

# Periodical Essay

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Paper-I  
Topic- Periodical Essay  
Lecture-1

The periodical Essay began as a piece of journalism towards the end of the 17th century. The periodical essay was the peculiar product of the 18th century. It was periodical because it was not published in the book form like the essays of Bacon but it was published in Journals and Magazines which appeared periodically. It had a inherent social purpose. It aimed at improving the manners and moral of the people and hence it is also termed as the social Essay. Defining the periodical Essay William Hazlitt remarks "it makes us familiar with the world of men and women records, their actions, assigns, their motives, exhibits their whims, characterises their pursuits in their all their endless and singular variety ridicules their absurdities exposes their inconsistencies," "holds the mirror up to nature, and shows the very age and body of time, its form and pressure takes minutes of their dress, airs, looks, words, thoughts, actions shows us what we are and we are not plays the whole game of human life

Over before us and by making us enlightened spectators of its many coloured scenes, enabled us, if possible to become tolerably reasonable agents in the area in which we have to perform a part.

The periodical Essay mirrors the 18<sup>th</sup> century life, society, manners, customs and behaviour in all their entirety. The main cause and behaviour in all of the success and popularity of the periodical essay during the 18<sup>th</sup> century was that it suited the moral temper of the age. Its two great Stalwarts and Addison and Steele realised that the ripe of the middle class needed a morality that was diametrically opposed to the "profligate restoration tradition of loose living and loose thinking" and "the Puritanic fanaticism and bigotry". W. H. Hudson remarks; "their method was admirably adapted to their purpose. They did not indulge in sweeping, condemnations and unqualified invective as greatly to the damage of their cause. The Puritan moralists habitually did they wrote good humouredly, make all cases of readers on their own ground and made ample allowance for the ordinary failings of humanity; but at the same time they advocated the claims of decency and sound sense". Their purpose was both moral and educative.

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