Neoclassicism Study Guide

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Introduction

Neoclassicism was a movement whose artists looked to the classical texts for their creative inspiration in an effort to imitate classical form. The writers in particular drew on what were considered to be classical virtues□simplicity, order, restraint, logic, economy, accuracy, and decorum□to produce prose, poetry, and drama. Literature was of value in accordance with its ability to not only delight, but also instruct.

Although the terms Classicism and Neoclassicism are somewhat interchangeable (and often used as such), Neoclassicism refers strictly the specific literary periods in history that produced art inspired by the ancients, which, of course, excludes the ancients themselves. It is usually more specifically defined as a Classicism that originally dominated English literature during the Restoration Age and which lasted well into the eighteenth century.

What these writers longed for began as a reaction to the Renaissance. Neoclassicists believed in Greek ideals, in restraint of passions, and valued communication as an exchange rather than individual self-expression. The Renaissance celebrated human potential, individualism, imagination, and mysticism. In contrast to the Renaissance, neoclassicists saw humans as being limited in potential and imperfect in form. They distrusted innovation and invention and believed in exercising restraint in personal expression. The efforts of the neoclassical writers resulted in the creation of a polite, urbane, and witty art form that was as instructive as it was entertaining.

Themes

Intellectuals and Intellectualism

Devotion to the exercise or application of the intellect was important to the neoclassical writer. This tendency is a natural outgrowth of the classical tradition these writers sought to imitate. Writers like Dryden, Johnson, and Pope, not wanting to limit themselves to one genre, engaged in experimentation to broaden their own intellectual abilities, imitating the conventions of classical poetic verse, drama, and rhetoric. In addition, these writers commented on a wide range of topics□political, historical, and social□demonstrating a wealth of personal knowledge. Intellectual expression was of greater value to the neoclassicist than the expression of feelings, and out of this desire came the satire and various forms of didactic (instructional) literature.

Often the writings of these authors were a printed form of warfare, intellectual contests in print and journalism. Satirists would compete with one another, relying on a keen sense of wit to savagely expose their adversary. When John Dryden wrote *Of Dramatick Poesie: An Essay*, he criticized the current trends of the English theater. Sir Robert Howard immediately responded to the essay with some criticisms of his own. The result was a scathing rebuttal, *A Defence of An Essay of Dramatick Poesie*, in which Dryden attacks Howard's comments. Howard's response was fairly mild, almost as if he were surrendering.

Social Protest

The seemingly unchecked actions and irresponsibility of the monarchy were a source of deep contention among its critics. The reign of Charles II and James were mired in contradiction, their public faces never mirroring their true intentions. There was also great opposition to the "reign" of Robert Walpole, 1st Earl of Orford; a highly influential statesman, he all but assumed the role of king, gaining the confidence of George I and II.

Neoclassical writers would, time and again, prove to pose a threat to the establishment, resorting to their own form of social protest, the written word expressed as satire, to inform, educate, and inspire public outrage. In response to Walpole's flagrant abuse of power, the two popular political parties of the time, the Tories and the Whigs, would form a loose alliance against Walpole. Of those dissenters, Tory writers Jonathan Swift, Alexander Pope, John Gay, and Henry Fielding and the Whig writer James Thomson formed an alliance bent on exposing Walpole publicly. The efforts of the small group of sharp-tongued intellectuals stung Walpole. He responded to the attacks by imposing censorship on the group.

Imitation

The neoclassicists sought to imitate the classics, looking to the poetic conventions, the dramatic theories, as well as the rhetorical skills of the classicists for guidance. From the onset of the Restoration Age through the Age of Johnson, writers would look to classical forms such as the ode, the satire, and the epic for their inspiration. They also tended to favor rhymed couplets utilizing conventional poetic diction and imagery in their works.

Imitation was also a neoclassical genre. An imitation is a translation by which the translator takes certain artistic liberty with a classical work in an effort to produce something new. Using the classical source as a point of reference, the translator often altered not only the language but the actual structure of the work, sometimes omitting or changing sections of it to suit contemporary tastes.

Imitation was a well-accepted art form, readily adopted by Restoration poets. Samuel Johnson was an imitator and chose the Latin poet Juvenal, imitating his *Satura III*, to express himself on urban life in London. Johnson took care to include Juvenal's words at the bottom of the pages of his *London*, wishing to preserve Juvenal's sentiments next to his own. Johnson preserved the original structure of the work but altered portions of it in order to voice his own views, which were more specific to his audience.

Style

Allegory

An allegory is a narrative technique in which symbolic characters or actions are used to convey a message or teach a lesson. Typically used to teach moral, ethical, or religious ideals, it is also used for political purposes. In the case of the neoclassicists, the latter was often the case, often in conjunction with satire.

Swift's criticism of English politics was so harsh that he felt it necessary to publish his work *Gulliver's Travels* anonymously. On the surface, the work is mere fiction, but on a deeper level it is an account of the bitter political struggles between the two major political parties of the early eighteenth century, the Tories and the Whigs.

Johnson lampoons those intimate with the British political scene in his depiction of certain characters. For example, the Lilliputian emperor is characterized as being tyrannical and corrupt and is also easily recognized as George I, King of England (from 1714 to 1727). The Lilliputian Empress stands for Queen Anne, who, offended by Swift's earlier satires, chose to prevent his advancement in the Church of England. The two parties in Lilliput, the Low-Heels and the High-Heels, represent the Tories and the Whigs.

Didactic

This term describes works of literature that aim to teach some moral, religious, political, or practical lesson. The term usually refers to literature in which the message is more important than the form. The aims of many of the neoclassical writers were instructional, as many of them were moralists and critics of English politics, and all shared an interest in conveying their position. In the case of *Robinson Crusoe*, Defoe's lesson for the young audience is that perseverance pays off.

Robinson Crusoe was recognized as a book of extraordinary value for children in its time. Many believed Crusoe to be an excellent role model for children. Steady, intelligent, spirited, independent, industrious□Defoe's character demonstrates all of these qualities in the face of great adversity and survives. Defoe's work has also been praised because of children's ability to relate to Crusoe and his persistence, delighting in the discoveries he makes and the things he does to survive.

Blank Verse

Any unrhymed poetry constitutes blank verse; more specifically, it is unrhymed iambic pentameter verse (composed of lines of five two-syllable feet, or sets, with the first syllable accented and the second unaccented). Blank verse was often used by

neoclassical poets, as it was by post-Renaissance poets, and was appreciated for its flexibility as well as its dignified tone.

Shakespeare wrote most of his plays in blank verse, subsequently attracting imitators like John Dryden. Dryden was known for his mastery of various rhyme forms, and blank verse was among his repertoire, *All for Love* (1678) being a prime example.

Mock Epic

This literary form was a common and clever mode of satire used to make light of a wide range of contemporary concerns. Many of the neoclassical writers□Pope, Swift, Dryden, Defoe, Richardson, Johnson□wrote satires on what they viewed to be some of the social and political excesses of the age.

First, consider the classic epic□a long narrative poem about a hero, someone of great nationalistic, historic, or legendary importance. The setting is vast, and often there is some sort of cosmic intervention in the form of gods, angels, or demons. The work is usually written in a classical style, with elaborate metaphors and allusions to further express the importance of its subject.

The mock epic employs many of the same classical conventions as the epic□the work is written as a long narrative, employing the use of high language, metaphors, and allusions. The subject matter, however, is decidedly less heroic, thereby ridiculing real-life overreactions to it.

Pope's "Rape of the Lock" is a good example of the mock epic. As duly pointed out by Frances Mayhew Rippy, in "The Rape of the Lock: Overview," Pope's work looks at modern concerns, finding them less heroic than those of the classical world. Rippy adds that the "Epic battles have become card games and snuff-throwing," and the "genealogy of weapons has become the history of Belinda's ornamental hairpin." Essentially, the work succeeds in satirizing the loss of a sense of what is important.

Historical Context

The English climate during the neoclassical period was one of false appearances in both political and the public domains. Part of the masquerade involved a monarchy that was publicly sensitive yet privately ambivalent concerning many issues. There was also a *nouveau riche* middle-class who were more interested in gentrifying themselves with clothing and mannerisms than acknowledging the political conflicts swirling about them.

The history of the monarchy was fuel enough for a great deal of criticism on the part of the neoclassicists, and rightfully so. The hopes of the public were high for a leader who could promise relief from the religious and political struggles that plagued England. It is not surprising that a crowd gathered to cheer Charles II as he landed on the shores of Dover in May of 1660. Many felt that Charles's coronation in 1661 would signify an end to the civil and political unrest. However, he would prove to be a man of contradictions.

Charles II, at least on the surface, gave England much to hope for. Publicly, he professed a love of parliaments and expressed a hope for an independent Church of England. Privately, however, he often postponed parliaments, pushed for toleration of Catholics, and even converted to Catholicism on his deathbed. Similarly, James, Charles's brother and successor, initially pledged support of the Anglicans by promising to honor the national church and to end religious uniformity. Soon, however, he would move against Anglican interests. His attempts to convert the nation to Catholicism provoked William of Orange, his Dutch son-in-law, to organize an army. A confrontation occurred in November of 1688, causing James to flee to France.

The reign of King William III saw the restoration of the Church of England but also an England deep in debt from funding the revolution, inspiring much political grumbling and satire. Queen Anne, his successor, had what some historians have called a peaceful reign, inspired by consumer confidence and a sense of nostalgia. But after Queen Anne's death, King George I and his family were imported from Hanover, Germany. He could only speak broken English and had little interest in English politics.

At that point, Robert Walpole chose to step in and manage the affairs of both George I and his successor, George II. Walpole, acting more as minister than advisor, overstepped his bounds, swaying party politics, making way for the Whigs to assume a dominant role. He was sarcastically dubbed "prime" minister, due to his arrogance and his politics. So tyrannical were his policies that the two main parties, the Whigs and the Tories, formed a temporary alliance against him. It would be the pressure of military conflict that would ultimately lead to Walpole's resignation.

George III was next to take the throne, and though his reign has been characterized as a tumultuous, historians are quick to point out that during that time, Britain was the richest nation with the largest world empire. The return of English control to the monarchy also fostered the reopening of the London theaters in 1662. The new theaters were no longer located in the lower-class parts of town, as was often the case in the Elizabethan age, but were now between Westminster and the City of London, elevating

the audience's experience to new levels. It was a chance for people of many financial positions to observe royalty and the well to do in addition to the actors' performances. The drama of the theater also managed to overshadow a major naval defeat at the hands of the Dutch in 1673.

It was also a time of high fashion. As the middle class mingled with gentry, they strove to imitate what they saw as being their tastes. Wigs, scarves, silks, jewelry□all of these commodities were in demand and appeared in catalogs like Sotheby's. Advertising was also a natural outgrowth of such consumerism and began to be a major source of financial support to periodicals. There was also a focus on politeness and self-control. Pope, Swift, and others would satirize what they saw as being frivolous or pointless attempts at self-promotion.

All of the diversion□the pomp and circumstance of the social classes, the drama of the theater, the drama of the monarchy□could not avert the ever-widening gaps between rich and poor. Nor could it avert the public outcry against the slave trade, a business that was the reason for much of England's financial success as a superpower. These conflicts and others would move literature towards Romanticism.

Movement Variations

The Restoration Age (1660-1700)

England underwent a transformation at the outset of the Restoration, in strong reaction against Puritanism. The period was marked by a resurgence of scientific thought as well as investigation. It is at this point, with the infusion of French influences, that Neoclassicism begins to develop.

