PROSE I

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SYLLABUS

Prose I

Objectives:

- To introduce essay as a specific genre of literature and discuss its various aspects
- To improve students' understanding of essay writing and its critical and analytical aspects
- To discuss the stylistic features of the essayists included in the syllabus

Sr. No.	Content
1	Development of Prose writing through the literary Ages
2	Francis Bacon-Of Studies: Introduction, Detailed study and Critical Analysis Francis Bacon-Of Truth: Detailed Study, Critical Analysis
3	Charles Lamb-Dream children: Detailed Study, Critical Analysis. Charles Lamb -A Bachelors Complaint On The Behaviour Of Married: Introduction and Detailed Study Charles Lamb -A Bachelors Complaint On The Behaviour Of Married: Critical Appreciation
4	Addison-Pleasures Of Imagination: Introduction, Detailed Study and Critical Appreciation
5	Steele-On The Death Of Friend: Introduction, Detailed Study and Critical Appreciation

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Unit 1: Development of Prose Writing through the Literary Ages

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Objectives

After reading this Unit students will be able to:

- Understand the important period's of English Literature.
- Discuss the development of prose writing through the literary ages.

Introduction

This unit covers the period of discovery in the history of English literary prose. It begins with the latter half of the fourteenth century, when the writing of prose first assumed importance in the life of the English people, and it ends with the first quarter of the seventeenth century, when practice and experiment had made of English prose, in the reigns of Elizabeth and James, a highly developed and efficient means of expression.

The origins of English prose come relatively late in the development of English literary experience. This apparently is true of most prose literatures, and the explanation seems to lie in the nature of prose. Even in its beginnings the art of prose is never an unconscious, never a genuinely primitive art. The origins of prose literature can consequently be examined without venturing far into those misty regions of theory and speculation, where the student of poetry must wander in the attempt to explain beginnings which certainly precede the age of historical documents, and perhaps of human record of any kind. Poetry may be the more ancient, the more divine art, but prose lies nearer to us and is more practical and human.

Being human, prose bears upon it, and early prose especially, some of the marks of human imperfection. Poetry of primitive origins, for example the ballad, often attains a finality of form which art cannot better, but not so with prose. Perhaps the explanation of this may be that poetry is concerned primarily with the emotions, and the emotions are among the original and perfect gifts of mankind, ever the same; whereas prose is concerned with the reasonable powers of man's nature, which have been and are being only slowly won by painful conquest. Whether this be a

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right explanation or not, it is certainly true that in its first efforts English prose is uncertain and faltering, that it often engages our sympathies more by what it attempts to do than by what it actually accomplishes.

The study of the origins of English prose is consequently concerned not only with the growth of the English mind, but, in the broadest sense, with the development of the English language.

Since literary prose is very largely the speech of every-day discourse applied to special purposes, it is in a way true that the origins of English prose are to be sought in the origins of English speech. No student of the speech would be content to pause short of the earliest English records in the four centuries which preceded the Norman Conquest. From the days of the first Teutonic conquerors of Celtic Britain, the English speech has continued in an un-broken oral tradition to the present time. But obviously English literary prose in its various stages has not been merely the written form, the echo, of this colloquial speech.

The bonds which unite the two are close, but their courses are not parallel. English literary prose has had no such continuous history as the language, and there are sufficient reasons for regarding the prose of Alfred and his few contemporaries and successors as a chapter in the life of the English people which begins and ends with itself. For its antiquity and for its importance in preserving so abundantly the early records of the language, Old English prose is to be respected; but it was never highly developed as an art, nor was its vitality great enough to withstand the shock of the several conquests which brought about a general confusion of English ideals and traditions in the tenth and eleventh centuries. It is consequently in no sense the source from which modern English prose has sprung. It has a separate story, and when writers of the early modern period again turned to prose, they did so in utter disregard and ignorance of the fact that Alfred and Elfric had preceded them by several centuries in the use of English for purposes of prose expression. Nor did the later writers unwittingly benefit by the inheritance of a previous discipline of the language in the writing of prose. In the general political and social cataclysm of the eleventh century, the literary speech of the Old English period went down forever, leaving for succeeding generations nothing but the popular speech upon which to build anew the foundations of a literary culture.

