role of Clichés and Jargon:

- The essay criticizes the use of clichés and jargon for their role in diluting meaning and preventing critical engagement with important issues. Orwell believes that reliance on these forms of language contributes to political deception and apathy.

3. The Relationship Between Language and Thought:

- Orwell emphasizes that language and thought are intertwined. He asserts that the decline in language quality is both a result of and a contributor to poor thinking, which can perpetuate ineffective or harmful policies.

4. The Call for Clear Writing:

- Orwell advocates for a return to clear, honest writing as a means of promoting clarity of thought and political integrity. He suggests that improving language standards can lead to more effective communication and healthier political discourse.

5. Ethical Responsibility of Writers:

- Orwell underscores the ethical responsibility of writers to use language with precision and honesty. He believes that writers play a crucial role in shaping public understanding and should strive to combat the misuse of language in political and social contexts.

"Politics and the English Language" is a critical examination of how language influences and reflects political thought. Orwell's essay remains a seminal work in the study of political language and its impact on public discourse. By advocating for clearer and more precise language, Orwell emphasizes the importance of linguistic integrity in maintaining democratic principles and preventing political manipulation.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- a. What is the main concern of Orwell in this essay?
- b. How does Orwell describe modern English?
- c. What does Orwell say about the connection between language and thought?
- d. How many rules does Orwell propose for better writing?
- e. What is one common language misuse Orwell criticizes?
- f. According to Orwell, what is the main goal of political language?

- g. What does Orwell suggest about ready-made phrases?
- h. What is Orwell's first rule for clear writing?

4.4 LET US SUM UP

"Politics and the English Language" by George Orwell, published in 1946, critiques the decline of English prose, arguing that vague and imprecise language perpetuates bad thinking and corrupt politics. Orwell highlights how contemporary writing, especially in politics, is filled with clichés, jargon, and obfuscation that obscure meaning and hinder clear communication. He links poor language to poor thinking and political manipulation, offering guidelines for improvement, such as avoiding clichés, using specific language, and preferring active voice. Orwell advocates for clear, honest writing to enhance political discourse and maintain democratic integrity.

4.5 FURTHER READING

- *The Cambridge Introduction to George Orwell*. Cambridge University Press. 2012.
- *Orwell: Essays, Journalism and Letters Vol 4*, eds. Sonia Brownell and Ian Angus, p. 576
- Bounds, Philip. *Orwell and Marxism: The Political and Cultural Thinking of George Orwell*. I.B. Tauris. 2009

4.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- a. The decay of language.
- b. As full of bad habits and imprecision.
- c. Corrupt language leads to corrupt thought.
- d. Six rules.
- e. The use of dying metaphors.
- f. To make lies sound truthful and murder respectable.
- g. They should be avoided because they prevent clear thinking.
- h. Never use a metaphor, simile, or other figure of speech which you are used to seeing in print.

4.7 MODEL QUESTIONS

1. How does George Orwell argue that the decline of language contributes to political manipulation and the erosion of truth in his essay "Politics and the English Language"?
2. In "Politics and the English Language," Orwell criticizes the use of vague and abstract language in political writing. Discuss how this vagueness serves the interests of those in power and undermines democratic discourse.

3. Examine the relationship between language and thought as presented by Orwell in "Politics and the English Language." How does he believe poor language habits impact our ability to think critically and clearly?
4. Orwell provides several examples of "dying metaphors" and other language misuses in "Politics and the English Language." Analyse these examples and explain how they illustrate his broader critique of modern English.
5. Discuss Orwell's six rules for writing clearly as outlined in "Politics and the English Language." How do these rules aim to counteract the decline of language, and how might they be applied in contemporary writing?
6. In what ways does Orwell link the degradation of language to the rise of authoritarianism in "Politics and the English Language"? Provide examples from the text to support your answer.
7. How does Orwell's essay "Politics and the English Language" reflect his broader concerns about truth, power, and the role of language in society? Discuss with reference to specific passages.
8. Orwell argues that political language is designed to make "lies sound truthful and murder respectable." How does he support this claim in "Politics and the English Language," and what are the implications for political communication?