During the Restoration Age, the Heroic couplet, a rhyming couplet written in iambic pentameter (a verse with five iambic feet), was the major verse form. The poetry itself was typically didactic or satirical in nature□the work's main aim was either to instruct some moral, religious, political, or practical lesson or to ridicule and attack some aspect of contemporary life. The ode was also a widely used form. An ode is a lengthy, lyrical, rhyming poem addressing or praising some object, person, or quality in a lofty, noble style.

Prose took on a more "modern" style, as represented by Bunyan, Dryden, and Milton, principal writers of the age. Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* were among the major literary achievements of the period, and Dryden's work demonstrates a transition toward the Augustan Age. Locke's writings, more political in nature, represented the course of English thought during this time.

The Restoration Age also enjoyed the reopening of theaters. Both William Wycherly and William Congreve would infuse the stage with their contemporary dramas. The comedy of manners and the heroic drama developed as genres.

The Augustan Age (1700-1750)

Classical ideas of common sense and reason took precedence over creativity fueled by emotion and imagination during the Augustan Age. Characteristically, literature produced in this time is realistic, satirical, and moral□it was also guided by the politics of the day. Authors like James Thomson continued to reflect in their writings a concern for the study of nature and science.

Poetry is decidedly cleaner and tighter, as reflected in that of Pope, and the mock epic as well as the verse essay became commonly used literary forms. Defoe's journals, collections of essays, and periodicals like the *Spectator* influenced English prose style. Swift's satires were popular as were the early novels of Samuel Richardson and Henry Fielding, among others. Finally, the theater took a turn in character from a moralistic bent in favor of the sentimental comedy. In addition, classical and domestic tragedy also dominated the stage.

The Age of Johnson (1750-1798)

A period aptly named after Samuel Johnson, whose prose and critical works eventually led to the end of the neoclassical tradition, the Age of Johnson represented a transition from a focus on classical study/imitation to an interest in folk literature and popular ballads, which can be similarly observed in Johnson's writing.

During this time, the novel advanced steadily, and Sterne and Mackenzie developed what would be called the novel of sensibility. The Gothic novel came into view due to the efforts of Ann Radcliffe and Horace Walpole. Henry Brooke and William Godwin wrote novels steeped in distinct philosophical as well as political commentary. Shakespeare was exceedingly popular, and both the sentimental comedy and the comedy of manners remained widely used forms. In addition, burlesque, pantomime, and the melodrama also came to the forefront.

The age experienced a growing interest in human freedom, intensified by both the American and French revolutions. An interest in the outdoors, a celebration of country life, and an engagement in an ever-widening circle of intellectual pursuits characterized the period, as did the development of several religious movements like Methodism. It would be in this environment that the neoclassical tradition would then finally be put to rest while English Romanticism gained moment.

Representative Authors

Daniel Defoe (1660-1731)

Daniel Defoe produced his most important works during the Augustan Age, named for its writers who consciously attempted to emulate the work of the original Augustan writers, such as Vergil and Horace. He is also among those responsible for the creation of the English novel. Over the course of his lifetime, he worked as a journalist, pamphleteer, and essayist, writing as a social commentator for the merchant class. Defoe's work is a hallmark of the neoclassical age. It was didactic as well as intellectual in nature. Defoe wrote as effortlessly on the subjects of politics, religion, and economics as he did fiction and employed the use of several neoclassical conventions, including the satire and the epic.

Scholars estimate that Defoe's birth occurred sometime in 1660, the year that marked the beginning of the neoclassical age. He was born to James Foe, a tradesman and merchant, and Alice Foe; it is unclear why Daniel added the "De." Though his father was reasonably successful, he could not send his son to the best schools, as he was a Dissenter, which was a religious group that did not conform to the Church of England. In his adult life, Defoe would work as a businessman in land speculation, the import business, as an inventor, and in other endeavors.

During Defoe's life, England was politically driven by the monarchy and the Anglican Church, and, like his father, Defoe was a Dissenter and found need to defend his faith. Defoe participated in several rebellions, and, after a show of support during the Glorious Revolution, was honored with several positions, serving William of Orange from 1689 to 1702. Defoe's religious beliefs are what prompted many of his writings, including several political pieces and pamphlets and some satirical poetry. It was *The Shortest-Way with Dissenters; or, Proposals for the Establishment of the Church*, a satire written in support of religious freedom, that earned him fame in 1702. In reaction to the work, Defoe found himself charged with libel, fined, and imprisoned until Robert Harley secured his release in 1703 in exchange for his services as a pamphleteer and undercover public propagandist for the government, which continued for roughly ten years.

A Review of the Affairs of France, with Observations on Transactions at Home, was a triweekly journal Defoe created in 1704. Though he likely felt obligated to lean his review in favor of the government, his employer, it was still an essential vehicle of expression for the writer at the time. In the journal, Defoe offered his views on a variety of topics, including politics, economics, morality, and religion. His reporting techniques, social commentary, advice columns, and other features made *A Review of the Affairs of France, with Observations on Transactions at Home* a model publication for journalism today.

The Life and Strange Surprizing Adventures of Robinson Crusoe of York, Mariner, better known today as *Robinson Crusoe*, was published in 1719. It was his first novel and is

his most recognized. Defoe is also responsible for writing several other novels including *Moll Flanders*, *Colonel Jack*, and *Roxana*, all of which are still in publication.

Defoe died April 26, 1731, in Moorfields, London, England.

John Dryden (1631-1700)

John Dryden, a champion of the Restoration Age, was an amazing writer whose versatility has rarely been matched and whose works managed to change the course of English literary history. He produced a wide variety of literature, including satires, comedies, tragedies, lyric poetry, farces, translations, literary criticism, political poetry, and essays. Identified by some scholars as England's first verse satirist, Dryden's development of the verse satire and use of the heroic couplet would be carried on by a new generation of writers for an entire century following his death.

He was born in 1631 in Aldwinkle, Northamptonshire, England. He grew up the son of Erasmus Dryden and Mary Pickering, land-owning gentry, and was well schooled in the classics, first attending Westminster School and then Trinity College, Cambridge, starting in 1650. Dryden won recognition for his poetry throughout his school career, winning prizes for various poems. He eventually earned a bachelor of arts in 1654, the same year his father died.

A year after his graduation, he left Trinity and eventually obtained a position in London working as some sort of civil servant under Oliver Cromwell. His first poem of any significance was in reaction to Cromwell's death, entitled "Heroique Stanzas to the Glorious Memory of Cromwell," in 1659. Several poems followed, but his first lengthy poetic work was "Annus Mirabilis." The poem consisted of 304 quatrains (four-line stanzas) documenting English history, covering a recent war, plague, and the Great Fire. *Mac Flecknoe*, published in 1682, was his first notable satire.

By 1663, Dryden had also begun to write his plays. His first was *The Wild Gallant*, followed by *The Rival Ladies*, and then *The Indian Queen, The Indian Emperour*. He wrote a critical piece entitled *Of Dramatick Poesie: An Essay*, published in 1668, which was a precursor to future dramatic works. Subsequent companion pieces were published in 1668, *A Defence of an Essay of Dramatick Poesie*, and in 1672, *Of Heroique Playes*. Both were written in response to the criticisms of Sir Robert Howard, who took issue with some of Dryden's theatrical conventions.

Of Heroique Playes betrays his strong interest in writing an original epic, as does his *Discourse Concerning the Original and Progress of Satire* (1692). Although Dryden found no time to realize his epic, other essential works would follow.

By 1668, Dryden is England's leading playwright and, shortly after the restoration of Charles II to the throne, is appointed poet laureate. Throughout the remainder of his life, Dryden would continue to produce critical works in response to the ever-changing nature of literary form. In addition, he would produce some of his finest poetry, including

"To the Memory of Mr. Oldham" in 1684, and pieces that experimented with the beast fable. On May 1, 1700, he died and was buried in Poet's Corner in Westminster Abbey.

Samuel Johnson (1709-1784)

Though the Age of Johnson marked the end of Neoclassicism, Samuel Johnson is still considered a major author of the era. Johnson was a man of many talents, including those of lexicographer, translator, journalist/essayist, travel writer, biographer, editor, and critic. He injected into the neoclassical age his own energy and enthusiasm, an appreciation of nature and the country life, and an ever-widening range of intellectual interests.

Born to Michael and Sarah Ford Johnson in 1709 at Lichfield in Staffordshire, Johnson spent most of his early childhood coping with illness. Poor financial circumstances left his family in a state of unrest. Despite a troubled childhood, Johnson demonstrated a keen intellect during his time at Lichfield Grammar School. He then attended Stourbridge Grammar School and would eventually work there.

The first poem Johnson wrote was "On a Daffodil, the First Flower the Author Had Seen That Year" in 1724. Most of his work at Stourbridge was translations of specific books of the *Iliad*. He also wrote several poems; works demonstrating his talents through his experimentation with poetic conventions and his use of diction as well as rhythm. In 1728, Johnson attended Pembroke College, Oxford. There, as throughout the rest of his career, Johnson demonstrated a natural ability for writing poetry with incredible speed as well as precision.

His first attempt at writing professionally came when he moved to London in 1737 in an effort to complete and promote his blank-verse tragedy *Irene*. Johnson eventually began writing for *Gentleman's Magazine*, producing poetry of light verse as well as Latin and Greek epigrams. Johnson turned to a popular contemporary poetic form□the imitation □to attempt to create his first independent piece. The art of imitation allowed the author to exercise creative freedom as he translated the original compositions of others. Johnson chose the Latin poet Juvenal and imitated his *Satura III*, writing on urban life in London. *London: A Poem, in Imitation of the Third Satire of Juvenal* was published in May of 1738. He then published *One Thousand Seven Hundred and Thirty Eight*, a second imitation, just a few days later. The success of these poems led to subsequent renderings of Juvenal's works and a steady stream of poetry from Johnson to follow.

Johnson would spend the next fifteen to twenty years working as a hack writer and journalist. He continued writing reviews, translations, and articles for *Gentlemen's Magazine* through the mid 1740s. Much of his work, at this time, was prose, although he did revise several poems, including "The Young Author," "Ode to Friendship," and "To Laura," which were published in the magazine in 1743 along with Latin translations like *The Vanity of the Human Wishes* and *Satura X*.

During the latter part of his life, Johnson earned an honorary master of arts degree at Oxford (1755) for the *Dictionary of English Language*. In 1765, Trinity College, Dublin, also presented him with an honorary doctor of laws degree. By the time of Johnson's death, on December 13, 1784, he had earned his place in Poet's Corner in Westminster Abbey, near the foot of Shakespeare's monument. Not only recognized as being a master of heroic-couplet verse among critics, Johnson is also recognized for his great contributions to the age, ranked with Pope and Dryden as masters of the form. His work and views would pave the way to English Romanticism.

Representative Works

Of Dramatick Poesie: An Essay

Of Dramatick Poesie: An Essay (1668) represented John Dryden's challenges to the trends of English theater in the seventeenth century and is considered one of his best prose works. The significance of the piece lies within the argument it presents concerning the development of the English theater and would prove to be a driving influence.

