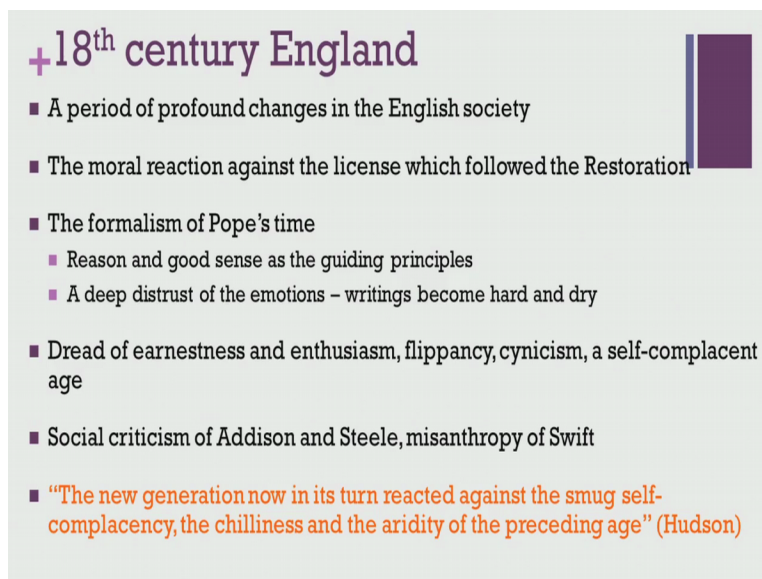


History of English Language and Literature
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Lecture 12
The Age of Johnson

Hello everyone! Let me welcome you to today's session of the course, The History of English Language and Literature. In today's lecture we are continuing to look at the long 18th century focusing on the Age of Johnson which lasted from 1745 till 1798. In the last couple of sessions, we have also been looking at how the early 18th century had been fashioned, what were the major influences, sociopolitical, religious, societal, other scientific elements, how the age of enlightenment also contributed to the development of English language and literature.

We had been looking, taking a look at all of these things in the last couple of sessions and today we continue to look at how the later part of the century has been framed and has been fashioned in terms of its writings, in terms of its literary influences, the various shifting tendencies of the people, the politics, the writings, so on and so forth.

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+18th century England

- A period of profound changes in the English society
- The moral reaction against the license which followed the Restoration
- The formalism of Pope's time
 - Reason and good sense as the guiding principles
 - A deep distrust of the emotions – writings become hard and dry
- Dread of earnestness and enthusiasm, flippancy, cynicism, a self-complacent age
- Social criticism of Addison and Steele, misanthropy of Swift
- "The new generation now in its turn reacted against the smug self-complacency, the chilliness and the aridity of the preceding age" (Hudson)

In the beginning of the 18th century, there was also a moral reaction against the license which followed the Restoration period. We notice that much of the writings of this period was also characterized by, characterized with this reactionary nature. We saw how it was also dominated

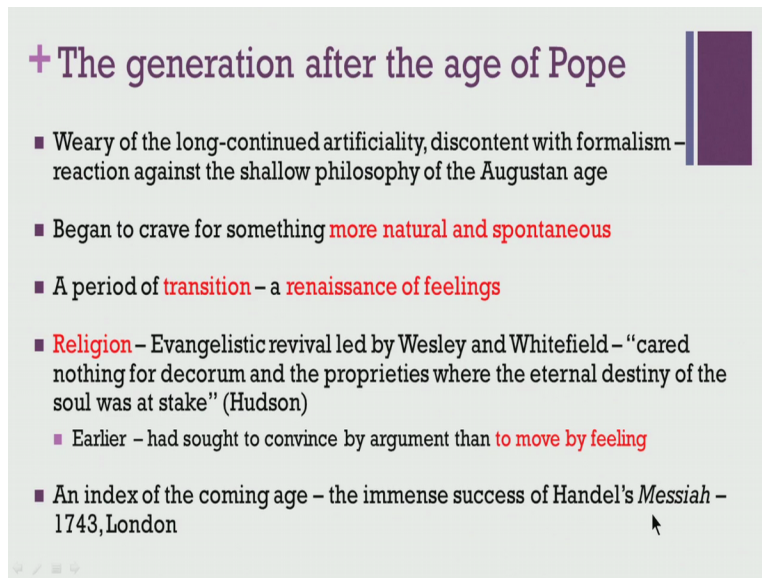
by the formalism of the Age of Pope during which period reason and good sense prevailed as the guiding principles. And there was also a deep distrust of the emotions and the feelings. Writings accordingly had become harder and dryer in comparison with the earlier times.

As a result of the reactionary forces against the elements of Restoration drama and the licentiousness of the period, people also developed the certain kind of dread against earnestness and enthusiasm. Accordingly there was also a domination of flippancy, cynicism and the age in general was considered as mostly self-complacent. And this is also reflected in the writings of Addison and Steele which also had a minor form of social criticism.

We also saw it heavily getting reflected in the writings of Swift which was mostly misanthropist in nature. In the context of all these changes and all these movements which were coming about, Hudson remarks, "The new generation now in its turn reacted against the smug self-complacency, the chilliness and the aridity of the preceding age." So we begin to see that by the mid-18th century, there is again a reaction, a sort of response against the dominant tone of flippancy, the dominant tone of cynicism and also the formalism and the dryness which had crept into the writings of the times.

So just as we have noted in the discussion of our previous centuries, every age seems to react to the preceding age in some form or the other. So whatever happens in the latter half of the 18th century is again yet another reaction to the tendencies of the early 18th century.