After the Conquest came the slow process of establishing social order. Laws must first be formulated, Normans, Scandinavians, and Saxons must learn to live in harmony with one another, above all must learn to communicate with one another in a commonly accepted speech, before literature could again lift its head. During all this period of the making of the new England, verse remained the standard form for literary expression. Such prose as was written was mainly of a documentary character, wills, deeds of transfer and gift, rules for the government of religious houses, and similar writings of limited appeal. In the lack of a standard vernacular idiom, more serious efforts, such as histories and theological treatises, were composed in Latin, and to a less extent, in French. It was not until towards the middle of the fourteenth century that the various elements of English life were fused into what came to be felt more and more as a national unity. A wave of popular patriotism swept over the country at this time, clearing away the encumbering foreign traditions by which the English had permitted themselves to become burdened. This new national feeling showed itself in various ways, in a renewed interest in English history, in the special respect now shown to English saints, and above all in the rejection of French and in the cultivation of the English language as the proper expression of the English people. At the same time men of riper and broader culture made their appearance in the intellectual life of the people. An age which produced three such personalities as those of Chaucer, Langland, and Wiclif cannot be regarded as anticipatory and uncertain of itself. Economic conditions also forced upon the humbler classes of people the necessity of thinking for themselves and of setting forth and defending their interests. In the larger world of international affairs the dissensions and corruptions of the church, culminating in the great schism of the last quarter of the century, compelled account to be taken of that whole

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order of theocratic government which the medieval world had hitherto accepted almost without question.

In this combination of circumstances, one man stands out pre-eminently in England as realizing the drift of events and the kind of action needed to regulate them. This man was Wiclif, a scholar and theologian, but not merely a man of the study or the lecturer's chair. Wiclif's practical wisdom is particularly apparent in his deliberate choice of the English language as a means of exposition and persuasion. If English prose must have a father, no one is so worthy of this title of respect as Wiclif. Not a great master of prose style himself, Wiclif was the first Englishman clearly to realize the broad principles which underlie prose expression. He made a sharp distinction between prose and verse, and he foresaw, at least, the ends to be attained by a skillful use of the mechanism of daily colloquial speech for broader and less ephemeral purposes than those to which it had hitherto been applied. In a word, Wiclif was the first intelligent writer of English prose, a discoverer in the truest sense of the word. With him begins the long and unbroken line of English writers who have striven to use the English tongue as a means of conveying their message as directly and as forcibly as possible to their hearers and readers. The spirit of Wiclif is the spirit of Sir Thomas More, of Tindale, of Hooker, of Milton, of Burke, of Carlyle, of all the great masters of expositional and hortatory prose in the English language. Technical details have changed, exterior ornaments have varied, but the fundamental purpose and method have remained the same. With Wiclif and his period, therefore, we begin our study of the rise of English literary prose.

The later limits of the present undertaking have not so easily determined themselves. It would have been interesting to carry the discussion down to the masters of prose in the seventeenth century, to Milton, Clarendon, Jeremy Taylor, Burton, Dryden, for they are indeed the fruit of the sixteenth-century flower. But the close of the sixteenth century and the opening of the seventeenth century mark the end of the great originating period in the development of English prose. The tentative beginnings of Wiclifite prose are by that time fully realized in models of the plain style not surpassed by any later writers. The literary and more narrowly artistic interests have entered, and experimentation in this direction has been carried almost to the extreme limits of the possibilities of the language. Scarcely any side of human activity remains unexpressed in English prose at the end of the reign of Elizabeth, and though it by no means follows that the prose of later times is less admirable, it is nevertheless different from the prose of this first fresh and tremendously energetic age of invention and experimentation.

Since that is the subject of the whole volume, it manifestly falls outside the province of these prefatory remarks to discuss the various processes and developments of this first formative period of English prose. It may be worth while to put down, however, as a kind of preliminary scaffolding, the opinions of one of the greatest of the early moderns, of one who from the vantage-ground of the end of a long life, cast his eye backward and formulated what seemed to him the prime moving causes and tendencies of writing in his day. Starting with the discussion of the origins of the fantastic or ornate literary style in Europe, Bacon continues with an analysis which, whether true for the whole European awakening or not, certainly applies in a peculiar degree to England, where the Renascence was from the first so largely a religious and theological movement :