In *Of Dramatick Poesie: An Essay*, four speakers, namely Crites, Eugenius, Lisideius, and Neander, drift down the Thames River as the English and Dutch wage a naval battle. Dryden presents his views in dialogue form. The use of several characters allowed Dryden to present the various aspects of his argument from a multitude of perspectives without specifically endorsing a given opinion. The author offers clear positions on the issues discussed, i.e., on the merits of English theater versus that of the French and on other dramatic conventions, including his defense of drama written in verse. Dryden had an affinity for this mode of argument, being characteristic of much of his work, as it allowed him to offer consideration for various positions in an effort to support his own.

The characters in the essay are engaged in a discussion of classical conventions, as they are used by the French, and the value of the unities in English theater. The unities were strict rules of dramatic structure formulated by Italian and French writers during the Renaissance and loosely follow the dramatic principles of Aristotle. Presented as a dialogue, another classical convention, the work is as intellectually engaging as it is entertaining.

Gulliver's Travels

Jonathan Swift experienced overnight success with the publication of his politically charged satire *Gulliver's Travels*. It had all of the elements of a tempting read□mystery as well as political, social, and sexual scandal. So controversial was its content, however, that Swift saw fit to publish the book anonymously in 1727.

Lemuel Gulliver is the main character of *Gulliver's Travels*, and the book is an account of his adventures in Lilliput, Brobdingnag, Laputa, and Houyhnhnms. Gulliver finds himself towering over the inhabitants of Lilliput (they are only six inches high), and they refer to Gulliver as "Man-Mountain." Gulliver's size is a political issue, and, as he becomes more and more involved in Lilliput, demands are put upon him to aid the Lilliputians in a war against Blefuscu.

The plot was largely allegorical in its comment on contemporary British politics. It did not take the public long to discover that the author was writing about England rather than

Lilliput and the like, or that the author of this satire was Jonathan Swift. He was not only active on the political scene but a wellknown journalist with an easily recognizable style.

Robinson Crusoe

A classic in its own right, *The Life and Strange Surprizing Adventures of Robinson Crusoe of York, Mariner*, now recognized as simply *Robinson Crusoe*, was published in London by William Taylor on April 25, 1719. It was based on the adventures of Alexander Selkirk, a Scottish sailor marooned alone on the island of Yernandez in the South Pacific. By many accounts, it has been branded as one of the first English novels.

Robinson Crusoe rejects his mercantile family in favor of a life at sea. After a number of adventures, including his encounters with pirates and an escape from slavery, to name a few, Crusoe is caught in a hurricane. His ship is rendered useless as a result of the storm, and for the next twentyeight years, he finds himself stranded on an island in the Caribbean. The work documents Crusoe's struggle to survive in isolation.

Robinson Crusoe has many characteristics of a classical epic, with an identifiable hero, hard travel, separation from a homeland, and even small battles. Defoe assigns the character of Robinson Crusoe several admirable qualities, recognized, both now and at the time of the book's publication, for his practicality, intelligence, and a well-balanced religiousness, among others. The book was even used for instructional purposes as a result. Known for its efficiencies, it is devoid of needless complexity and is unified in plot and character, also attributes valued by the ancients.

The Rape of the Lock

When one thinks of the works of Alexander Pope, *The Rape of the Lock* is often the first that comes to mind. In light of the work's value, this immediate association is not unfounded□*The Rape of the Lock* has been identified as one of the best examples of the mock epic from the neoclassical age. Pope's work has also been recognized for its use of the heroic couplet and as a good example of satire in eighteenth-century literature. The work was published in 1712, when Pope was just twentythree years old.

The story was written to smooth over the tensions that developed between two prominent families when Lord Petre cut a lock of Arabella Fermor's hair. In Pope's version, Belinda (Arabella Fermor) meets the Baron (Lord Petre), among others, at the Hampton Court Palace. Over coffee and tea, the Baron cuts the treasured lock, inviting a verbal attack from other women at the gathering who witness the crime. Belinda manages to throw snuff in his face before threatening him with a hairpin. At this point, the speaker interjects his own consolation to the victim, and at the work's end, he also points out that, though the lock is lost and cannot be recovered, it will be preserved on the moon (a common belief of the time concerning things lost) and may outlast even Belinda.

The work, in the tradition of the genre, softens the events on which it was based by satirizing or making light of them. Pope honors this minor tragedy in classical form and, in doing so, undermines the intensity of Arabella's experience. This is precisely because the trivialities of modern life fail to compare to the subject matter classicists usually reserved for the genre.

London

This work is an imitation, a popular contemporary poetic form used by Samuel Johnson. *London* was a translation of *Satura III* by Juvenal, a great satirical poet of ancient Rome. It is a work on urban life in London, and it is of particular significance since it would be the first piece Johnson would create and publish on his own, independent of the magazine he was working for in 1738.

The satire speaks first to the difficulties of making an honest living in the city and then moves on to discuss the dangers of urban life. Johnson did not stick closely to the text, however, but reworked it to accommodate his depictions of country life as a viable alternative for city dwellers. This celebration of country life is dictated by the time in which he wrote, a time when literature expressed a preoccupation with nature and life on the farm. Johnson also left out many of Juvenal's depictions of urban blight and poverty as well as the nuisances accompanying them, i.e., noise, crowds, traffic, crime, etc. Johnson also expands *Satura III*, adding many contemporary political references to the introduction of the work. Following a common practice of the times, Johnson used his work as a platform for critique, in this case, pointed at Spanish efforts to squash British commerce, among other things.

Critical Overview

Neoclassicism is an extension of the classical period. Scholars generally note that it was in fact a time of great importance because the works produced during this period have greatly influenced the course of literature to follow. Dubbed by many to be "intellectual art," the works of neoclassical writers were praised for their didactic nature. Great admiration has been bestowed upon these founding fathers of the English canon□many have marveled at the great versatility of these writers who produced a seemingly endless variety of work, including poetry, satire, odes, drama, prose, criticism, and translations. The works themselves commanded greater admiration still, as they were apt to be written with elegance, simplicity, dignity, restraint, order, and proportion.

One rather negative assertion made on the part of critics is that imagination was intentionally repressed during the neoclassical period. To the contrary, Donald F. Bond, author of "The Neo- Classical Psychology of the Imagination," argues that although writers were concerned with the "dangers of an uncontrolled imagination, an examination of the psychological background of the period reveals an awareness of the validity of the imagination." Considering the mind as a "storehouse of images," he elaborates on his point by stating that "this aspect of the imagination, as the power whereby the mind is cognizant of external objects without direct sensory stimulus, is prevalent throughout the period."

Another problem of note is the rather fuzzy classification Neoclassicism is subject to. Depending upon the critic, the terms Classicism and Neoclassicism are thought to be sometimes interchangeable and sometimes not. James William Johnson's "What Was Neoclassicism?" explored the issue, taking the position that the research of his contemporaries has uncovered "a vast range of literature simply ignored□or perhaps suppressed □by earlier critics." His conclusion was simply that "the resulting disparity between limited assumptions and expanded information has called into question the very possibility of formulating any critical schema that accurately describes the characteristics of English literature between 1660 and 1800."

In Donald Greene's "What Indeed Was Neoclassicism," the author counters Johnson, dismissing his ideas as "tedious pseudo-problems, better left for journalists□and professors of literature□ to play with if it amuses them."

Criticism

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Critical Essay #1

Kryhoski is currently employed as a freelance writer. In this essay, Kryhoski considers critical opinions on the definition of Neoclassicism.

The boundaries defining the neoclassical genre have been tested, questioned, and found wanting by many literary critics. Equally troublesome to many of these critics is the notion that a literary canon can be categorized strictly on the basis of what is a largely accepted, though narrowly focused. In the late 1960s, James William Johnson considered this idea in his work "What Was Neoclassicism." He was chiefly concerned with what he identified as a vast range of literature widely ignored in favor of a "limited, prejudged selection of Restoration and 18th Century literature."

Johnson contends that modern writers are also a threat, having no sense of aesthetic or principle akin to that of the neoclassicists, or even the Victorians, for that matter. Although this is an old argument, it continues to resonate today. Even the most respectable literary reference books will prove discerning as to just what differences exist between a classic and a "new" classic. Some literary dictionaries will go as far as to say that the terms Classicism and Neoclassicism are interchangeable, leaving the amateur (and perhaps even the seasoned) scholar to shake his or her head.

Donald Greene, in his reply to Johnson's work, "What Indeed was Neo-Classicism? A Reply to James William Johnson's 'What was Neo-Classicism?,'" also responds to what he sees as a somewhat troublesome form. Greene states that unlike other literary periods in history, the neoclassical age comes with "undistinguished credentials," without, what he calls, some of the big, generalizing terms used to define periods of significant literary importance. Greene feels that a substantial objection to the application of the term Classicism, or any of its variants, is based on the understood basis of classification for such literature. Greene states simply that in the classification of such literature of the period, 1660-1800, it remains that

> if it means that people in the eighteenth century read widely in the Latin and Greek classics and were influenced by them, they did so equally, and sometimes more, in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and a good deal of the nineteenth centuries.

The whole idea that there was a sudden "revival" of Classicism is repellent to Greene and others. It has been noted that if there was such a period in English history, a period when Classicism was declared dead, in Greene's rather humorous words, "this is indeed some important news." He cites the efforts of one of the greatest writers of the years preceding what has been coined the "classical revival" in the history in England, namely those of Milton. The example is a compelling one because of Milton's stature in the literary community and in the Western canon as a whole. He is identified by Greene, and, undoubtedly, countless others, as one perhaps more profoundly schooled in the classics than "any other English author." Milton was also admired for his uses of

classical Latin elegiac verse; his last publication mirrored a strict form of Greek tragedy to boot.

Shakespeare also seems to take a sort of nebulous position within the context of neoclassical conventions. Thora Burnley Jones, in her collection, *Neo-classical Dramatic Criticism, 1560- 1770*, considers the acceptance of Shakespeare by Restoration playwrights such as Pope and Johnson. Jones asserts that such playwrights encouraged a "climate of opinion which ensured the acceptance of Shakespeare as the central figure in the English literary tradition." However, Shakespeare certainly did not fit within the conventional window of opportunity provided as a reference for describing the English neoclassicists.

Yet Jones takes the author's style to task, citing, rather pointedly, his neoclassical qualities as a playwright. First, says Jones, Shakespearean plays had a certain degree of verisimilitude to them. He was able, with great depth and accuracy, to explore the human condition in a language that was allinclusive, one that everyone could hear and be touched by. Shakespeare does not subscribe to the neoclassical principles of form, however. Critics often note Shakespeare's lack of concern for established classical form and for rules of decorum. He often mixed comedy with tragedy and completely ignored the unities. (Jones suggests the possibility that he knew nothing of such convention.) He also often lacked the level of style and elevation that other classicists shared as a common trait in their writings. Jones states that the third criterion defining the neoclassicist hinges on the idea of "art and morality." It is the task of the neoclassical writer to "indicate the way to a good life." Shakespeare is certainly guilty of this tendency, although his moralistic tendencies have been viewed as being somewhat misguided.

Shakespeare did have some faults when compared to those neoclassicists who followed him. Such faults seemed to clash against the very virtues that the neoclassicists strove to imitate. But the Augustan Age brought with it a marked interest in Shakespeare. Shakespeare somehow managed to rise above the fray, to continually be both recognized and excused for his deficits. Jones states that critics engage in "excusing his faults by the application of false historicism: he lived in barbarous times, spoke a less refined vernacular, shared the company of coarse players, and so on."

