



Dr Frank Wilson, Senior Lecturer in English, University of Wolverhampton

Dr Frank Wilson received a PhD from the University of York in 1993. He is Course Leader for the BA English and MA English awards. Frank teaches undergraduate modules in all major periods of English literature from Shakespeare to the Victorian novel, but his research interests lie within the late-17th and early-18th centuries. His most recent publication is an article on Daniel Defoe's travel satire *The Consolidator in Comparative Critical Studies*, and he is currently working on a study of Defoe's satiric poetry. Postgraduate teaching includes a study in 18th century satire, and Frank welcomes research proposals on Milton, Defoe, and various aspects of 17th and 18th century literature.

Since 1996, *Literature Online* has been one of the most substantial resources available for scholars and students of English and American literature. In addition to over a third of a million full-text works of poetry, prose and drama in English, *Literature Online* also contains resources for over 18,500 authors, more than 4,500 biographies, and the full text of well over 300 specialist literature journals. The vast depth and range of content in *Literature Online* enables academics to both review and revisit traditional areas of scholarly study, as well as explore new themes, ideas and subjects. Recently, *Literature Online* has added audio resources bringing together all of Shakespeare's plays in fully dramatised recordings, featuring many noted Royal Shakespeare Company actors.

Literature Online contains not only canonical texts in their original format (all *Literature Online*'s texts are accurate reproductions of authoritative printed texts; full publication and pagination details of the print original are given for accurate academic citation) but also more than 100,000 contemporary works of literature, from an extensive range of authors and publishers. For students at the University of Wolverhampton, *Literature Online* forms the bedrock of their study of English literature.

With over 170 students on the *Introduction to Literature* course pressure on key texts is high. *Literature Online*

effectively eases the pressure on library resources, allowing multiple users to consult texts. In the current economic climate, Dr Wilson sees more value in *Literature Online* than ever before, reducing the photocopying costs of stretched departmental and student budgets.

Students are introduced to *Literature Online* in the first week of the BA in English literature at the University of Wolverhampton. Masters students follow the same training. As many of the students beginning their MAs come from other subject disciplines, the wealth of material offered in *Literature Online* provides the perfect place to develop the research methodology required for English literature graduates. Dr Wilson describes the excitement of opening up the world of reliable primary texts to his students. "Quite simply", he says, "if it didn't exist, students wouldn't have a research method!"

Literature Online assists students in developing academically respectable research skills, and helps Dr Wilson lure them away from Google. When sending his students to look for material on *Literature Online* he "knows everything on the site is quality", which allows them to "pick the right tree in the forest" of information on the site.

Trawling through *Literature Online* also invigorates the research method. When

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composing assignments for his classes Dr Wilson notes that the high amount of primary sources, including less-studied texts, allows a novelty factor to refresh pre-existing essay questions. This is particularly useful for the MA students. In setting research questions on lesser-known texts students are stretched to develop their own unique voice. Without extensive secondary contextual material, students need to have a highly analytical approach to examining poems, and he finds that this "liberates them".

On a personal note, Dr Wilson said that he is "delighted to see how much drama is now available on Literature Online. Our students have grown utterly dependent on Literature Online, and it's great to hear that you've somehow managed to strengthen it further!"

In Dr Frank Wilson's Eighteenth Century Literature first year course, he sets the following assignment using *Literature Online* for advanced students:

Online Session 7 – Gender and Discourses of Power

In this session of the Forum you will be exploring to what extent discourse changes (if it changes) in women's writing between the publication of Mary Astell's *A Serious Proposal* in 1694 and Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* in 1792. You will be working with the extracts of Astell and Wollstonecraft distributed in class:

Forum tasks:

1) Using the *Literature Online (LION)* database, find a text by a female author first published between 1694–1792 – one which represents women speaking for themselves, rather than through male commentators – and compare that female voice with at least ONE of the two authors above.

You will need to provide the following information identifying your chosen text for your colleagues:

- title of the work and the year published;
- author (if known);
- genre (eg, essay, travel letters or journal, polemical journalism, novel, satiric poem, etc).

2) Now choose a colleague's posting, and post a reply to it (remembering to use the 'REPLY' button when doing so). You may want to consult the text that colleague is using, to enable a more informed response.

Some relevant questions to get you thinking:

- What 'discourses of power' are employed by the author you have found, and how do these compare/contrast with those used in the text(s) from class?
- How do these texts exercise a dominance over these 'objects' of power (in this case, women)?
- Do they achieve a sense of coherence / consistency?
- What institutional contexts are employed? What 'sites of resistance' or sources of opposition to these narratives are contained within the texts?

Search-tips:

Any text substantial enough to communicate a speaker's point of view will suffice here. However, if you need a place to start your investigation for material, you may wish to search the database using keywords which overlap with some of the issues addressed in Astell and/or Wollstonecraft: eg, education; manners; custom; sensibility; rights, etc.

Texts may be prose or poetry, fiction or non-fiction.

Do not duplicate a colleague's choice of text.

Do not choose a text by a female author already featured on your reading list (nor another by Astell or Wollstonecraft).

The screenshot shows the 'Literature Online' interface. The main header includes 'HOME PAGE', 'QUICK SEARCH (HELP?)', and 'HELP | SITE MAP'. The left sidebar contains navigation options like 'SEARCH AUTHORS', 'TEXTS', 'CRITICISM & REFERENCE', etc. The main content area is titled 'Author Page' for 'Mary Wollstonecraft'. It includes links for 'AUTHOR INDEX', 'MARKED LIST', and 'SEARCH HISTORY'. Below this, there are options to 'Add to Marked List', 'Receive alerts for this author', 'Save to My Archive', 'Print View', and 'Durable URL for this page'. A portrait of Mary Wollstonecraft is shown on the right. The page lists her 'Dates of Birth/Death: 1759-1797', 'Gender: Female', 'Literary Periods: Eighteenth Century, 1700-1799, Romantic Period, 1780-1837', and 'Literary Movements: Romanticism 1780-1837'. It also lists 'Texts By Mary Wollstonecraft' and 'Resources'.

The screenshot shows search results for 'Texts: Full Text'. The results list 'More, Hannah, 1745-1833 : : Miscellaneous observations on genius, taste, good ... [in, Essays on various Subjects] (1777)'. It also includes 'Biographic details' and 'Citations'.

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