"Martin Luther, conducted (no doubt) by an higher Providence, but in discourse of reason finding what a province he had undertaken against the Bishop of Rome and the degenerate traditions of the church, and finding his own solitude, being no ways aided by the opinions of his own time, was enforced to awake all antiquity, and to call former times to his succors to make a part against the present time, so that the ancient authors, both in divinity and in humanity, which had long time slept in libraries, began generally to be read and revolved. This by con-sequence did draw on a necessity of a more exquisite travail in the languages original wherein those authors did write, for the better understanding of those authors and the better advantage of pressing and applying their words. And thereof grew again a delight in their manner of style and phrase, and an admiration

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of that kind of writing; which was much furthered and precipitated by the enmity and opposition that the propounders of those (primitive but seeming new) opinions had against the schoolmen; who were generally of the contrary part, and whose writings were altogether in a differing style and form; taking liberty to coin and frame new terms of art to express their own sense and to avoid circuit of speech, without regard to the pureness, pleasantness, and (as I may call it) lawfulness of the phrase or word. And again, because the great labor then was with the people, (of whom the Pharisees were wont to say, *Execrabilis ista turba, qua non novit legem*,) [the wretched crowd that has not known the law,] for the winning and persuading of them, there grew of necessity in chief price and request eloquence and variety of discourse, as the fittest and forciblest access into the capacity of the vulgar sort. So that these four causes concurring, the admiration of ancient authors, the hate of the schoolmen, the exact study of languages, and the efficacy of preaching, did bring in an affectionate study of eloquence and copie of speech, which then began to flourish. This grew speedily to an excess; for men began to hunt more after words than matter; and more after the choiceness of the phrase, and the round and clean composition of the sentence, and the sweet falling of the clauses, and the varying and illustration of their works with tropes and figures, than after the weight of matter, worth of subject, soundness of argument, life of invention, or depth of judgment. Then grew the flowing and watery vein of Osorius, the Portugal bishop, to be in price. Then did Sturmius spend such infinite and curious pains upon Cicero the orator and Hermo-genes the rhetorician, besides his own books of periods and imitation and the like. Then did Car of Cambridge, and Ascham, with their lectures and writings, almost deify Cicero and Demosthenes, and allure all young men that were studious unto that delicate and polished kind of learning. Then did Erasmus take occasion to make the scoffing echo : *Decem annos consumpsi in legendo Cicerone*, [I have spent ten years in reading Cicero :] and the echo answered in Greek*, one, Asine*. Then grew the learning of the school-men to be utterly despised as barbarous. In sum, the whole inclination and bent of those times was rather toward copie than weight."

Bacon closes his survey with the generation which immediately preceded his own. The detachment with which he viewed the refinements of the artificial writers shows that he at least had accepted different standards and ideals of writing. To complete the sketch, it would be necessary to add certain developments of English prose in the direction of order and moderation of which Bacon's own writings are signally illustrative. And it is with these developments that the survey undertaken in the following pages will come to an appropriate conclusion.

The limits of the present undertaking imply certain exclusions. This unit is neither a bibliographical nor a biographical history of English literary prose, nor is it a dictionary of reference to all prose monuments for the period it covers. No attempt has been made to give a critical survey of the paper wars that have centered about debated points, though it will be found, it is hoped, that the references given supply the clew to all the rest. Thus the earlier bibliography of Euphuism may be derived from the studies mentioned in the text or notes. Biographical details are included only when they seemed useful for the better understanding of such writings as are discussed, and titles are mentioned only for the purpose of indicating with certainty the sources of the various passages cited or quoted in the text. Passages within double quotation marks are quoted exactly—except that, for the sake of consistency, the modern custom in the use of *u* and *v* has been followed. Passages within single marks are the author's literal modernizations. The temptation to quote more frequently and at greater length has been strong, but a single volume of reasonable size cannot be both history and anthology. Quotation can never take the place of the reading of texts, and fortunately, for those who have not access to large libraries and for students in college classes, several collections of illustrative extracts are available.

The author has assumed the liberty of saying nothing about works and about writers that, to his mind, required no mention. It might be a satisfaction to put down all the results of one's investigations, if one could only be sure in so doing that the reader's share in this pleasure would

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be as great as the author's. But it would be unkind for the literary critic or historian to attempt to rescue insignificant names from the" poke of oblivion " where time in its mercy has permitted them to rest in peace. In such names the sixteenth century was as rich as any other, though mere antiquity does often seem to lend a specious importance to writings otherwise not important. But the author has endeavored to choose his materials always with an eye to the main point, which has been to trace the growth of a temper and attitude of mind towards the use of speech, to show the development of taste and feeling for prose expression by directing attention to those writings which reveal some skill and originating power in the practice of the art of prose composition.