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+ The generation after the age of Pope

- Weary of the long-continued artificiality, discontent with formalism – reaction against the shallow philosophy of the Augustan age
- Began to crave for something **more natural and spontaneous**
- A period of **transition** – a **renaissance of feelings**
- **Religion** – Evangelistic revival led by Wesley and Whitefield – “cared nothing for decorum and the proprieties where the eternal destiny of the soul was at stake” (Hudson)
 - Earlier – had sought to convince by argument than **to move by feeling**
- An index of the coming age – the immense success of Handel's *Messiah* – 1743, London

So the generation which came after the Age of Pope, they were really of the long continued artificiality and also displayed a lot of discontent with formalism. So we also find them reacting against the shallow philosophy of the Augustan Age. But the writers were writing during the Age of Pope which is also known as the Augustan Age. They strongly believe that they were following the tenets of the ancient classical writing.

They also thought that they were more philosophical and they were more profound and in-depth than their predecessors. We also find them reacting against even the writings of the golden period, the Elizabethan Age. In that sense having witnessed how the writings had become more formalist, more imitative to the classical tendencies, we find that the generation after Pope craving for something more natural and spontaneous and not intellectual and artificial.

So in that sense we also witnessed a renaissance of feelings during this time and accordingly this age is also seen as an age of transition which marked the changes from the formalist tendencies of the Age of Pope towards the more spontaneous, towards the more spontaneous expressiveness of the romantic age which is yet to come. For example, this sort of change was seen in almost all spectrums of life including religion.

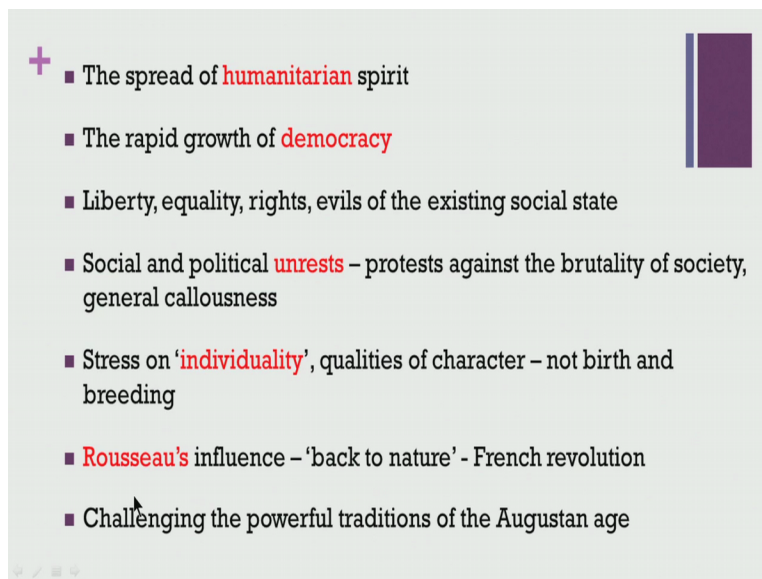
We find that there was a sort of evangelistic revival which swept across Britain during this time. It was led by, primarily by Wesley and Whitefield. We find that, we find Hudson talking about it

in a very interesting way. He notes, “The evangelist cared nothing for decorum and the proprieties where the eternal destiny of the soul was at stake.”

So even in the religious discussions and religious tendencies of those times we find the marked difference in the sense that in the early 18th century, the focus was more on convincing someone through an argument. But in the latter half with this evangelistic revival we find that there is also a focus on trying to move by feeling rather than by arguments and through a rational, rather than through rational arguments.

One of the major events which also marked the beginning of such an evangelistic revival was the successful staging of this particular play, Handel’s Messiah in 1743 in one of the stages in London. This was hugely successful and later historians do note this event as an index of the coming age.

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- The spread of **humanitarian** spirit
 - The rapid growth of **democracy**
 - Liberty, equality, rights, evils of the existing social state
 - Social and political **unrests** – protests against the brutality of society, general callousness
 - Stress on ‘**individuality**’, qualities of character – not birth and breeding
 - **Rousseau’s** influence – ‘back to nature’ - French revolution
 - Challenging the powerful traditions of the Augustan age

In the latter half of the 18th century we also find a prolific spreading of the humanitarian spirit. We find a rapid growth of democracy which is also a phenomenon which we witnessed in other parts of Europe as well. And we also find that people begin to celebrate the ideals of liberty, equality and rights and also they begin to expose the evils of the existing social state. So compared to the previous age which was more cynical in its response to most of these events which were happening in society, we find that the present age, the generation which was living

during the latter half of the 18th century, we find them more responsive and trying to stage a lot of protest against the existing evils in society.


So in that sense it was also a period of lot of social and political unrest. We find people reacting the brutality of the system, brutality of the society in general. And there is also an increased stress on individuality and qualities of character. We also find that there is an increased stress on individuality and qualities of character. People begin to focus on things which are acquired rather than the qualities which are acquired by birth and through breeding.

So there is lot of moving away from the aspects of nobility, from the aspects of aristocracy and focusing on the individual irrespective of the background from which each one has hailed from. And we also find tremendous influence of Rousseau and we also know that he was the one who influenced the French Revolution quite a lot. We find that the Rousseau's influence is particularly seen in the way in which the writers are responding to his call to go back to nature. So we find at a later point even with the advent of romanticism this influence was quite profound and visible throughout the writings and throughout the various sort of cultural reflections.

On the whole we find that in the latter half of the 18th century, after the Age of Pope, the writers, the thinkers and major influential cultural proponents of those time, they challenged the powerful traditions of the preceding Augustan Age.