The convention in Augustan criticism of pitting Shakespeare against Aristotle is said to be a tradition of the age. For whatever reason, this did little, if anything, to ruin his critical reputation among other writers of the period. He is instead continuously excused for ignoring the rules of form precisely because he knew no better. Critics have often forgiven Shakespeare for his weaknesses with plot and structure, looking to his character sketches in order to grant the playwright redemption.

Shakespeare's critics make a case for the assertions set out by Johnson that critics are often blinded by their own personal interests. This is not to dispute the value of Shakespeare's contribution to literature; rather, it is only used to demonstrate the seemingly arbitrary assignment of values even those neoclassicists who were contemporaries of the age might assign an author in determining merit. For instance, in

Jones's works, she recalls the preface to Pope's text on Shakespeare. The preface states that he transcended imitation, going beyond the interpretation of a common human experience (nature), and has "conjured up a golden world."

But Jones claims that Pope is merely repeating the established view that "Shakespeare's characterization is good because it is lifelike; it is individualized and it is consistent, drawn from life and not from other writers." Pope's work about the playwright is interesting insomuch as he was pandering to an audience who loved Shakespeare. Pope forgives his excesses, attributing them to the types of audiences he answered to. As to his lack of education, Pope pointed to Shakespeare's level of wit and fancy, claiming that the abilities he had in both areas more than made up for his lack of scholasticism.

The conclusion Jones comes to is that despite the critical techniques of writers like Pope, there still exists an urge to apply neoclassical values to Shakespeare's work, regardless of the fact that such value judgments are in direct opposition with a felt response to the poetry. The conventions of Neoclassicism, no matter how loosely applied, do not seem to warrant the classification of Shakespeare as a neoclassicist. Again, the critics of neoclassical literature and form are not impervious to their own personal motivations and, as demonstrated by Pope, eschew critical response in an effort to forward their own personal agendas.

So who will redraw the lines of the genre, and what artists should be included? Should they be redrawn at all? To Donald Greene, at least, the matter is simply a matter of vision. Specifically, he warns of the dangers of looking too closely at individual instances where the convention might fit a person or idea, in favor of looking at the cultural landscape that inspires such movements.

Source: Laura Kryhoski, Critical Essay on Neoclassicism, in *Literary Movements for Students*, The Gale Group, 2003.

Critical Essay #2

In the following essay excerpt, Sitter considers what constituted "wit" during the neoclassicist period by examining philosophical writings of the times.

For thee explain a thing till all men doubt it,
And write about it, Goddess, and about it.
—Alexander Pope, *Dunciad*

Sooner or later in any discussion of neoclassical literature the word *wit*, if not the spaniel, splashes its way back to the hunter's side. That major authors of the Restoration and early eighteenth century prized and practiced wit is perhaps the one thing every succeeding generation has agreed on, although with widely differing evaluations of that achievement. Each retrospective estimate of Dryden or Pope seems, interestingly, to approach Dryden's view of one of his predecessors: "if we are not so great wits as Donne, yet certainly we are better poets." As Dryden's usage and the work of many modern scholars remind us, the value and definition of wit have been complex all along. Wit is Nature in ambiguity dressed—and so is Nature.

Despite the broad problems of historical semantics, readers continue to agree that Restoration repartee, *The Rape of the Lock*, Fielding's asides and prefaces, most of the poetry of Swift and Prior, and *The Beggar's Opera* all are witty. Whatever neoclassical wit is taken to be, it is likelier sought in Gay than Gray. It is not sought everywhere in the period—rarely in Defoe, scarcely in Richardson, for example—but wherever it is found the impression is generally one of hearing a shared language of the age, a shared rhetoric, rather than a clever ideolect. The examples mentioned range greatly but call to mind a familiar mixture of "common" sense, unconventional perspective, quickness, economy, and irreverence, to which no single writer (no Austen or Wilde, for example) has a unique claim in the period. This historical impression might be focused by looking for a moment at what might be called the epitaph of neoclassical wit, the couplet John Gay wrote for his tomb, and at the reaction it provoked in a young writer of a later generation, Samuel Johnson. The lines Gay asked Pope to put on his grave and that duly appeared in Westminster Abbey are these: "Life is a jest; and all things show it, / I thought so once; but now I know it." Writing for the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1738, Johnson finds this "trifling distich" more proper for the "window of a brothel" than for a monument. All people, he argues, do or do not believe in a future state of rewards and punishments. "In one of these classes our poet must be ranked. . . If he was of the latter opinion, he must think life more than a jest, unless he thought eternity a jest too; and if these were his sentiments, he is by this time most certainly undeceived. These lines, therefore, are impious in the mouth of a Christian, and nonsense in that of an aetheist." Nothing suggests that Gay saw any contradiction between making a good end and making a jest, or that friends such as Pope, Arbuthnot, and Swift found the epitaph trifling. Johnson's objections have their reason, but not the reason of his predecessors. The encounter is a reminder again of how often neoclassical wit plays upon mortality and how often it laughs at the oppositional logic of either/ or. The common language Gay counted on was quickly disappearing.

While this episode suggests wit's passage, the more closely this ordering rhetoric is looked for the less explicit it seems to have been. Not only does "wit" itself have an array of meanings, as even the casual reader of *An Essay on Criticism* soon suspects, but it has its own oppositional story through the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries. The best-known version is that of true wit versus false wit in Addison's series of *Spectator* essays (nos. 58-63), but Addison builds on Locke's earlier opposition of wit and judgment. Locke in turn was probably influenced by Malebranche, almost surely by Hobbes, perhaps by Boyle, and possibly by Bacon. Locke is a good place to begin not only because his oppositions seem to have been the most influential but also because a careful reading of *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* shows that behind the desire to derogate or dignify wit lie issues far different from coffeehouse decorum. At stake are conflicting notions of intellectual coherence and competing versions of reality. After exploring Locke's dichotomy and its implications in his theory of knowledge, I shall turn to its subversion, respectively genteel and raucous, by Addison and Prior. Less suspicious of language than Locke, both Addison and Prior are more deeply sceptical of individual aspirations to an unmediated agreement of thinking and things.

Critical Essay #3

I shall imagine I have done some service to Truth,
Peace, and Learning if, by any enlargement on this
Subject, I can make Men reflect on their own Use of
Language; and give them Reason to suspect, that
since it is frequent for others, it may also be possible
for them, to have sometimes very good and approved
Words in their Mouths, and Writings, with
very uncertain, little, or no signification. And therefore
it is not unreasonable for them to be wary herein
themselves, and not to be unwilling to have them examined
by others.

In a later chapter of the same book Locke would attend to wit under the rubric "Of the Abuse of Words," but he had in fact discussed it at some length before deciding to take language as his province. This earlier passage from book 2 ("Of Ideas") is the one Addison put into broad circulation the morning of 11 May 1711 by quoting most of it in the fifth of six *Spectators* on wit:

If in having our *Ideas* in the Memory ready at hand,
consists quickness of parts; in this, of having them
unconfused, and being able nicely to distinguish one
thing from another, where there is but the least difference,
consists, in a great measure, the exactness of
Judgment and clearness of Reason, which is to be observed
in one Man above another. And hence, perhaps,
may be given some Reason of that common
Observation, That Men who have a great deal of Wit,
and prompt Memories, have not always the clearest
Judgment, or deepest Reason. For *Wit* lying most in
the assemblage of *Ideas*, and putting those together
with quickness and variety, wherein can be found any
resemblance or congruity, thereby to make up pleasant
Pictures, and agreeable Visions in the fancy: *Judgment*,
on the contrary, lies quite on the other side, in
repeating carefully, one from another, *Ideas* wherein
can be found the least difference, thereby to avoid being
misled by Similitude, and by affinity to take one
thing for another. This is a way of proceeding quite
contrary to Metaphor and Allusion, wherein, for the
most part, lies that entertainment and pleasantry of
Wit, which strikes so lively on the Fancy, and therefore
[is] so acceptable to all People; because its
Beauty appears at first sight, and there is required no
labour of thought, to examine what Truth or Reason

there is in it. The Mind, without looking further, rests satisfied with the agreeableness of the Picture, and the gayety of the Fancy: And it is a kind of affront to go about to examine it, by the severe Rules of Truth, and good Reason; whereby it appears, that it consists in something, that is not perfectly conformable to them.

This pasage is worth considering more carefully than has been the modern habit. Kenneth MacLean, in what is regrettably still the standard work on Locke and eighteenth-century literature, points to the influence of the dichotomy but refers to it as a "detached bit of psychology" of "obviously little significance" in Locke's philosophy, a view more recent commentators seem to endorse by passing on in silence. Even literary critics as alert to Locke's metaphorical valences as is Paul de Man (1979) tend to proceed directly to book 3 and the explicit remarks on language. My view is that this piece of psychologizing is thoroughly attached to the tensions in Locke's argument throughout the *Essay* and that understanding those tensions can help in the reading of several neoclassical works of wit in something more of the spirit their authors writ. . .

It is clear that metaphor marks the appetite of wit for similarities, while judgment patiently seeks out differences. The place of allusion may seem less obvious, however, first because it is not necessarily associated with wit in particular (as distinguished, for example, from scholarly writing or sermons), and secondly because Locke gives no plain counterpart to it other than judgment's "whole way of proceeding." But it is clear that allusion is still on Locke's mind when he discusses wit again in book 3. This section is again long, but I quote it whole in the interests of care rather than quickness:

Since Wit and Fancy finds easier entertainment in the World, than dry Truth and real Knowledge, *figurative Speeches*, and allusion in Language, will hardly be admitted as *an* imperfection or *abuse* of it. I confess, in Discourses, where we seek rather Pleasure and Delight, than Information and Improvement, such Ornaments as are borrowed from them, can scarce pass for Faults. But yet, if we would speak of Things as they are, we must allow, that all the Art of Rhetoric, besides Order and Clearness, all the artificial and figurative application of Words Eloquence hath invented, are for nothing else but to insinuate wrong *Ideas*, move the Passions, and thereby mislead the Judgment; and so indeed are perfect cheat; and therefore however laudable or allowable Oratory may render them in Harangues and popular Addresses, they are certainly, in all Discourses that pretend to inform or instruct, wholly to be avoided; and where Truth or Knowledge are concerned, cannot but be thought a great fault, either of the Language or Person that makes use of them. What, and how various they are, will be superfluous here to take notice; the books of Rhetorick which abound in the world will instruct those who want to be

informed: Only I cannot but observe, how little the preservation and improvement of Truth and Knowledge is the Care and Concern of Mankind; since the Arts of Fallacy are endow'd and preferred. 'Tis evident how much Men love to deceive, and be deceived, since Rhetorick, that powerful instrument of Error and Deceit, has its established Professors, is publickly taught, and has always been had in great Reputation: And I doubt not but it will be thought great boldness, if not brutality in me, to have said thus much against it. *Eloquence*, like the fair Sex, has too prevailing Beauties in it to suffer itself ever to be spoken against. And 'tis in vain to find fault with those Arts of Deceiving, wherein Men find pleasure to be Deceived.

The opposition of "truth" and "rhetoric," it has been argued, has been essential to philosophy's self-definition since Plato's attack on the Sophists; philosophy is distinguished by not being rhetoric or poetry. Locke's particular "plain-style" aversion to the "arts of fallacy" is familiar. This passage emphasizes the values implicit in Locke's earlier distinction, since the quasi-psychological opposition of wit and judgment now becomes the openly ethical contest of wit and fancy on one side (the syntax of the first sentence merges them) against knowledge and truth on the other. . .