1.1 Periods of English Literature—An Overview

Historians normally divide English literature into periods for convenience of discussion. Sometimes the numbers, dates or the names of the periods seem to vary.

The four and a half century between the Norman Conquest in 1600, which became the cause for radical changes in the language, life and culture of England, and about 1500, when the standard literary language has become "modern English" that is similar to the language of ours. The period from 1100 to 1350 is sometimes called the Anglo-Norman Period because the non-Latin literature of the era was written in Anglo-Norman. Among the important works of the period were Marie de France's "Lais" and Jean de Meun's "Roman de La Rose". When the native vernacular - descended from Anglo-Saxon period.

The native vernacular descended from Anglo-Saxon with widespread syntactic and lexical elements assimilated from Anglo-Norman which was later called "Middle English" came into literary application. Therefore, it became primarily the medium of homiletic and religious writings.

The 15th century was known by what was called "Scottish Chaucerians". It was important more for popular literature than the artful sorts of literature normally addressed to the upper class. It was the age of excellent songs, secular and folk ballads.

Did u know? The second half of the 14th century produced secular kind of literature along with native English literature. This was the age of Chaucer and John Gower which gave great kind of religious and satirical poems like "Piers Plowman". There was the most famous prose romance written by Thomas Malory called "Morte d' Arthur".

The Renaissance Period (1500-1600)

Many historians consider this age an "early modern" age. It refers to a rebirth commonly applied to the period of European history following the Middle Ages. During this period the European arts of sculpture, painting and literature reached a peak. The development came late to England in the 16th century which didn't have its flowering until the emergence of Elizabethan or Jacobean period. In fact sometimes, John Milton (1608-74) is considered as the last greatest renaissance poet.

Elizabethan Age (1558-1603)

Elizabethan Age is often used to describe the late 16th and early 17th centuries even after the death of Elizabeth. This was the time of swift expansion in English commerce and the development of nationalist feeling - the time of the defeat of Spanish Armada in 1588. It is considered as a great age English literature - the greatest in the field of drama. You can call it the age of Sir Phillip Sidney, Christopher Marlow, Edmund Spencer, Francis Bacon, Ben Jonson, shakespeare and other excellent writers of prose and dramatic, lyrical and narrative poetry. Many scholars have considered this age as one of intellectual coherence and social order.

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Elizabethan Lyrics - Greatest Lyrical Poetry of the Time

If we talk about lyrical poetry, the temper of the Elizabethan age was perfectly suited to the lyrical mood. For that reason, there was the emergence of the lyrics in abundance. The lyrical expressions came on the surface with the efforts of Wyatt and Surrey, the prominent poets of the time. This lyrical spirit sustained through the dramas of the age. Furthermore, this spirit got foothold in the several miscellanies of the time. Afterward, this lyrical impulse was seen into the melodies of Campion and the darker moods of metaphysical poetry and poets like Donne.

In the history of the English literature, the Elizabethan period occupies a grater place because in this period lyrical forms were properly shaped. Songs were sung in parlors and halls. They were composed around the themes such as love songs and religious songs. It was the age of singing birds in right sense of the term. They were composed in every mod for example mocking, grave, cynical and sentimental. The form of lyrical poetry is effortless to read and enjoy.

Jacobean Age (1603-1625)

Jacobean Age Jacobean Age covers the reign of James I (often called "Jacobus" in Latin). This was the period when the prose writings of Bacon, John Donne's sermons, Robert Burton's "Anatomy of Melancholy", king James translation of the Bible, major writings of poets and playwrights including Ben Johnson, Michael Drayton, Beaumont, Fletcher, John Webster, George Chapman developed. Elizabeth Cary was the first English woman whose biblical drama "The Tragedy of Marium, the Faire Queen of Jewry" was published at that time.

Caroline Age (1625-1649)

Caroline Age - the reign of Charles I (called "Carolus" in Latin). It was the time of English Civil War between the supporters of the King and supporters of the parliament. More interestingly John Milton began his writing during this period. It was the age of the religious poet George Herbert and of the prose writers like Robert Burton and Thomas Browne. The poets of this period were called Cavalier Poets. There were the writers of witty and of polished lyrics of courtship and gallantry. This was the group of Richard Lovelace, Sir John Suckling and Thomas Carew.