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Samuel Johnson (1709-1784)



- The greatest English man of letters after Pope, before Wordsworth
- The son of a bookseller – a school usher for a time
 - did some translation for a Birmingham publisher - married a widow 20 years his senior – a futile attempt to establish a school of his own
 - Forced to leave college (Pembroke, Oxford) due to lack of funds
- 1737 – moved to London to try his fortunes (with 2 pence half penny)
 - The company of David Garrick – former pupil, one of the greatest actors of the time
- A **poet, essayist, moralist, literary critic, biographer, editor, lexicographer**
 - “arguably the most distinguished man of letters of in English history”
- A devout **Anglican**, a committed **Tory**, the ‘great cham’ of literature, acknowledged dictator
- Odd gestures and tics – disconcerting to some – Tourette syndrome?

One of the most important figures of this period was Samuel Johnson so much so that age itself gets named as the Age of Johnson. He lived from 1709 to 1784 and he is considered as the greatest English man of letters after Pope and before Wordsworth. So he also signaled a certain kind of transition not just in literary writings but also in the development of language. He was born as the son of a bookseller, he worked as a school usher for a time.

He also did in the earlier days of his career in order to make a living. He also did some translation for a Birmingham publisher. We also get to know that he married a widow who was 20 years his senior. And after a while together as a family they try to establish a school of their own but it was quite unsuccessful. He also falls into a lot of misfortune as a result of that. And in between he also lived, he is also forced to leave college which was the Pembroke College in Oxford due to lack of funds.

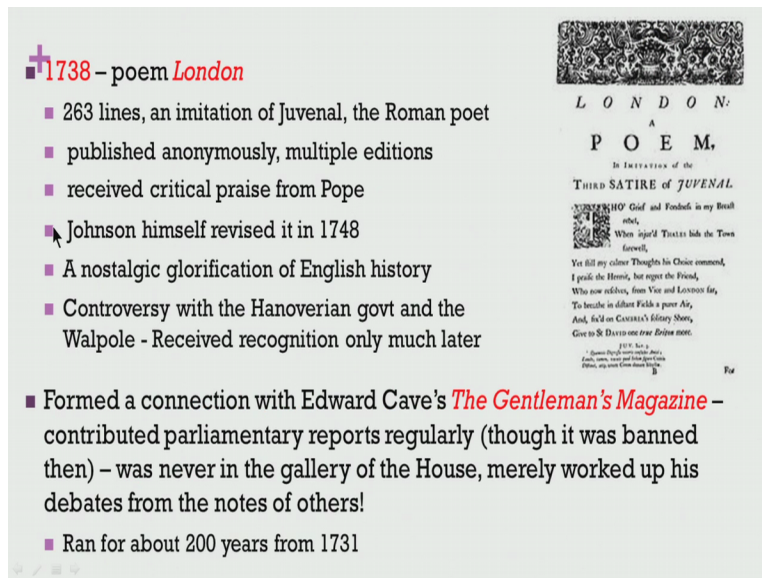
And as a result of these many unkindly things which were happening in his life and the unpromising way in which life was moving ahead, in 1737 he decides to move to London to try his fortune. It is said that he moved to London with just 2 pence and half a penny in his pocket. He however was fortunate to have the company of David Garrick who was also a former pupil of his and he also had later become one of the most renowned actors of those times. He was fortunate to have the company of David Garrick with whom he is also said to have lived for a while until he could establish himself in London.

If we look at the career of Johnson, we note that he was, many things rolled into one, he was a poet, an essayist, a moralist, a literary critic, a biographer, an editor, a lexicographer because of which the historians do feel that he was arguably the most distinguished man of letters in English history. In terms of his religious beliefs and his political affiliations, it is important to note that he was a devout Anglican, he was a committed Tory. And in terms of his literary achievements he is also considered as the 'great cham' of literature.

And he was also an acknowledged dictator of those times when it came to matters of literature, culture, society and all things related to letters. About his personality there was, lot of people have noted about a strange phenomenon. Many have written about how some of his odd gestures and takes were seen as disconcerting to many who came to visit him. It was also the result of him not developing good relationships with some of his contemporaries.

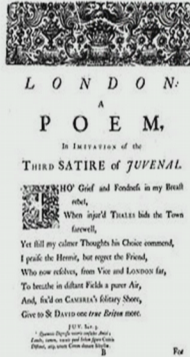
Later historians have also assumed perhaps that he had this Tourette syndrome which was a certain kind of neuro-disorder which was not yet diagnosed then. So his some of the unusual kind of behavioral patterns Johnson displayed, it could have been because of this (tourist) Tourette syndrome which was not diagnosed.

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1738 – poem *London*

- 263 lines, an imitation of Juvenal, the Roman poet
- published anonymously, multiple editions
- received critical praise from Pope
- Johnson himself revised it in 1748
- A nostalgic glorification of English history
- Controversy with the Hanoverian govt and the Walpole - Received recognition only much later
- Formed a connection with Edward Cave's *The Gentleman's Magazine* – contributed parliamentary reports regularly (though it was banned then) – was never in the gallery of the House, merely worked up his debates from the notes of others!
- Ran for about 200 years from 1731



Talking about his literary capabilities, he first he published his first poem in 1738, it was also titled London. This poem had 263 lines and since he was a very avid admirer of the classicist, this was an imitation of Juvenal, the Roman poet. The first poem was published anonymously and it also ran into multiple editions. And he was also fortunate to have received much critical acclaim from Pope who did believe that he was one of the greatest writers of those times.