The first sentence of the earlier passage associates wit with "having our *ideas* in the memory ready at hand" but judgment with "having them unconfused and being able nicely to distinguish one *thing* from another" (my emphasis). This silent slide from ideas to things is crucial to Locke's dichotomy and, as I shall try to show, a clue to greater problems within the *Essay*. The attribution to wit of the "artificial and figurative application of words" and of "allusion" implies, of course, contrary ways of proceeding in the world of judgment, knowledge, and truth. What exactly are these contraries? Presumably the first would be the natural and literal application of words, and the second would be unallusive language.

In short, Locke's charged opposition of wit and judgment entails three major claims: (1) we can know and speak of things as they are; (2) we can (and should) speak naturally and literally; (3) we can (and should) speak without allusion. The question is whether there is really any space in Locke's *Essay* for any of the three assumptions. Put another way, in light of Locke's rigorous contributions to epistemology, to the study of language, and to ethics, what are we to make of his supposition that we can and should seek an unartificial language free of allusion and illusion? The boundaries between the epistemological and linguistic-ethical claims Locke makes in attacking wit are less clear than my listing of them may suggest, but I shall try to consider them in the order enumerated above.

I have already suggested that the general difficulty behind Locke's claim that judgment distinguishes *things* or that it guides us in speaking of "things as they are" stems from the commitment of the *Essay* as a whole to the view that what we know are (only) our ideas. Since able readers of Locke from Thomas Reid to the present have commented on the tension between that commitment and Locke's equally strong belief that our

senses give knowledge of the external world, it is possible to concentrate selectively on a few of the *Essay's* moments of attempted reconciliation in order to see the range of Locke's ideas about ideas. Seeing that range may help in understanding Locke's occasional vehemence, because it stretches, sometimes awkwardly, from ideas as "mental Draughts" or "Pictures of Things" to ideas as barely legible signs.

In his discussion of "clear and obscure, Distant and Confused Ideas," Locke launches at once into visual metaphor□"the Perception of the Mind, being most aptly explained by Words relating to the Sight"□in order to argue that "our *simple ideas* are *clear*, when they are such as the objects from whence they were taken did or might in a well-ordered sensation or perception, present them" (2.29.2). This painstakingly worded statement seems to offer more certainty than it provides. It sounds as if clear ideas are visual copies ("taken") of objects viewed in the way a normal person perceives them. But if in place of the words Locke italicizes we attend to *as* and *might*, we find that what seemed a generic or causal account of the origin of clear ideas is a conditional description of them based on a simile: Ideas are clear when they are kinds of mental images *like* those that normal viewers *might* have registered had they been there.

The fate of *simple* ideas is noteworthy because while Locke is habitually ready to grant that *complex* ideas are things we make up to think and talk with ("fictions of the mind") rather than direct perceptions, he is understandably less willing to sever the mimetic link between simple ideas and the external world. At his most scrupulous, however, he does sever most of it. Not only is "likeness" to things in the world restricted to simple ideas, it is narrowed still further to simple ideas of "primary qualities" of body (solidity, extension, figure, motion, and number as opposed to colors, sounds, tastes, and so on). It would seem that only Newton spent most of his time having ideas "like" the world. Such ideas "*are resemblances*" of bodies and "these patterns do really exist." The rest "*have no resemblance* of them at all. There is nothing like our *Ideas* existing in the bodies themselves." It is in this chapter that Locke's "idea" becomes more like the response to a sign than like a picture. Most simple ideas of sensation are "no more the likeness of something existing without us than the names that stand for them are the likeness of our *ideas*, which yet upon hearing they are apt to excite in us."

Our experience, in other words, is closer to reading or listening to speech than to looking at things. We have, with the exception of primary qualities, access not to objects but to signifiers. Had Locke pursued this model of experience consistently, rather than the complex of visual metaphors noted earlier, the *Essay* would be a very different book. As it is, the linguistic analogy surfaces at several revealing points, often in negative terms, as in the remarks on wit or rhetoric. Before going further it is necessary to underscore the significance of the analogy here by recalling that Locke is perhaps the first major analyst of language to stress that the relation of signifier to signified is not divinely instituted or mimetic but "perfectly arbitrary." What the linguistic analogy implies, then, is a functional, convenient but wholly ungrounded relation of idea and world.

At this point we can begin to see Locke's denigration of figurative expressions and allusions in the context of his uneasiness about language in general. There are moments in Locke, as will be seen, where words alone are certain truth, but many more,

and more explicit ones, of linguistic skepticism: "For he that shall well consider the *Errors* and Obscurity, the Mistakes and Confusion, that is *spread in the World by an ill use of Words*, will find some reason to doubt whether Language, as it has been employ'd, has contributed more to the improvement or hindrance of Knowledge amongst Mankind." Locke's suspicion of what he terms the "cover of wit and good language" runs deeper than the currents of plain-style Puritanism or scientific polemic. The tension between Locke's thinking of ideas as pictures or as interpretations of signs (or correspondingly of objects available to us as things or as signifiers) is played out at large in the *Essay* as a tension between truth as residing in perceptions or in propositions. The explanation I want to try to illustrate is this: having reached the uncomfortable insight that our experience of "things" is in fact the experience of signifiers, Locke seeks to manage the radical implications of the linguistic analogy by reverting to the model of perceptions and pictures and by stipulating impossibly strict standards for proper language. If experience may just be a language, then language itself had best be kept determinate. It should (against all odds) speak of things as they are.

Locke's treatment of language in book 3 of the *Essay* strikes most readers as remarkably free of theories of origin and (and perhaps therefore) surprisingly consistent on the arbitrariness of the relation between signified and signifier. Hans Aarsleff claims more than chronological priority for Locke (1982). To be sure, language is God's gift to humanity, but the terms remain general: language is defined as the totality of all natural languages and as their use by the totality of speakers. Unlike vast numbers of his contemporaries and many later writers, Locke nowhere in the *Essay'* s chapters on language speculates about how Adam and Eve communicated, the Tower of Babel, or, except dismissively, mysterious or mystical connections between names and things named. However pious his intentions at large (the "main end of these inquiries" being "knowledge and veneration" of the "Sovereign Disposer of all things", for purposes of philosophic discussion there is no linguistic paradise lost. Where an Adamic myth surfaces instead is in Locke's notion of a language of judgment that names things as they are, without figure and, as only Adam could, without allusion.

Locke's contradictions on the subject of figurative language in book 3 have been brilliantly illustrated by de Man, and the issue of metaphor in the *Essay* as a whole can best be considered in connection with the responses to Locke of Addison and Prior. For now at least a partial answer emerges to the question of what allusion has to do with figurative speech in Locke's opposition of wit and judgment. Like "eloquence" and other "artificial" uses of language, allusions lack original innocence, are in fact the most emphatic figure of this lack, of having fallen into time. Return briefly, then, to the question of how an ideal of an unallusive language fits so uneasily with Locke's arguments elsewhere in the *Essay*.

The two arguments that run counter to the unallusive norm are linguistic and epistemological, although again the boundaries are not always distinct. The linguistic is relatively simple. When discussing language directly Locke argues, consistently, that since words have "naturally no signification" the "*idea* which each stands for must be learned and retained by those who would exchange thoughts and hold intelligible

discourse with others." What such learning and retention of common usage amounts to is a continual series of allusions, namely to the usage of past and present speakers. Most of these allusions are of course unconscious, and any conventional notion of language implies the ability to make them, even the inability to *not* make them most of the time. But Locke goes further to recommend conscious allusions. If we would seek "propriety of speech" as indeed we should since words are "no man's private possession by the common measure of commerce and communication," we will find propriety by studying and imitating the usage of our linguistic predecessors: "The proper signification and best use of Terms is best to be learned from those, who in their Writings and Discourses, appear to have had the clearest Notions, and apply'd to them their Terms with the exactest choice and fitness."

Let me acknowledge at once that my use of "allusion" may well be broader than Locke intended and that he might have been thinking not of the shared use of words but of distinctive phrases and sentences□something closer to quotation. But it is also clear that in the attacks on wit in books 2 and 3 he is not criticizing the citation of authorities, something he does attack elsewhere but as characteristic of Scholasticism rather than of wit, fancy, or eloquence. It may be that he means something close to what allusion usually means in modern literary discussion, that is, intentional reference to previously used phrases or verbally established contexts for the complication of present meaning. And if it may be added that allusion often complicates by suggesting at least a fleeting parallel, it may be seen why Locke repeats the word in the same breath with "figurative speeches" and "similitude." But when all of this has been granted, it remains true that Locke's notion of a wholly direct and unallusive discourse belongs to a less sophisticated theory of language than to the secular one he works out. While we can speak of some writers, for example, as more allusive than others, there is no logical place for a use of language "quite contrary" to allusion. In view of Locke's account of language as the sum of common conventions, a speech that is the opposite of allusive speech would seem to belong to a world of neither wit nor judgment but desire.

If the allusiveness Locke denigrates is in fact central to his theory of language, is it also central to his theory of knowledge? Much of the *Essay* can be read as a succession of attempts to answer no to this question, to put the knower and the known in a direct relation, unmediated by community or language. Before considering a few of the efforts to find extralinguistic certainties in book 4, let us turn to a final episode in the discussion of language that seems already an epistemological episode as well. Locke is discussing the names of "mixed Modes," that is, several ideas of "sorts or Species of Things", and arrives at the interesting observation that, unlike simple ideas, these complex ideas usually become known to us *after* we have learned the words for them.

I confess, that in the beginning of Languages, it was
necessary to have the *Idea*, before one gave it the
Name: and so it is still, where making a new complex
Idea, one also, by giving it a new Name, makes
a new Word. But this concerns not Languages made,
which have generally pretty well provided for *Ideas*,
which Men have frequent Occasion to have, and communicate:

And in such, I ask, whether it be not the ordinary
Method, that Children learn the Names of mixed Modes,
before they have their *Ideas*? What one of a thousand
ever frames the abstract *Idea of Glory* and *Ambition*,
before he has heard the Names of them?

With the rare exceptions, then, of new coinages, the large range of ideas that make converse of any complexity possible are learned by a process of allusion. The vocabulary of these ideas exists first as a vocabulary.

I have been arguing that Locke's criticism of the figures and allusions of wit is part of an uneasiness about language at large and that his criticism was sharpened by the suspicion that knowledge and language are inseparable. Locke would not concede their inseparability. What he says instead, explaining how he came to write book 3, is that he found that knowledge and words had "so near a connexion" that "very little" could be "said clearly or pertinently" about knowledge without first observing the "face and manner of signification" of words. Because knowledge is, in Locke's suggestive phrase, "conversant about truth," it has "constantly to do with propositions." While it ends "in things," it arrives there "so much by the intervention of words" that they seem "scarce separable" from general knowledge. "At least they interpose themselves so much between our Understandings, and the Truth, which it would contemplate and apprehend that, like the *Medium* through which visible Objects pass, their Obscurity and Disorder does not seldom cast a mist before our Eyes, and impose upon our Understandings." The progress of actions attributed to words is striking: words intervene, then interpose, and finally impose.