Commonwealth Period (1649-1660)

Commonwealth Period extended from the end of the Civil War and the excursion Charles I in 1649 to the restoration of the Stuart monarchy under Charles II in 1600. Dramas disappeared for almost eighteen years after the puritans closed the public theaters in September 1642, not only on moral and religious grounds, but also to prevent public gatherings and assemblies that might create civil disorder. It was the age of Milton's political pamphlets, of Hobbes's political treatise *Leviathan (1651)* of the prose writers like Sir Thomas Browne, Abraham Cowley and Andrew Marwell.

The Neo-classical Period (1600-1785)

The Neo-classical Period in England covers almost 140 years after the Restoration (1660). The authors such as John Dryden, Alexander Pope, Joseph Addition, Jonathan Swift, Oliver Gold Smith, Samuel Johnson, Edmund Burke contributed to neoclassic literature.

The literature of this period was considered to be an "art" that is a set of skills which ought be perfected by practice. Neoclassical writers considered human beings as limited agents who ought to set themselves only accessible goals. Many of the great writings of the period was satirical, didactic and was often direct attack on human "pride"

Restoration Period (1660-1700)

Restoration Period takes its name from the restoration of the Stuart line (Charles II) to the English throne in 1600, at the end of Commonwealth. The urbanity, wit and licentiousness of the life focusing on the court is reflected in the literature of this period. The theaters came back to life after

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the revocation of the ban placed them by the Puritans in 1642. Sir George Etherege, William Wycherley, William Congreve and John Dryden developed the distinctive comedy of manners called "Restoration Comedy". Dryden was the major poet and critic as well as one of the major dramatists of the time.

The Development of Prose Style

English writers of the sixteenth century were self-consciously puzzled about the state of their language. They knew that it had changed markedly in the past two centuries, but they were not sure whether too rapid a change was good. They were aware also that its vocabulary was being influenced by other modern languages, especially French and Italian. They wondered whether it should be more like Latin, the international language of learning, or whether it should be true to its own native genius.

The spread of printing meant that people who were not learned (who did not know Latin) could afford English books and would therefore read, as they had not done before. Notable defenses of the vernacular tongues of Italian and French had been published; some Englishmen felt that an equally valid defense of English could be made. As early as 1543 a translator, Peter Betham, proclaimed that he thought translators ought to use the usual terms of our English tongue, not borrowing terms from other languages, because, as he said, continual borrowing without repayment would make the language, as it would make a man, bankrupt. Furthermore, he deplored what he called "inkhorn" terms, learned words derived from Latin or invented by authors—words so obscure that he thought the ordinary Englishman would not be able to understand them. To be sure, he admitted, a few words of foreign origin must be allowed, since languages are clearly interlaced with each other, but the good writer of English is the one who follows Chaucer and other old writers, keeping English in its native tradition. The most notable theorist of language reform in the middle of the century was the famous classical scholar, Sir John Cheke, Regius Professor of Greek at Cambridge. His theory of phonetic spelling is demonstrated in his letter to the translator Sir Thomas Hoby. The most important translations of the sixteenth century were the renderings of the Bible into the vernaculars. In England William Tyndale began his translation in 1523; he had to do it surreptitiously and outside the country; he finally suffered martyrdom for his efforts. In 1530 a royal proclamation condemned Tyndale's translation and all other versions in the vulgar tongue. Then in 1535 Miles Coverdale published, in Zu¨ rich, the first complete Bible in English. By this time the official attitude was changing, and in 1540 the so-called Great Bible was published, the first English Bible issued with official sanction—evidence of the extent of the breach between the English church and the Church of Rome.

1.2 Prose in the Fourteenth Century

The second half of the fourteenth century in England was a period rich both in realization and in anticipation. At such happy times, not one but many kinds of thought and action occupy men's attention. The pageant of chivalry was then still being displayed upon the stage of the great world, and was finding in Froissart a worthy chronicler. Crecy and Poitiers were living memories of young men when Ed-ward III died. Though the changes abroad were many, at home English laws and government were rapidly assuming forms which were to be permanent. The place of the commons in the control of affairs was becoming more clearly defined, and the nation at large was entering upon a new era of patriotism and national self-consciousness. Architecture, especially domestic architecture, flourished, and the comforts and luxuries of life were increasing. Gower, Chaucer, Langland, and the unknown author of *The Pearl* and other remarkable poems, were lending luster to the newly-prized English language. In the humbler walks of life, the voice of the people was making itself heard, and the last remnants of medieval serfdom were disappearing as new conceptions of personal liberty came into being. Wiclif and his followers were spreading

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doctrines of almost incalculable importance for the future growth of the English nation. And not least in importance among these shadowings of the future, English prose was coming to be applied to English thought in ways more effective and intimate than had ever before been necessary or possible.