And Johnson himself in fact, he was increasingly unhappy with the first edition which was published in 1738. We find him revising it again in 1748 much to the discomfort of many others who felt that the first one was much better than the latter revised edition. And in this poem we find a certain kind of a nostalgic glorification of English history in the sense that he was trying to praise the earlier governments and the earlier monarchs in comparison with the present ones who were ruling the 18th century and because of which he also ran into a lot of controversy with the Hanoverian government and Robert Walpole who was the Prime Minister de facto.

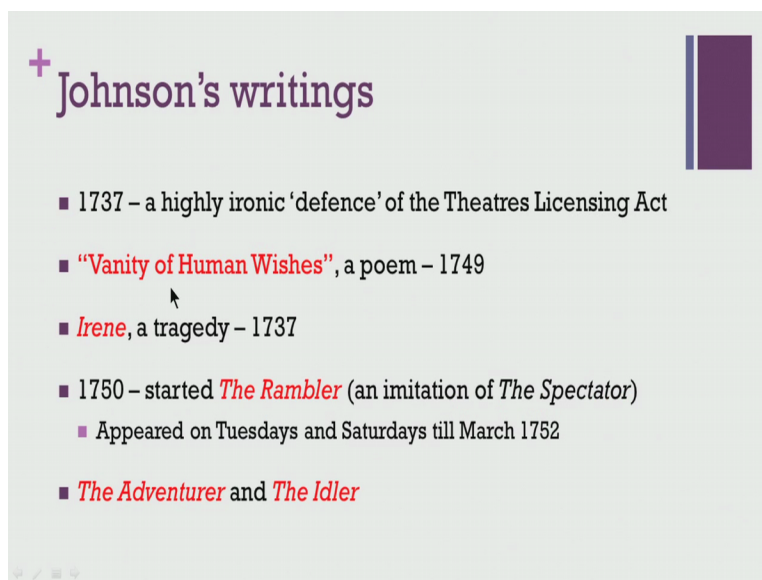
It is also useful to remember that the government was mostly Whig oriented while Johnson had a lot of affiliations towards the Tory party. Maybe because of these reasons, because he had

managed to fill the ruling party right at the beginning of his literary career, he managed to (recede), he managed to receive some sort of recognition and financial assistance only much later in his life. During this period we also find him establishing a connection with one of the former publishers of those times, Edward Cave who also was running this particular magazine known as The Gentleman's Magazine.

Johnson used to regularly contribute to the parliamentary reports for these magazines and it is important to remember that during those times parliamentary reporting was banned. But nevertheless he manages to contribute to this column on a regular basis. Again it is interesting to note that Johnson himself was never in the gallery of the house, he merely worked up his debates from the notes of others. So we also get to know about the kind of immense genius that he possessed right from the beginning in order to fashion everything according to his convenience and also begin to write according to what the public wanted.

And an important note about this particular magazine, The Gentleman's Magazine is that it ran for about 200 years since it was established in 1731. This was quite a rare feat since most of the periodicals and magazines which began in the early phase of 18th century and even in the early 19th century. They could not manage beyond a few decades at the maximum.

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Johnson's writings

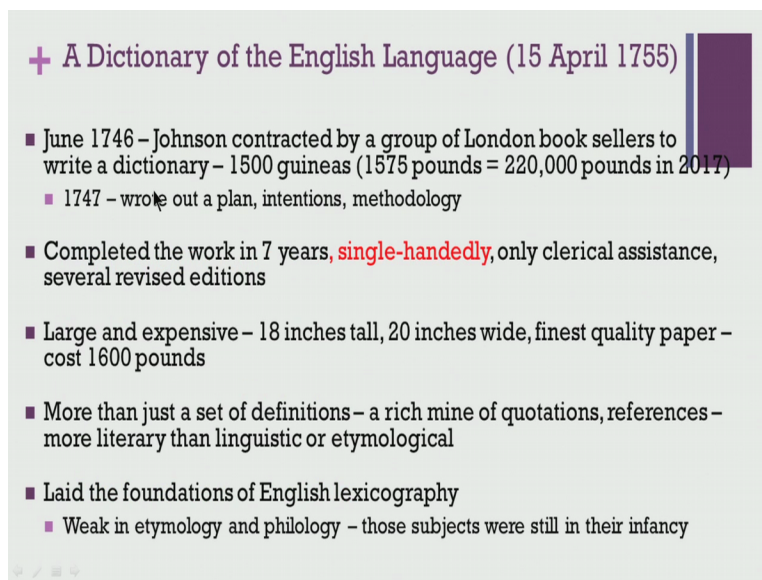
- 1737 – a highly ironic 'defence' of the Theatres Licensing Act
- "Vanity of Human Wishes", a poem – 1749
- *Irene*, a tragedy – 1737
- 1750 – started *The Rambler* (an imitation of *The Spectator*)
 - Appeared on Tuesdays and Saturdays till March 1752
- *The Adventurer* and *The Idler*

Some of the other important writings of Samuel Johnson include one of his earliest defense of the Theatres Licensing Act. This was in 1737. He also writes a poem, Vanity of Human Wishes in

1749 which was also, which is also considered as one of the best of his poetic works. He, in 1737 he wrote a tragedy titled Irene. In 1750 just like Addison and Steele we find him beginning this periodical titled The Rambler. It was also an imitation of The Spectator. The Rambler used to appear on all Tuesdays and Saturdays till March 1752.

He used to work on this single-handedly and it was also quite successful though it did not achieve the kind of popularity that (spect) that Addison's and Steele's periodicals used to get. He also published two more periodicals titled The Adventurer and The Idler.