In a landscape so populated or where, to take a later metaphor, so many have wandered "lost in the great Wood of Words", mathematics often looks like the safest way out of allusion and illusion. "By abstracting their Thoughts from Names, and accustoming themselves to set before their Minds the *Ideas* themselves . . . and not sounds instead of them," mathematicians have escaped most of the "perplexity, puddering, and confusion" of other fields (ibid.). If we would "but separate the *Idea* under consideration from the Sign that stands for it" moral knowledge would be "as *capable of real Certainty*, as Mathematics." I shall return to Lockes admiration for mathematical method in discussing Prior's response to the *Essay*, but the general point is simply that the main appeal of mathematics for Locke seems to be that it offers not a world of symmetry unencumbered by matter, or (as one might expect), more direct access to primary qualities, but an escape from words.

Locke's desire for extralinguistic certainty shows forth even when he argues more fully the point that truth resides in propositions. The chapter in which he does so, "Of Truth in General", is one of the most curious in the *Essay*, primarily because of Locke's insistence on a distinction between mental and verbal propositions, "truth of thought" and "truth of words." For it turns out that when he begins by defining truth as "nothing but *the joining or separating of Signs, as the Things signified by them, do agree or disagree one with another,"* Locke is not at all making the same definitional move that Hobbes had made in declaring that "*true* and *false* are attributes of speech, not of

things. And where speech is not, there is neither *truth* nor *falsehood*. . . Truth consisteth in the right ordering of names in our affirmations." For Locke, on the contrary, the "signs" joined or separated to make propositions can be either words *or* ideas: "So that Truth properly belongs only to Propositions: whereof there are two sorts, viz. Mental and Verbal; as there are two sorts of Signs commonly made use of, *viz. Ideas* and Words." This is a most unusual definition of "idea," I believe unprecedented in the *Essay* to this point. (Although I have argued that some of Locke's descriptions of ideas imply that they are like our responses to signs, the synonyms he himself normally uses are phantasms, notions, perceptions, pictures, and so on.) This odd twist allows Locke, however, to go on to assert the necessity of considering truth of thought and truth of words "distinctly one from another."

Necessary as it may be, two difficulties are conceded. The first is that as soon as we begin to describe mental propositions in words they become verbal propositions (a problem analogous to trying to observe oneself without being self-conscious, say, which does not usually lessen the belief that one has periods of unselfconsciousness). The second, much greater difficulty Locke poses to his own distinction appears to undo it entirely: "And that which makes it *harder to treat of mental* and verbal *Propositions separately*, is That most Men, *if not all* [my emphasis], in their Thinking and Reasonings within themselves, make use of Words instead of *Ideas*, at least when the subject of their meditation contains in it complex *Ideas*." Having opened the possibility that all propositions of much complexity are verbal rather than purely mental, Locke vacillates in the rest of this brief chapter between extremes, wishing at one point that those who speak on subjects like religion, power, or melancholy (all of them remarkably complex ideas) would "think only of the Things themselves" rather than their words, and at another point restricting his definition of truth further to only verbal propositions: "*Truth* is the marking down in Words, the agreement or disagreement of *Ideas* as it is."

> Every one's Experience will satisfie him, that the
> Mind, either by perceiving or supposing the Agreement
> or Disagreement of its *Ideas*, does tacitly within
> it self put them into a kind of Proposition affirmative
> or negative, which I have endeavoured to express by the
> terms *Putting together* and *Separating*. But this
> Action of the Mind, which is so familiar to every thinking
> and reasoning Man, is easier to be conceived by reflecting on
> what passes in us, when we affirm or deny, than to be
> explained by Words.

Locke's meaning seems to be that our habit of making nonverbal propositions can be better imagined nonverbally than explained verbally. In other words, the proposition that we habitually make tacit propositions is most clear as a tacit proposition.

Critical Essay #4

If Locke's opposition of wit and judgment involves as many problems as the previous section claims (and a few more will be suggested here), it is material to ask why it ever attracted Joseph Addison. That we cannot know Addison's motivation as he sat to the pages that would become *Spectator* 62 does not preclude some guesses. There is the general prestige of the *Essay*, and there is Addison's particular interest in bringing philosophy from the closet to the coffeehouse. Moreover, Locke's opposition has the appeal of familiar wisdom (so-and-so is "clever" but not thoughtful, or "steady" but not quick) suddenly bolstered by modern analysis ("and hence perhaps may be given some reason . . .") and looking for the moment as if it might offer an exhaustive characterological dichotomy (a recurrent fantasy neatly satirized in the quip, "There are two kinds of people: those who divide things into two and those who don't"). Neither eighteenth- nor twentiethcentury intellectuals are immune to the charms of such a prospect. But it is probably safer to modify the question about Addison to *how* he found Locke's dichotomy attractive. How much of it does he accept, how does he use it, and how does it look when he has finished?

Like the rest of the series, *Spectator* 62 contrasts "true" wit and "false" wit. Addison begins it by referring to Locke's "admirable Reflection upon the Difference of Wit and Judgment, whereby he endeavours to shew the Reason why they are not always the Talents of the same Person." He then quotes all of the passage from 2.11.2 quoted earlier, except the first sentence, replaced by his summary, and the last sentence and a half, thus ending with Locke's observation that through metaphor and allusion wit "strikes so lively on the Fancy, and is therefore acceptable to all People." The passage, then, that Addison commends as the "best and most philosophical Account that I have ever met with of Wit" has already changed clothes for the meeting. His introduction neutralizes Locke's explanation of why men of wit are often not good judges (Locke says nothing of wit being beyond the reach of men of judgment) to a distinction of talents. And in silently ignoring the latter part of Locke's section he suppresses Locke's *regret* that wit is so "acceptable to all people," a fact due to its requiring "no labour of thought" and not being up to the rigor of "truth or reason." Similarly, there is no mention in the essay of Locke's attack on wit, figurative language, and allusion in book 3 (quoted above).

To what he does quote, Addison adds and qualifies. Locke's is the best (previous) explanation of wit, "which generally, tho' not always, consists in such a Resemblance and Congruity of Ideas as this Author mentions. I shall only add to it, by way of Explanation, That every Resemblance of Ideas is not that which we call Wit, unless it be such an one that gives *Delight* and *Surprize* to the Reader: These two Properties seem essential to Wit, more particularly the last of them." The reserve clause ("generally, though not always") can be held, with Addison, until the conclusion of his consideration of Locke. Before going there it is worth noting, first, that Addison's "Resemblance and Congruity of Ideas" replaces Locke's assertion that wit is an "assemblage of ideas" based on "any resemblance or congruity" the assembler can find, and, second, that Addison's emphasis on the "surprize" of wit suggests pleasure from the discovery of real

resemblance in place of Locke's "beauty . . . at first sight." Both alterations are important for Addison's later propositions. "That the Basis of all Wit is Truth" and that a beautiful thought has "its Foundation in the Nature of Things."

The essential claim of most of the rest of Addison's essay, where he appropriates Locke's dichotomy between wit and judgment into his own between two kinds of wit, is that true wit is true. The point is explicit but sometimes lost sight of because "true" wit can be taken to mean something like "genuine" or "pure" wit and because Addison also uses contrasts like "Gothic" versus "natural"; but the starker terms are "Falsehood" and "Truth." The phrase probably quoted most often in summarizing Addison's position is "true Wit consists in the resemblance of Ideas, and false Wit in the Resemblance of Words." What he actually says is that this description covers the examples he has just cited ("according to the foregoing Instances"), among which figure prominently the familiar targets, such as shaped verses, acrostics, quibbles, and puns. The attack on puns (which false wit might call an argument ad homonym) is usually best remembered because it fits so readily the distinction between resemblances of words and resemblances of ideas. But *similarity* of ideas is not the basis of all true wit, as Addison's conclusion makes clear:

> I must not dismiss this Subject without observing, that as Mr. *Locke* in the Passage above-mentioned has discovered the most fruitful Source of Wit, so there is another of a quite contrary Nature to it, which does likewise branch it self out into several Kinds. For not only the *Resemblance* but the *Opposition* of Ideas does very often produce Wit; as I could shew in several little Points, Turns and Antitheses, that I may possibly enlarge upon in some future Speculation.

Perhaps if Addison had returned to the opposition of ideas in a later essay this passage would by now have attracted more notice. Standing almost as an afterthought, its casual tone is as disarming as the suave appearance of agreement with Locke earlier in the essay. Here Addison does much more than shift Locke's emphasis. If it is true that wit discerns differences as well as similarities, then the dichotomy between wit and judgment collapses. Having enlisted it in an argument for the truth of wit, Addison leaves Locke's distinction, so to speak, without judgment.

It may be coincidence that Addison characterized the wit of opposition as "quite contrary" to the more familiar sort Locke had described. Accident or allusion, the phrase suggests their distance, since it is the one Locke used to oppose not one kind of wit to another but the ways of difference and similitude. My brief discussion of *Spectator* 62 no doubt reveals the judgment that Addison knew exactly what he was doing. But judgment, as Locke eventually argues in some passages to which it is now time to turn, should be distinguished from knowledge.

The fourth book of Locke's *Essay*, "Of Knowledge and Opinion," begins with the proposition that because the mind's only immediate object is its own ideas, knowledge

is "nothing but *the perception of the connexion and agreement, or disagreement and repugnancy of any of our Ideas*. In this alone it consists. Where this Perception is, there is Knowledge, and where it is not, there, though we may fancy, guess, or believe, yet we always come short of Knowledge." In fact, as Locke everywhere emphasizes, we usually do come short of knowledge. Fancying, as we have seen, has nothing to do with knowledge, but we must often guess or believe in order to "know" how to live. "He that in the ordinary Affairs of Life, would admit of nothing but direct plain Demonstration, would be sure of nothing, in this World, but of perishing quickly." Rarely in the presence of certainty, our guesses and beliefs in this "twilight" of probability are guided by judgment, the subject of a late chapter (14).

To understand Locke's account it is necessary to see what is at stake. The starting point of book 4 makes clear that knowledge□like truth, its expression in propositions□is conversant about similarities of ideas ("agreement") as well as about differences. The difference between wit and knowledge in this respect seems to be that wit *makes* similarities and knowledge *perceives* them. The question, which Addison helps indirectly to focus, is whether the same is true of judgment. Is judgment closer to knowledge or to wit?

Locke does what he can to close the gap between judgment and knowledge by associating them with each other as much as possible, and, as we have seen, the attacks on wit and eloquence in books 2 and 3 provide occasion to use judgment, truth, reason, and knowledge as near synonyms. Whatever the discriminations to be made elsewhere among the four terms, Locke seems to fuse them to compose whatever it is that is "quite contrary" to wit. Judgment ("being able nicely to distinguish") and knowledge ("perception" of agreement or disagreement) are closely associated elsewhere by Locke's tendency to speak of perceiving and distinguishing as the same thing: the mind recognizes separate ideas "at first view," for example, "by its natural power of Perception and Distinction."