By the middle of the fourteenth century, the various Scandinavian and Romance additions which had enriched at the same time that they had disintegrated the old England, built up by the successive kings of the West Saxons from the time of Egbert, had united with the English base to form a new nation. During the time of disturbance the English speech had passed through a period of popular degradation. It had lost literary caste, but now, under the influence of a new national feeling and a renascence of culture, it had recovered all that had been lost and was gaining more. By the assimilation of a host of Romance words, it had acquired possibilities of expression beyond the reach of the language of the Old English period. The English were no longer an isolated people. Their intellectual life was more vigorous and more varied, and their social life was more gracious, than either had been in the most flourishing days before the Conquest. The English writer of the later fourteenth century had a richer body of thought and sentiment to express than his Anglo-Saxon ancestor, and he had a more effective medium in the language of his day to serve the purposes of expression. The Anglo-Saxon poets had seldom passed beyond the simple themes of war and religion; and the prose of Alfred, of Wulfstan, of Ælfric, was limited almost entirely to the second of these themes. Religion and theology remain, indeed, the principal concern of prose even into the sixteenth century, but with a very great difference. Scarcely a trace of popular insurgence is to be found in English writing before the days of Wiclif. The newest, the most disturbing, and for the history of English prose, the most important element in the life of England in the fourteenth century was just this awakening of the underworld of the people. Men now first began to realize that their political and spiritual salvation lay not in the hands of overlords and ecclesiastics, but in their own. New impulses within demanded new modes of external expression. Literature could not continue to be merely artistic and courtly, learning could not expend itself entirely in theological exegesis or the formulation of dogma. The pallid legends and the summary repetitions of officially approved information and doctrine which constitute so large a part of medieval writing in the vernacular began now to disappear and their place to be taken by a fresher literature, addressed not merely to the memory, but directly to the reason and the hearts of mankind.

1.3 Chaucer's Prose

It was only gradually, however, that English writers acquired the courage to use prose. Long custom had established verse as the only accredited form of literary expression. From the point of view of literary art, the two most significant writers of the latter half of the fourteenth century were Chaucer, courtly, polished, and reasonable, and Langland, something of a mystic and enthusiast, a fellow-sufferer with the people, whose hard life he so intimately describes, and certainly less an artist than his greater contemporary. Chaucer's prevailing interest being in men and manners, one might suppose that prose would have been for him a more appropriate form of expression than verse. And in truth, we may suppose that the use of metrical form by Chaucer was largely an accident of time. He wrote in verse because the literary conventions of his time imposed the metrical form upon all writing of artistic pretension. Perhaps it was fortunate for Chaucer that he accepted these conventions. In his day and hour it was easier to realize the ideals of simplicity, clarity, and control which his verse exhibits by following the conventional custom of metrical composition than it would have been if he had chosen to experiment in prose. But Chaucer was not temperamentally an experimenter or innovator. He followed clearly defined paths of literary tradition, changing and improving greatly in detail, but seldom departing widely from the practice of his predecessors and masters. He seems to have felt no impulse, therefore, to invent prose for English literature, to become an English Boccaccio.

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Chaucer did not neglect altogether the writing of prose, although by universal consent his prose writings are regarded as the least interesting of all his works. They are four in number, and all of considerable length. The only one which can be dated certainly is the latest, the *Treatise on the Astrolabe*, written in 1391. The others were written probably within the decade preceding this year, and it is interesting to note, therefore, that Chaucer's prose works were produced at about the same time that Wiclif began to write in English. Of these four prose efforts of Chaucer, the most important is his translation of the *De Consolatione Philosophiae* of Boethius, made probably in entire ignorance of the fact that it had already been translated into English by King Alfred almost five hundred years before. The *De Consolatione* is mentioned in the *Romance of the Rose* as " Boece," and the original author of this section of the famous allegory, Jean de Meun, declares that he would confer a great benefit on the unlearned folk who should translate this work for them. It is not unlikely that Chaucer found in this statement of the much admired French poet the suggestion which led him to undertake his translation into English.