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- June 1746 – Johnson contracted by a group of London book sellers to write a dictionary – 1500 guineas (1575 pounds = 220,000 pounds in 2017)
 - 1747 – wrote out a plan, intentions, methodology
- Completed the work in 7 years, **single-handedly**, only clerical assistance, several revised editions
- Large and expensive – 18 inches tall, 20 inches wide, finest quality paper – cost 1600 pounds
- More than just a set of definitions – a rich mine of quotations, references – more literary than linguistic or etymological
- Laid the foundations of English lexicography
 - Weak in etymology and philology – those subjects were still in their infancy

Perhaps the most important work of not just Samuel Johnson but the most important work of the 18th century itself was the publication of a dictionary of the English Language. The dictionary came out on 15th April 1755 in order to also mark the beginning of a new phase in the history of English language. In June 1746 seeing the possibility of standardizing English language, we find that Samuel Johnson who was by then quite a renowned figure in London, he was contracted by a group of London booksellers to write a dictionary.

And he was offered 1,500 guineas which is equivalent to 1,575 pounds. And in today's terms it would be 220,000 pounds. So it was such an enormous sum of money which was offered to Samuel Johnson for beginning his work on this particular dictionary which was quite a novel work in English language then. During this time the French people had already come out with a dictionary of their own which was published by their academy of letters.

But we find that these English booksellers they do find that there is a possibility of a new market in terms of if they manage to come out with a dictionary. They also realized that this is a huge project which they cannot fund on their own. So they kind of come together, form a collective and commission Johnson to do that. Johnson also was quite smart enough to see the possibility and see the, and also to identify a possible market in this. And by 1747 we begin to note that he had written out of plan complete with his intentions and his methodology and he begins to work on this.

Though initially he thought that he would be able to complete this work in about 3 years, we see that he takes about 7 to 8 years to complete this work. Nevertheless this is considered as one of his greatest contributions to English language and literature. He had worked on it single-handedly and this was a remarkable not just during those times but even in today's terms. He only had employed some clerical assistance to help him with certain clerical work. And there was also several revised editions which came out even after it was published in 1755.

There is a dictionary which was produced, it was very large and it was expensive. In terms of its dimensions it was 18 inches tall, 20 inches wide. It also use the finest quality paper available then. The cost was, one dictionary was about 1,600 pounds. So we do find that it was very expensive and not affordable to the common reader. Only certain academies and institutions could buy it then. What made Johnson's dictionary quite distinctive is that it was not just a set of definitions and meanings. It was also a rich mine of quotations, references and it was also seen as more of a literary artifact than a linguistic artifact.

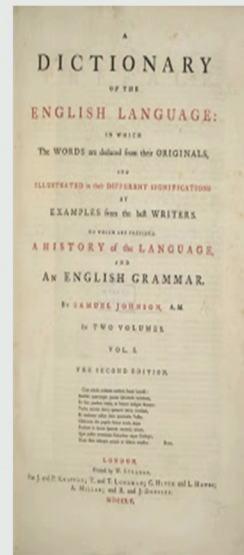
We the find that it was not just about meanings and etymologies, it was also about including a lot of references from contemporary literary texts. Johnson's dictionary also has this rare distinction of having laid the foundations of English lexicography. Though there is a criticism that this work was quite weak in etymology and philology but nevertheless we also need to keep in mind that these subjects were still in their infancy in the 18th century.

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- **Lexicographer** – a writer of dictionaries, a harmless drudge
- **Oats** – a grain, which in England is generally given to horses, but in Scotland supports the people
- **Patron** – commonly a wretch who supports with insolence, and is paid with flattery

OATMEAL. *n. f.* [*oat and meal.*] Flower made by grinding oats.
Oatmeal and butter, outwardly applied, dry the scab on the head. *Arbutnot on Aliment.*
Our neighbours tell me oft, in joking talk, Of *oats*, *leathers*, *oatmeal*, bran, and chalk. *Gay.*
OATMEAL. *n. f.* An herb. *Ainfeurth.*
OATS. *n. f.* [*acen, Saxon.*] A grain, which in England is generally given to horses, but in Scotland supports the people. It is of the grass leaved tribe; the flowers have no petals, and are disposed in a loose panicle: the grain is eatable. The meal makes tolerable good bread. *Miller.*
The *oats* have eaten the horses. *Shakespeare.*
It is bare mechanism, no otherwise produced than the turning of a wild *oatbear'd*, by the infinnuation of the particles of moisture. *Locke.*
For your lean cattle, fodder them with barley straw first, and the *oat* straw last. *Mortimer's Husbandry.*
His horse's allowance of *oats* and beans, was greater than the journey required. *Swift.*
OATTHISTLE. *n. f.* [*oat and thistle.*] An herb. *Ang.*

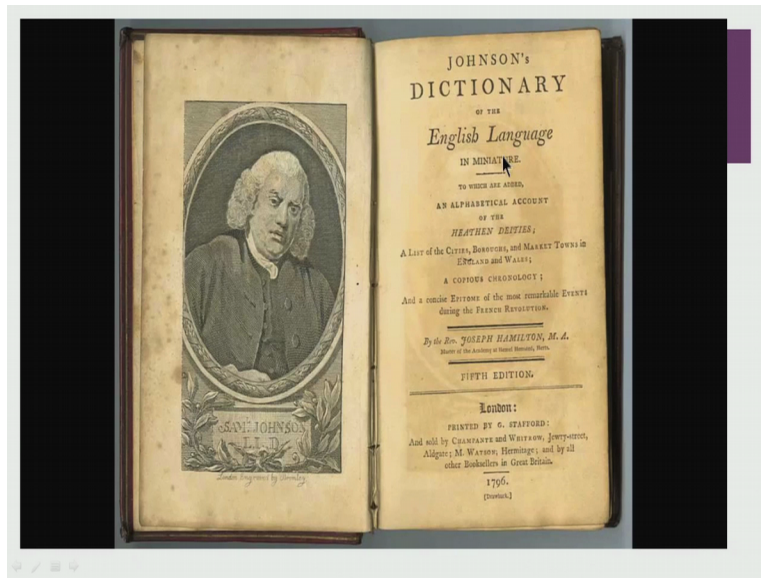
Quoted
Shakespeare
more than any
other writer