A broader association of judgment with knowledge by virtue of what "it" is opposed to operates in the chapter "Of the Reality of Knowledge," where Locke contrasts the knowledge of a "sober" man and a man of the "most extravagant Fancy in the world." How do these two differ, Locke imagines his reader asking, if knowledge is only the internal agreement or disagreement of one's own ideas? Like the original contrast of judgment and wit, this opposition of sobriety and fancy signals a great deal of strain. Locke's answer to the question is that our knowledge is limited but consists of "two sorts of *Ideas*, that, we may be assured, agree with things," simple ideas and all complex ideas except those of substances. What he in fact argues is much narrower: simple ideas "*are not fictions* of our Fancies" because they represent things to the extent "ordained" by the "wisdom and will of our Maker," in the way we are "fitted" to perceive them; complex ideas have all the "*conformity necessary to real knowledge*" because they are "*archetypes* of the mind's own making" and were never "intended to be the Copies of anything." When, after several paragraphs on the desirability of separating ideas from words, Locke concludes that we have "certain real knowledge" whenever "we are sure those ideas agree with the reality of things," the words come

uncomfortably close to his later dismissal of enthusiasts: "They are sure because they are sure." The chapter ends in a tone weirdly reminiscent of *A Tale of a Tub:*

> Of which agreement of our *ideas* with the reality of things having here given sufficient marks, I think I have shown wherein it is, that *Certainty, real Certainty*, consists. Which, whatever it was to others, was, I confess, to me heretofore, one of those *Desiderata* which I found great want of.

When Locke finally comes to write of the judgment directly rather than by way of "contraries," it is still on the side of truth, but the fundamental association with knowledge no longer holds. The brief chapter (4.14) concludes with a new refinement.

> Thus the Mind has two Faculties conversant about Truth and Falsehood:*First, Knowledge*, whereby it certainly perceives and is undoubtedly satisfied of the Agreement or Disagreement of any *Ideas*.*Secondly, Judgment*, which is the putting *Ideas* together, or separating them one from another in the Mind, when their certain Agreement or Disagreement is not perceived, but *presumed*. . . And if it so unites or separates them as in Reality Things are, it is *right Judgment*.

In this scheme knowledge perceives but judgment puts together and separates. At least half (and if Addison is right, all) of its operations, then, seem less contrary than kindred to the "assemblage of ideas, and putting those together" previously assigned to wit. The function of the original dichotomy seems in retrospect to have been to protect the "good" assemblages (complex ideas, for example) from the taint of fiction and to make a firmer claim on "things as they are" than the Lockean way of ideas can consistently justify. Having in this chapter momentarily opened the possibility that judgment may after all proceed rather like wit, Locke attempts to close it in the last sentence with the sudden introduction of "*right Judgment*." It might fairly be objected that if we can have right and wrong judgment we can have right and wrong□or true or false□wit as well. In that case, wit and judgment are not distinct actions but different manners: one "quick," the other "careful." To Matthew Prior, at least, Locke's judgment would seem a name for slow wit.

Prior's "A Dialogue between Mr: John Lock and Seigneur de Montaigne" was not published until this century. By far most of the best of its roughly ten thousand words are given to Montaigne, whose urbanity and ranging observation are plainly more sympathetic to Prior than is Locke's earnest introspection. When Locke objects that as the "loosest of writers" Montaigne naturally undervalues "my close way of Reasoning," Montaigne replies: "All the while you wrote you were only thinking that you thought; You and Your understanding are the *Personae Dramatis*, and the whole amounts to no more than a Dialogue between John and Lock." And the shortcomings of monodrama are as plain as the maxim that "he that does not talk with a Wiser Man than himself may

happen to Dye Ignorant." "Really who ever writes in Folio should convince people that he knows something besides himself, else few would read his Book, except his very particular Friends." When Locke again criticizes Montaigne's lack of method, this time enlisting Chanet, Scaliger, and Malebranche for support, Montaigne says: "I have observed that there is Abcedarian Ignorance that precedes Knowledge, and a Doctoral Ignorance that comes after it. . . Method! our Life is too short for it."

Despite the breezy antipathy of these exchanges, references to arguments and examples from all four books of the *Essay* show that Prior read it with care if not respect. He is particularly attentive to Locke's suspicion of figurative language and allusions. Prior approaches allusion by having Locke boast that while Montaigne's writing is a collection of stolen goods, "I spin my Work out of my own thoughts." The claim predictably leads Montaigne to "allude" to *The Battle of the Books* and play Swift's bee to Locke's spider, with an additional shake of the metaphor: "But to come nearer to you, Mr: Lock, You like many other writers, Deceive your Self in this Point, and as much a Spider as you fancy your Self, You may often cast your Webb upon other Mens Textures." Locke answers that if he has been anticipated in some points without knowing it, "what I write is as much my own Invention as if no Man had thought the Same thing before me," while Montaigne simply copied materials from his commonplace book. To this Montaigne replies laconically: "Why the best One can do is but compose, I hope you do not pretend to Create." Finding Locke undaunted, Montaigne charges him with unwitting allusion:

Your Ideas, as you call them . . . were so mixed and
Blended, long before You began to write, in the great
Variety of things that fall under their Cognizance that
it was impossible for You to Distinguish what you Invented
from what You Remembered. . . When you Seem to have least
regard to Orators and Poets you have recourse to both for
your very turn of Style and manner of Expression. Parblew
Mr. Lock, when you had writ half your Book in favor of your
own Dear Understanding you quote Cicero to prove the very
Existence of a God.

In another part of this long speech, Montaigne asserts that Malebranche, like Locke, warned against misleading the judgment with figurative language but was in fact wise to ignore his own advice: "the Strength of his Argument consists in the beauty of his Figures." This claim, that figurative language discovers rather than covers an author's judgment, conveys the radical difference between Prior and Locke. It emerges more resonantly in a passage that gains point when we recall that Locke's suspicion of language had led to celebrations of mathematics; on at least four occasions he had paused in particular to hope that philosophy would attain an "instrument" of "sagacity" approaching algebra. In this exchange Montaigne has just attacked Locke with two analogies, one of them taken from the *Essay*:

Lock. Simile upon Simile, no Consequential Proof,
right Montaigne by my Troth. Why, Sir, you catch at

Similes as a Swallow does at Flies.

Montaigne. And you make Similes while you blame them. But be that as it will, Mr. Lock, arguing by Simile is not so absurd as some of You dry Reasoners would make People believe. If your Simile be proper and good, it is at once a full proof, and a lively Illustration of Your matter, and where it does not hold the very disproportion gives You Occasion to reconsider it, and You set it in all it's lights, if it be only to find at least how unlike it is. Egad Simile is the very Algebra of Discourse.

This simile (or "metasimile") falls so neatly that it may seem, as Locke would say (the actual Locke), a "kind of affront to go about to examine it by the severe-rules of truth and good reason." Locke's point is that the obvious inappropriateness of such an examination is itself an admission that wit is not "conformable" to the way of judgment. But whatever Prior thinks of Locke's method, he invites the reader to apply the test of truth, maintaining in fact that all similes issue such invitations. If a simile succeeds in being at once "full proof" and "lively illustration," it conveys knowledge (as Locke's agreement of ideas); if it does not, it calls judgment into action ("gives . . . occasion to reconsider") and will lead to knowledge (as Locke's disagreement of ideas). Bad similes may lower our estimate of a work; but for the reader a simile "works" whether it succeeds or fails.

Prior clearly assumes a less vulnerable reader than Locke's, one whose judgment will be quickened rather than outdistanced by wit's quickness. Exactly how much more he assumes in the passage is difficult to determine, but it seems likely that he might expect the reader who would examine the comparison of algebra and simile to be thinking of algebra as more than a shorthand notation. Considering algebra generally as the study of functions rather than fixed quantities (and the word seems to have had at least this currency), "the algebra of discourse" suggests the working-out of relationships within language. This is another way of claiming, with Addison, that wit has verity as well as brevity; in other words, it not only paints pictures but contemplates general relations. If the philosopher's desire is ultimately the Hobbesean one that words be used as the wise man's "counters" rather than as the fool's "money", to seek an extralinguistic discovery procedure for moral philosophy is simply to turn one's back on the higher mathematics already at hand in the liveliest uses of language.

With different emphases but complementary doubts, Addison and Prior both question Locke's devaluation of wit and the opposition of wit to judgment. Challenging the claim that discrimination is peculiar to judgment, Addison points politely to the collapse of the dichotomy. Prior more explicitly raises the problem of any such dichotomy (regardless of which side is "privileged") by questioning whether making similitudes and making distinctions are really separable acts of mind. This is the fundamental question at the level of common sense, and common sense sides, I believe, with Locke one moment and Prior the next: yes, we sometimes "distinguish," sometimes "assemble," and can

"distinguish" between the operations; no, we cannot differentiate without comparing and vice versa. But behind this armchair antinomy the problem dividing Locke from Addison and Prior can be seen as a question with particular pertinence to our own era and criticism: does it make more sense to think of "things as they are" as represented (perhaps badly) by language or as constituted by language?

The preceding commentary suggests at several points that Locke's accounts of language in general and of figurative language in particular are efforts to reclaim indirectly an access to pre- or extralinguistic "things" that other parts of his *Essay* seal off. In suggesting now that Addison and Prior are deeply skeptical of the attempt to get past language to something firmer, I do not mean to convert them into proto-Nietzschean or proto-Derridean rhetoricians of contradiction. From the perspective of poststructuralism, both are grounded in "logocentrism." Both believe that in the beginning was the Word, the authorial will originating all subsequent meaning. Neither would know what to make of the idea that this belief should be reinscribed as "In the always-already are words." Nor would either be likely to hear more than burlesque in Beckett's version, "In the beginning was the pun." But at the same time, neither Addison nor Prior seems to share Locke's nostalgia for things and ideas untouched by words or for truths too tacit to enter the shared figures and allusions of language. If these differences are significant, then it seems we would need to speak of logocentrisms in neoclassical writing (and presumably in other literary periods) for the term to be historically useful; in the monolithic singular it is, like Locke's "wit," less descriptive of variable rhetorical practices than protective of its rhetorically constructed opposite.

Source: John Sitter, "About Wit: Locke, Addison, Prior, and the Order of Things," in *Rhetorics of Order: Ordering the Rhetorics in English Neoclassical Literature*, edited by J. Douglas Canfield and J. Paul Hunter, University of Delaware Press, 1989, pp. 137-57.

Adaptations

Gulliver's Travels appeared as a television miniseries released by Hallmark Home Entertainment in 2000. This adaptation of the classic preserves the satire and wit of the original.

Robinson Crusoe has been adapted for film several times, most recently in 1996, starring Pierce Brosnan.

Topics for Further Study

The neoclassicists often used references to ancient cultures to give their works added meaning. Investigate some of the materials behind these references and explain their significance in the works of the neoclassical writers.

English politics was the major target for satirists Swift, Dryden, Pope, and others. Satire was often viewed as a dangerous political weapon, resulting in censorship or the arrest of many satirical writers. Investigate the influence of satire on the press during the neoclassical period in response to political events of the time.

The Age of Johnson represented a profound shift in the neoclassical genre that would ultimately result in the advent of Romanticism. What were the factors that caused such a shift as well as the end of the neoclassical era?

Compare and Contrast

1600s-1700s: Oliver Cromwell's protectorate is overthrown, and after two decades in which England was without a sovereign, Charles II is crowned king.

Today: Tony Blair is the prime minister of England, and Queen Elizabeth II is the symbolic head of state under a parliamentary democracy.

1600s-1700s: The most celebrated eighteenth century periodical, *The Spectator*, is founded by Joseph Addison and Richard Steele.

Today: The advent of the internet revolution connects millions of households with a seemingly limitless number of newspapers, magazines, and periodicals at the click of a mouse.

1600s-1700s: The rise of the English theater changes social patterns as English citizens from all classes begin to attend theatrical performances.