The original work of Boethius is divided into five books, and each book is sub-divided into alternating metrical and prose sections, commonly known as Metres and Proses, all of which, however, Chaucer translated into prose. In general Chaucer's translation attempted to give the content of the original, but it is by no means a literal translation, such not being the custom of Chaucer's day. Neither is it altogether a true translation, for Chaucer's scholarship was not always sufficient to save him from blunders. An instructive comparison may be made between Chaucer's prose version of Boethius and those passages of the same work which he versified in *Troilus and Cressida* and in *The Former Age*. Such a comparison will show that the metrical versions are decidedly more idiomatic and natural than the prose—another proof, if any were needed, that Chaucer had mastered more completely the discipline of verse than that of prose.

The main defects of the translation are crudity and awkwardness, even at times obscurity, of expression, due to imperfect adaptation of the thought to the English idiom. Chaucer's difficulties arose from the embarrassment caused by the necessity of striking a balance between a Latin and an English phrasing. In general the translations of the Proses are more idiomatic and less complicated than the translations of the Metres, obviously due to the fact that the Metres are more compact and involved in expression in the original. Chaucer wisely made little effort to introduce specifically English ornaments of style. Riming passages occur occasionally, but they are not frequent or long enough to disturb the prose intention. Alliteration is used, sometimes rather markedly, as in the phrase "fortroden under the feet of felonous folk," but is never carried through long passages. The only notable mannerism of style is the omission of the definite article where the English idiom requires it. This is an obvious Latinism, found not only in Chaucer but in Wiclif and many other writers of this time who wrote English under the influence of Latin.

Two of Chaucer's prose writings were distinguished by inclusion within the framework of the Canterbury Tales. One of these is Chaucer's own contribution to the entertainment of the pilgrims, the *Tale of Melibeus*, narrated by Chaucer after he has been 'stinted' of his *Tale of Sir Thopas* by the disgusted Host. The other is the *Parson's Tale*, a long and weary treatise on the vices and virtues which serves as the pious ending to the whole series of the Canterbury Tales. It is not certain that Chaucer wrote either of these tales, granting them this title by courtesy, for the express purpose of including them in the Canterbury group. Quite possibly they were early works written when he was more deeply interested in the composition of pious prayers and other works of devotion than he was later, which were thriftily turned to account in the elaboration of the plan of the Canterbury Tales. The two prose tales have very little dramatic appropriateness. One does not expect a conventional medieval sermon on the vices and virtues from the parson, the brother of the ploughman, who is described in the Prolog in terms that suggest Wiclif's poor priests. Here was Chaucer's opportunity to give that picture of actual popular movements in his day which we miss so much in his writings and which, without question, he consciously avoided giving. And the

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other prose tale, the *Tale of Melibeus*, is equally inappropriate to Chaucer, who tells it. Chaucer apparently assigned this tale to himself in a moment of ironic humor. At the same time it must be kept in mind that the modern reader's impatience with these two tales is likely to be much greater than was that of Chaucer's contemporaries. In the fourteenth century both the materials and the method of them were familiar and approved, and many of Chaucer's readers doubtless received them as highly respectable and meritorious performances.

Both of these prose tales are really translations. The *Tale of Melibeus* is a translation of a French treatise, *Le Livre de Melibee et de dame Prudence*, probably made by Jean de Meun, on the basis of a Latin work, *Liber Consolationis et Consilii*, by Albertano of Brescia. The *Tale* is not much more than a bundle of quotations of a generally moral and sententious character, bound together by a simple thread of allegorical narrative. Melibeus is a rich man of the world who finds himself ill-treated by his enemies and who is elaborately counseled by his wife, Dame Prudence, on such topics as the choice of friends and advisers, on avenging wrongs, on the use of riches. The characters are not realistically conceived, and the wife of Melibeus is the source of all wisdom in the story because Prudentia, Justitia,' Philosophia, and the other virtues were traditionally allegorized as feminine. The *Tale* has some resemblance to the type of didactic romance made popular in the sixteenth century by Guevara's *Dial of Princes*, the quotations being derived not merely from scriptural and patristic sources, but many of them from classical and post-classical literature. But the romantic and narrative interests of the *Tale* are held severely in hand and the main purpose of the story was to serve as a container for numerous aphoristic and sententious quotations. From the point of view of Chaucer as a writer of prose, the chief interest of the *Tale* lies in the fact that it is freely and idiomatically written, and that it thus shows how much easier Chaucer found it to translate from French than from Latin.