Johnson's dictionary had a lot of very curious kind of definitions which were also, which also had a tinch of humor in them. For example, he talks about lexicographer as a writer of dictionaries, a harmless drudge. An oats as a grain, which in England is generally given to horses but in Scotland supports the people, just obviously also had irked the Scottish people quite a bit. And patron is commonly a wretch who supports with insolence and is paid with flattery.

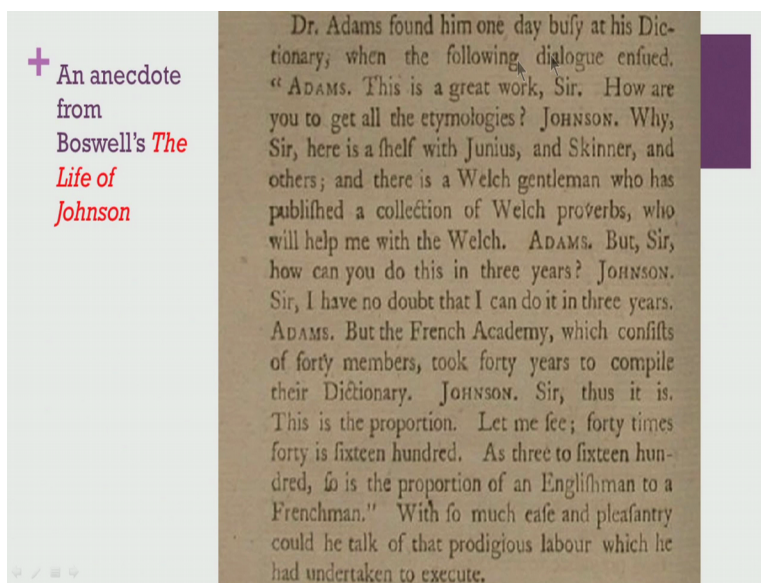
If we, this is a page from Johnson's dictionary. For example, if we take a look at this the meaning of the particular word oats, we find that apart from the meaning he also gives a lot of references from certain contemporary text. He quotes from Millar, Shakespeare, Locke, Mortimer and Swift, yeah. So this is quite an impressive archive of literary text as well because he refers to most of the text of those times which had some reference or the other to this particular word oats. And we also, it is important to note that among his literary quotations, he quotes, he quoted Shakespeare more than any other writer.

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Here also note that Johnson's dictionary which ran into multiple editions, it also had a miniature form which was, which came out in 1796. So we do find this also was one of those books that people really wanted to own during those times because there was no other reference book which could be used in order to understand words, usages, coinages. And it was also an interesting resource book for referring to various other forms of literature and writings.

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Boswell who wrote the biography of Johnson, *The Life of Johnson*, he speaks about an interesting anecdote in the context of the writing of the dictionary. Allow me to read out an

excerpt from this: Dr. Adams found him, that is Dr. Johnson, one day busy at his dictionary, when the following dialogue ensued, “Adams says this is a great work, sir. How are you to get all the etymologies? Johnson: Why sir, here is a shelf with Junius and Skinner and others and there is a Welch gentleman who has published a collection of Welch proverbs, who will help me with the Welch.

Adams: But sir, how can you do this in three years? Johnson: Sir, I have no doubt that I can do it in three years. Adams: But the French Academy, which consists of 40 members, took 40 years to compile their dictionary. Johnson: Sir, thus it is. This is the proportion. Let me see, 40 times 40 is 1,600. As 3 to 1,600, so is the proportion of an English man to a French man.” With so much ease and pleasantry could he talk of that prodigious labor which he had undertaken to execute.

Here we also note that this was the kind of response that he had to any kind of situation no matter how difficult or how grand it was. And this, he thus also was rightly named as, he thus was also rightly named as the greatest in that particular age. One particular incident marked a lot of difference in terms of the literary patronage system of the 18th century. And this was Johnson’s response to one of his patrons. Johnson in fact was very late in getting any kind of patronage from the wealthy nobles of those times.

And we have noted many times at the earlier sessions that throughout history we find that always there were particular patrons or wealthy gentlemen who were acting as patrons to promote arts, literature, culture et cetera. So the artist were always at the mercy of these powerful wealthy people.

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+Johnson's letter to Lord Chesterfield

- Received the patronage of **Philip Stanhope, 4th Earl of Chesterfield** – neglected him entirely, did not keep up his promise

“Seven years, My lord have now past since I waited in your outward Rooms or was repulsed from your Door, during which time I have been pushing on my work through difficulties of which it is useless to complain, and have brought it at last to the verge of Publication without one Act of assistance, one word of encouragement, or one smile of favour. Such treatment I did not expect, for I never had a Patron before.

Is not a Patron, My Lord, one who looks with unconcern on a Man struggling for Life in the water and when he has reached ground encumbers him with help. The notice which you have been pleased to take of my Labours, had it been early, had been kind; but it has been delayed till I am indifferent and cannot enjoy it, till I am solitary and cannot impart it, till I am known, and do not want it”.