Today: The advent of the DVD and the development of home entertainment systems begin to change the patterns of many moviegoers, who, instead of visiting the theater, opt to stay home.

1600-1700s: With the restoration of the English theater comes an intermingling of the social classes, and fashion becomes the focus as middle- and upper-middle class patrons of the stage imitate the monarchy in style and dress.

Today: Overnight pop music sensations like Britney Spears set fashion standards for contemporary teens.

What Do I Read Next?

Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe (1993), by Merry E. Weisner, represents the author's research of women from 1500 to 1750. The author focuses on women's roles in relation to general historical developments and the effects of such developments on women. Her work is characterized by her approach to study as a sort of "digging into women's private and domestic experiences." There is consideration not only of the physical experiences of women□those of menstruation, pregnancy, and motherhood□but of the ways in which women attempted to carve out meaningful lives for themselves based on such experiences. The work also compares female gender roles with those roles imposed on males, to produce some very interesting insights and observations.

Oliver Cromwell and the English Revolution (1990), edited by John Morrill, is a discussion of Oliver Cromwell's life, both personal and political. Although he died at the dawn of the neoclassical age, he was one of the best-known, as well as one of the most controversial, figures in English history and would shape political discourse well into the neoclassical age. Cromwell has been celebrated as a champion of both religious and civil liberties and for his role in the defeat of Stuart tyranny. The book describes the phases of his career as citizen, soldier, and lord protector.

The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding (1938), written by Ian Watt and reprinted in 2001, is a consideration of the relation between the growth of a reading public and the emergence of the English novel in the eighteenth century. Watt's study draws on the works of Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding, among other important novelists, to discuss the qualities of the English novel that distinguished it from other existing literary genres. His work has been characterized as a classic description of the social conditions, changing attitudes, and literary practices dominating the period during which the novel reigned as a dominant literary form. Watt's study also considers the audience the novel reached, its role in the book trade, and the evolution of English society during the eighteenth century.

The Literary Life and Other Curiosities (1981), by Robert Hendrickson, is a wonderful collection of anecdotes, quotations, lists, and poems concerning books and their authors, including many from the neoclassical period. It's a wonderfully humorous and historically valuable work, offering unusual insight into writers such as Dryden and Swift. In his chapter entitled "Wits, Wags, and Literary Weasels," Hendrickson explores the use of wit, pun, and hoax amongst writers, offering very amusing anecdotes and examples.

Further Study

Durant, William, and Ariel Durant, *The Age of Reason Begins*, Simon and Schuster, 1961.

The Age of Reason Begins is an excellent historical reference guide for those who want to understand the political era leading up to the neoclassical period. It reviews a period in history full of religious strife and scientific progress, from 1558 to 1650.

Finley, M. I., *The Ancient Greeks*, Penguin Books, 1991.

The Ancient Greeks covers the Greek classical period and includes discussions on Greek literature, science, philosophy, architecture, sculpture, and painting.

Highet, Gilbert, *The Classical Tradition*, Oxford University Press, 1949.

The Classical Tradition goes into great detail in explaining the major events/movements that defined Classicism. The author not only includes key classical movements, but also discusses the impact of classical work on more contemporary writers.

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Introduction

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Literary Movements for Students (LMfS) is to provide readers with a guide to understanding, enjoying, and studying novels by giving them easy access to information about the work. Part of Gale's□For Students□ Literature line, LMfS is specifically designed to meet the curricular needs of high school and undergraduate college students and their teachers, as well as the interests of general readers and researchers considering specific novels. While each volume contains entries on

□classic□ novels frequently studied in classrooms, there are also entries containing hard-to-find information on contemporary novels, including works by multicultural, international, and women novelists.

The information covered in each entry includes an introduction to the novel and the novel's author; a plot summary, to help readers unravel and understand the events in a novel; descriptions of important characters, including explanation of a given character's role in the novel as well as discussion about that character's relationship to other characters in the novel; analysis of important themes in the novel; and an explanation of important literary techniques and movements as they are demonstrated in the novel.

In addition to this material, which helps the readers analyze the novel itself, students are also provided with important information on the literary and historical background informing each work. This includes a historical context essay, a box comparing the time or place the novel was written to modern Western culture, a critical overview essay, and excerpts from critical essays on the novel. A unique feature of LMfS is a specially commissioned critical essay on each novel, targeted toward the student reader.

To further aid the student in studying and enjoying each novel, information on media adaptations is provided, as well as reading suggestions for works of fiction and nonfiction on similar themes and topics. Classroom aids include ideas for research papers and lists of critical sources that provide additional material on the novel.

Selection Criteria

The titles for each volume of LMfS were selected by surveying numerous sources on teaching literature and analyzing course curricula for various school districts. Some of the sources surveyed included: literature anthologies; Reading Lists for College-Bound Students: The Books Most Recommended by America's Top Colleges; textbooks on teaching the novel; a College Board survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; the NCTE's Teaching Literature in High School: The Novel;and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) list of best books for young adults of the past twenty-five years. Input was also solicited from our advisory board, as well as educators from various areas. From these discussions, it was determined that each volume should have a mix of □classic□ novels (those works commonly taught in literature classes) and contemporary novels for which information is often hard to find. Because of the interest in expanding the canon of literature, an emphasis was also placed on including works by international, multicultural, and women authors. Our advisory board members□educational professionals□ helped pare down the list for each volume. If a work was not selected for the present volume, it was often noted as a possibility for a future volume. As always, the editor welcomes suggestions for titles to be included in future volumes.

How Each Entry Is Organized

Each entry, or chapter, in LMfS focuses on one novel. Each entry heading lists the full name of the novel, the author's name, and the date of the novel's publication. The following elements are contained in each entry:

- Introduction: a brief overview of the novel which provides information about its first appearance, its literary standing, any controversies surrounding the work, and major conflicts or themes within the work.
- Author Biography: this section includes basic facts about the author's life, and focuses on events and times in the author's life that inspired the novel in question.
- Plot Summary: a factual description of the major events in the novel. Lengthy summaries are broken down with subheads.
- Characters: an alphabetical listing of major characters in the novel. Each character name is followed by a brief to an extensive description of the character's role in the novel, as well as discussion of the character's actions, relationships, and possible motivation. Characters are listed alphabetically by last name. If a character is unnamed□for instance, the narrator in Invisible Man-the character is listed as □The Narrator□ and alphabetized as □Narrator.□ If a character's first name is the only one given, the name will appear alphabetically by that name. □ Variant names are also included for each character. Thus, the full name □Jean Louise Finch□ would head the listing for the narrator of To Kill a Mockingbird, but listed in a separate cross-reference would be the nickname □Scout Finch.□
- Themes: a thorough overview of how the major topics, themes, and issues are addressed within the novel. Each theme discussed appears in a separate subhead, and is easily accessed through the boldface entries in the Subject/Theme Index.
- Style: this section addresses important style elements of the novel, such as setting, point of view, and narration; important literary devices used, such as imagery, foreshadowing, symbolism; and, if applicable, genres to which the work might have belonged, such as Gothicism or Romanticism. Literary terms are explained within the entry, but can also be found in the Glossary.
- Historical Context: This section outlines the social, political, and cultural climate in which the author lived and the novel was created. This section may include descriptions of related historical events, pertinent aspects of daily life in the culture, and the artistic and literary sensibilities of the time in which the work was written. If the novel is a historical work, information regarding the time in which the novel is set is also included. Each section is broken down with helpful subheads.
- Critical Overview: this section provides background on the critical reputation of the novel, including bannings or any other public controversies surrounding the work. For older works, this section includes a history of how the novel was first received and how perceptions of it may have changed over the years; for more recent novels, direct quotes from early reviews may also be included.
- Criticism: an essay commissioned by LMfS which specifically deals with the novel and is written specifically for the student audience, as well as excerpts from previously published criticism on the work (if available).

- Sources: an alphabetical list of critical material quoted in the entry, with full bibliographical information.
- Further Reading: an alphabetical list of other critical sources which may prove useful for the student. Includes full bibliographical information and a brief annotation.

In addition, each entry contains the following highlighted sections, set apart from the main text as sidebars:

- Media Adaptations: a list of important film and television adaptations of the novel, including source information. The list also includes stage adaptations, audio recordings, musical adaptations, etc.
- Topics for Further Study: a list of potential study questions or research topics dealing with the novel. This section includes questions related to other disciplines the student may be studying, such as American history, world history, science, math, government, business, geography, economics, psychology, etc.
- Compare and Contrast Box: an □at-a-glance□ comparison of the cultural and historical differences between the author's time and culture and late twentieth century/early twenty-first century Western culture. This box includes pertinent parallels between the major scientific, political, and cultural movements of the time or place the novel was written, the time or place the novel was set (if a historical work), and modern Western culture. Works written after 1990 may not have this box.
- What Do I Read Next?: a list of works that might complement the featured novel or serve as a contrast to it. This includes works by the same author and others, works of fiction and nonfiction, and works from various genres, cultures, and eras.

Other Features

LMfS includes □The Informed Dialogue: Interacting with Literature,□ a foreword by Anne Devereaux Jordan, Senior Editor for Teaching and Learning Literature (TALL), and a founder of the Children's Literature Association. This essay provides an enlightening look at how readers interact with literature and how Literary Movements for Students can help teachers show students how to enrich their own reading experiences.

A Cumulative Author/Title Index lists the authors and titles covered in each volume of the LMfS series.

A Cumulative Nationality/Ethnicity Index breaks down the authors and titles covered in each volume of the LMfS series by nationality and ethnicity.

A Subject/Theme Index, specific to each volume, provides easy reference for users who may be studying a particular subject or theme rather than a single work. Significant subjects from events to broad themes are included, and the entries pointing to the specific theme discussions in each entry are indicated in boldface.

Each entry has several illustrations, including photos of the author, stills from film adaptations (if available), maps, and/or photos of key historical events.

Citing Literary Movements for Students

When writing papers, students who quote directly from any volume of Literary Movements for Students may use the following general forms. These examples are based on MLA style; teachers may request that students adhere to a different style, so the following examples may be adapted as needed. When citing text from LMfS that is not attributed to a particular author (i.e., the Themes, Style, Historical Context sections, etc.), the following format should be used in the bibliography section:

□Night.□ Literary Movements for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 234-35.

When quoting the specially commissioned essay from LMfS (usually the first piece under the □Criticism□ subhead), the following format should be used:

Miller, Tyrus. Critical Essay on □Winesburg, Ohio.□ Literary Movements for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 335-39.

When quoting a journal or newspaper essay that is reprinted in a volume of LMfS, the following form may be used:

Malak, Amin. □Margaret Atwood's □The Handmaid's Tale and the Dystopian Tradition,□ Canadian Literature No. 112 (Spring, 1987), 9-16; excerpted and reprinted in Literary Movements for Students, Vol. 4, ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski (Detroit: Gale, 1998), pp. 133-36.

When quoting material reprinted from a book that appears in a volume of LMfS, the following form may be used:

Adams, Timothy Dow. □Richard Wright: □Wearing the Mask,□ in Telling Lies in Modern American Autobiography (University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 69-83; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 1, ed. Diane Telgen (Detroit: Gale, 1997), pp. 59-61.

We Welcome Your Suggestions

The editor of Literary Movements for Students welcomes your comments and ideas. Readers who wish to suggest novels to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions, are cordially invited to contact the editor. You may contact the editor via email at: ForStudentsEditors@gale.com. Or write to the editor at:

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