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The enlightenment period or the age of enlightenment as it is commonly known is a period in the 18th century where the smartest minds of the time tried to explain formerly unexplainable phenomena using scientific methodology and reasoning as opposed to tradition and faith which were more puritan ideals (Nina, 365). Everything at the time was subject to critical reasoning. Some of the fields that faced the reasonable critique were politics, religion and most importantly literature. Before the enlightenment period the dominant force on knowledge was religion, especially Christianity. The 18th century saw major transformations with many believing that the human mind at the time could grasp a firm understanding of what was happening around the world. Science started substituting religion, with thinkers such as Isaac Newton explaining what religion was at a loss explaining before (Nina, 365).

The enlightenment period was changing the world as it was known and in its place creating a world that was never seen before. As such the new world had to have a different literature aspect than was known before. As a result of enlightenment, there was diversity in every aspect of life. This is especially the case in North America (Formerly known as British North America). Enlightenment was attributed to the increase of these colonies from thousands to millions since advertising literature combined with other factors from the enlightenment made people think that British North America was where life could become better.

As a result of enlightenment replacing puritan doctrines, people started viewing their lives in social rather than religious standings. The enlightenment has a positive influence on both literature and a negative

effect on religion. The ideals that the church tried to portray were now being replaced with enlightenment ideals. The ideals had a positive effect on literature. For instance, multiple books were being written about how indigenous groups such as the blacks and the Indians were being exploited (Andrews, 79-89).

However, even changes in religion had an effect on literature (Curran, 137). As the advocates of religion worked hard to maintain their congregation, there rose a war of pamphlets. This war was between the clergy that supported enlightenment ideas and those that chose to remain with puritan ideals. Print culture spread rapidly to support different forms of revival that were being pushed on the congregation. However, the war only made the enlightenment ideals spread further. This is because the reformulation of the basics of Christianity by the early thinkers such as Isaac Newton altered the rate at which Christianity was being received in the New World (Curran, 137). The more the ideals of enlightenment spread the further the literature grew in the New World.

Another field that was affected by enlightenment was that of education. This is especially the English language. The standpoint and ideas that governed English literature at that time were changed drastically with enlightenment. For example one of the books written at that time “ Robin Crusoe” demonstrated the importance of education in man’s understanding of the world around him. The characters in the books demonstrated the importance of education and they were the embodiments of an enlightened Englishman. For instance in the book, the author uses techniques that were never before used. In the book, the author Dafoe uses techniques whereby to educate his

readers he employs scenarios that are similar to real life. This method was otherwise known as circumstantial realism.

Since life in general was under scrutiny in the 18th century due to enlightenment, the literature of the time had to change to assume an observatory position over society. Authors such as Jonathan Swift wrote satirical novels such as Gulliver's travels in order to condemn evils such as intolerance and ignorance from society. One of the major tools of enlightenment to explain the reason behind everyday occurrences was science. As such science had to have an impact on literature on English since it, (English) was the major mode of communication. Literature of the time was transformed by the marvels of science as a tool of reason. On the other hand, some novelists and authors used their work to explain and heed warning against the dark side of science. For example, the novel " the flying island" by Jonathan Swift was used to show the harm that science could do. The effects of this are seen even today such as with the efficiency of guns and bombs as killing machines and have direct links to the age of reason. Literature was used to spread the message of enlightenment (Nelson, 97). The basis of enlightenment was to show reason and individualism as a better way of living rather than traditional puritan methods. Since spreading this message proved to be difficult as a result of the opposition it got from puritan fundamentalists, enlightened novelists used it to spread the message. For instance, the traditional way of thinking suggested that the human history was a measure of human progress. Novelists like Swift used books like " Gulliver's travels" to contradict this notion for a more reasonable one.

Enlightenment supported logic rather than faith in facets of life. As such, enlightenment ideals gained popularity in the logical sciences and mathematics. Application of enlightenment ideals in such fields created the avenue for a new state of mind. Books written in this time supported this idea. For instance, Robin Crusoe used logic, deductive and inductive reasoning to survive in the new world.

Enlightenment entrenched itself in every aspect of life in the 18th century and therefore became entrenched in modernism. This was especially the case in education and literature to be specific. Literature became the best way through which enlightenment could spread its doctrine of challenging tradition, skepticism and bring about exchange of intellect among thinkers of the time.

However, the most important aspect that made literature the perfect medium was that spreading knowledge through scientific methods was the basis of enlightenment. Therefore, literature had to transform so that it could be a perfect medium in which ideals could be spread. The broad spectrum of literature also made it the perfect medium through which enlightenment could be spread. This is because enlightenment had a broad spectrum that more often than not contradicted itself. Literature, therefore, had to undergo a metamorphosis so that it could spread the different messages of enlightenment and still achieve the same purpose.

The result of this was that enlightenment through literature transformed life as it was in the 18th century. It ended up transforming culture, the way of governing and politics forever. This is the reason that modernism has direct links to enlightenment. With literature as its main form of transport from

one-time frame to the other, fundamentals of enlightenment like reductionism and rationalism are apparent in today's way of life (Fitzpatrick, 65). Enlightenment ideals still continue to influence and transform literature even to date.

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