- Dealt the deathblow to the whole eighteenth century system of patronage – the dictionary made Johnson financially independent (300 pounds a year – pension)

And when Johnson began his work on this particular dictionary, he had contacted Philip Stanhope, the 4th Earl of Chesterfield who also initially promised to help him out but we find that for a long time he neglected him greatly and the Earl of Chesterfield also did not keep up his promise. But however towards the end of his work when his dictionary was about to get published, we find Chesterfield again approaching him and also offering to help him financially.

However in between he also, Chesterfield also had written quite bitterly about the ongoing work on the dictionary in couple of newsletters and periodicals which were prevalent during those times. Johnson also harbored all of those ill feeling against Chesterfield and just when Chesterfield offered some amount of money towards the end of the completion of the work, Johnson wrote this particular letter in response and this has also become quite famous for the way in which literary writer treated a patron of, patron in the 18th century.

So this is how the letter reads, “Seven years, My lord have now past since I waited in your outward rooms or was repulsed from your Door, during which times I have been pushing on my work through difficulties of which it is useless to complain, and have brought it at last to the verge of Publication without one Act of assistance, one word of encouragement or one smile of favor. Such treatment I did not expect, for I never had a Patron before.

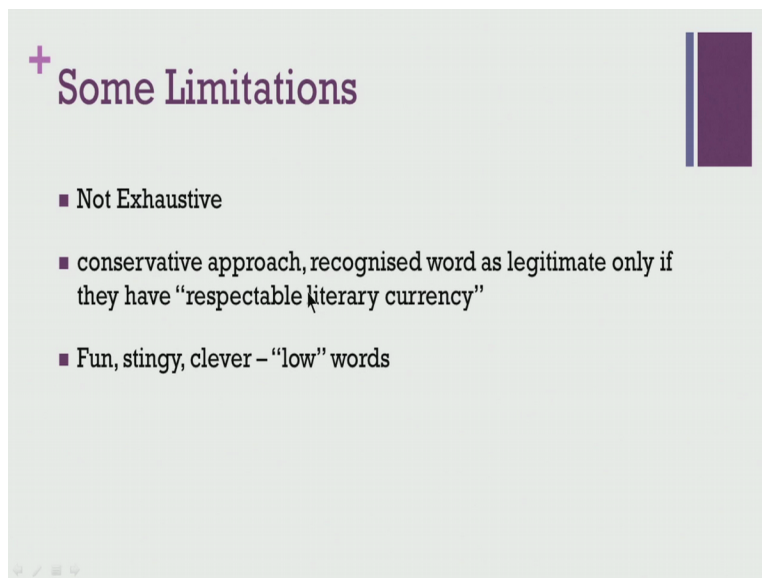
Is not a patron, my lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water and when he has reached ground encumbers him with help. The notice which you have been

pleased to take of my labors, had it been early, had been kind; but it has been delayed and but it has been delayed till I am indifferent and cannot enjoy it, till I am solitary and cannot impart it, till I am known and do not want it.”

This particular letter which Johnson wrote to Chesterfield in the 18th century, it was a major event then. It was also an encouragement to many of the artist and writers of those times. And it is also said that this event marked the deathblow to the whole 18th century system of patronage. And the dictionary also made Samuel Johnson financially quite independent. He began to even earn 300 pounds a year as pension.

It also showed the other writers and artist of those times that it is possible to earn one's livelihood through one's artistic and literary means as well without completely relying on the wealth of the patrons. Nevertheless the dictionary did have some limitations. The most important one was that it was not an exhaustive work compared to the later works but however one also need to keep in mind that Johnson worked with limited resources in the 18th century.

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+ Some Limitations

- Not Exhaustive
- conservative approach, recognised word as legitimate only if they have “respectable literary currency”
- Fun, stingy, clever – “low” words


And the other important fact was that Johnson was quite conservative in his approach of including words. For example, he only recognized word as legitimate only if it had some respectable literary currency. Certain words which he thought were of low profile or did not have enough literary quality, it did not make it into his dictionary. For example, because of those

reasons he had excluded words such as fun, stingy and clever but we know that at later point of time they all became part of the, part of proper English vocabulary.

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+ The Club - 1764

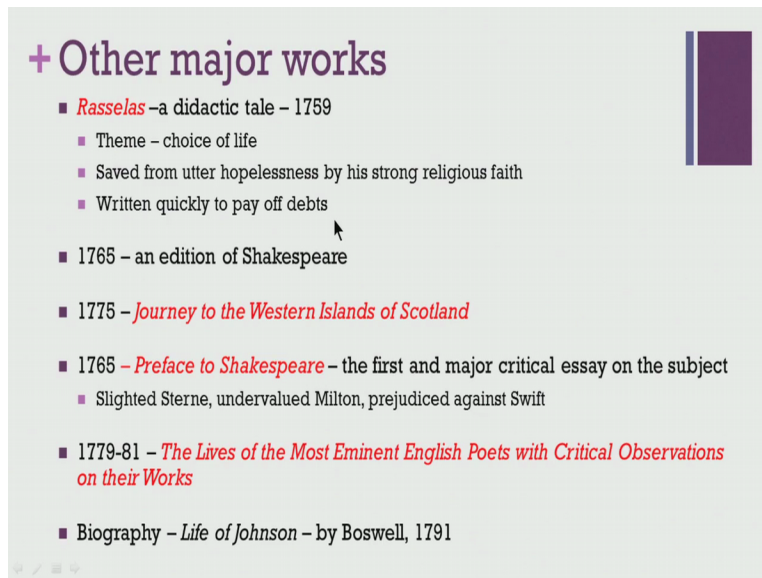
- At Turk's Head Inn, Gerrard Street
- Joshua Reynolds, the great painter, Oliver Goldsmith, Edmund Burke, Gibbon, Sir William Jones, Garrick and Boswell
- The Club's toast – "Esto perpetua" – Let it be perpetual



Samuel Johnson also founded the club in 1764. This was mostly literary club where the eminent personalities of those times used to get together, have dinner together and also discuss about the major sociopolitical affairs of those times. They used to meet regularly at the Turk's Inn, at the Turk's Head Inn, in Gerrard Street. The major members of this club included Joshua Reynolds who was renowned painter of those times. He is also said to have being one of the founding members of the club.

Oliver Goldsmith, Edmund Burke, Gibbon, Sir William Jones who was the orientalist, Garrick, the actor and also Boswell who was a hero worshipping friend of Johnson who also later wrote his biogeography. The club's toast was 'Esto perpetua', when translated from Latin it was Let it be perpetual. But nevertheless we do find that the club did not have a very long life. Nevertheless they did contribute to a lot of discussions and a lot of major thoughts. We can say that it has sprung from this club headed by Samuel Johnson.

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The slide features a title '+ Other major works' in a purple font. Below the title is a bulleted list of Johnson's works and their significance. The list includes 'Rasselas' (1759), an edition of Shakespeare (1765), 'Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland' (1775), 'Preface to Shakespeare' (1765), 'The Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets with Critical Observations on their Works' (1779-81), and 'Life of Johnson' (1791). A mouse cursor is visible over the text 'Written quickly to pay off debts'.

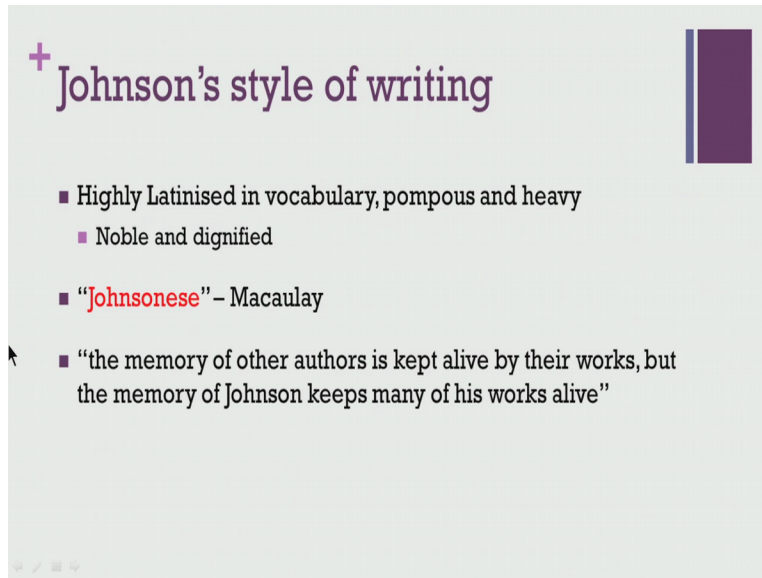
- *Rasselas* –a didactic tale – 1759
 - Theme – choice of life
 - Saved from utter hopelessness by his strong religious faith
 - Written quickly to pay off debts
- 1765 – an edition of Shakespeare
- 1775 – *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*
- 1765 – *Preface to Shakespeare* – the first and major critical essay on the subject
 - Slighted Sterne, undervalued Milton, prejudiced against Swift
- 1779-81 – *The Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets with Critical Observations on their Works*
- Biography – *Life of Johnson* – by Boswell, 1791

The other major works of Johnson include *Rasselas* which was a didactic novel which he published in 1759. It said that he had written off, he had written *Rasselas* quite quickly to pay off certain debts that he had accumulated. And in this work we also find his sense of deep religious faith which he claims to have saved him from utter hopelessness throughout his life. In 1765 he also published an edition of Shakespeare. In 1775 *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* which was also more like a travelogue. In 1765 he published *Preface to Shakespeare* which is also considered as the first and major critical essay on literature.

This was quite important and controversial in the sense that we find him slighting Sterne who was one of the earliest novelists. He undervalued Milton's work and he also displayed a lot of prejudice against Swift. Many feel that this was also because of the political rivalries that they had during the time. In 1779-81 we find him coming up with this another significant work on criticism, *The Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets with Critical Observations on their Works*.

In that sense we find that Johnson was important not just in laying the foundations of language but also in laying the foundations of literary criticism of English literature. The most important work about Johnson has been his biography written by Boswell in 1791 titled *Life of Johnson*.

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+ Johnson's style of writing

- Highly Latinised in vocabulary, pompous and heavy
 - Noble and dignified
- “Johnsonese” – Macaulay
- “the memory of other authors is kept alive by their works, but the memory of Johnson keeps many of his works alive”

Johnson's style of writing was very different from that of predecessors or of successors which is why as we noted at the beginning he is also considered as one of the greatest man of letters. His vocabulary was very Latinized and it was also pompous and heavy. But at the same time it was not flippant, it was not superficial, it was also noble and dignified. This had prompted Macaulay to even coin a term Johnsonese to talk about this dignified and noble style of writing.

Macaulay's observation about Johnson is quite apt as and when we begin to wind up this session. Macaulay once wrote, “The memory of other authors is kept alive by their works, but the memory of Johnson keeps many of his works alive.” On this note, on this celebratory note about Samuel Johnson we begin to wind up this session and we also shall continue to look at other eminent personalities of the 18th century who marked transition towards a romantic period of the 19th century. So with this we wind up today's session. Thank you for listening. Look forward to seeing you in the next session.