The other of Chaucer's two pious tales is not unlike the *Tale of Melibeus*. It likewise is obviously a translation, but the immediate source is not known. Whatever this immediate source may have been, it was almost certainly written in French and was closely followed by Chaucer in his translation. Like the *Tale of Melibeus*, the *Parson's Tale* is idiomatically expressed in a simple, straightforward, and unmannered style. Like the *Melibeus* in another respect, it is quite without personal or dramatic coloring in the body of text, although occasionally, as in the satirical passages on extravagance in dress, the conventional themes of medieval sermonizing are treated with some vivacity. But the main personal interest of the *Tale* lies in the fact that it is followed by the well-known retractions of Chaucer, in which he revokes his "Endytinges of worldly vanitees," and calls attention to his "othere bokes of Legendes of seintes and omelies and moralitee and devocioun."

Both the *Melibeus* and the *Parson's Tale* come safely under the head of medieval works of devotion, and it is quite probable that a good many similar pious writings of Chaucer have been lost. If so, some of them were pretty certainly written in prose, for in this kind of writing, prose had established for itself an unquestioned position.

Chaucer's remaining English prose work is a kind of medieval text-book, written for his little son Louis, who was at the time of the "tendre age of ten yeer" and who had shown evidences of ability to "lerne sciencez touchinge noumbres and proporciouns." This *Treatise on the Astrolabe*, like Chaucer's other prose writings, is merely a translation, or adaptation, the original in this case being a Latin version of a text in Arabic. Chaucer has omitted parts of his Latin source and has re-arranged the materials to suit himself, but his translation of the Latin is often literal. Although the exigencies of the subject-matter compelled him to use a good many Latinized technical words, the style on the whole, thanks perhaps to Chaucer's efforts to adapt it to a child of ten, is simple and much more idiomatic than the style of the translation from Boethius. The work was popular in Chaucer's day, as is shown by the unusual number of twenty-two early manuscripts still extant in various libraries.

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More interesting, however, to the student of Chaucer's prose than the body of this translation is an original preface by Chaucer, which is addressed to his little son Louis, and which, short as it is, constitutes the longest piece of original prose we have from Chaucer's hand. Chaucer declares it to be his purpose to set forth his treatise under "ful lighte rewles and naked wordes in English; for Latin ne canstow yit but smal, my lyte sone." He continues with a more general address to his readers in which he asks them to excuse his "rewde endyting" and his "superfluite of wordes," the first because "curious endyting and hard sentence is ful hevy atones for swich a child to lerne," and the second because it seems to him better "to wryten unto a child twyes a good sentence than he forgete it ones." In conclusion Chaucer points out that he makes no claim to the original authorship of his book, but confesses that he is merely "a lewd compilatour of the labour of olde Astrologiens," whose work he has translated : "And with this swerd shal I sleen envye." The whole passage is instructive as showing that the quaint simplicity and humor which constitute the main charm of his verse writings were not impossible to Chaucer in prose. Had he chosen to do so, Chaucer might have written prose tales for some of his Canterbury pilgrims, the Shipman or the Miller for example, which would have been more than deserving of a place in that series. But prose in Chaucer's mind must have seemed entirely inappropriate for writing of an entertaining or artistic character, and he therefore uses it only for practical and pious purposes. Chaucer's attitude towards prose was generally the attitude of his contemporaries. The first English prose was written under the hard necessity of instructing and edifying men, not of pleasing them, as Chaucer was mainly endeavoring to do. The art of prose begins with the effort to adapt language to useful ends, to find some means of communication whereby men may inform or persuade each other in the thousand and one complications of everyday life. Chaucer's perfunctory use of prose shows on the one hand how little interested he was in the complexities of the life of his day from the point of view of direct exposition or of persuasion, and it shows on the other hand how little impressed he was with the possibilities of prose as an art of fine writing. Limited though this attitude towards prose may seem to the modern student, it was natural in Chaucer's day and represents undoubtedly the best literary feeling of his time. For the development of the technic of English writing in verse, Chaucer is important; for the development of the technic of English prose, he is almost negligible.

1.4 Langland and Maundevile

By the side of Chaucer stands his greatest literary contemporary, Langland. Thanks to his connections with the court and with the higher official life of his time, public records have preserved a considerable body of information with respect to Chaucer. All that is known of Langland, on the other hand, is derived from the various manuscripts of his writings, and the information thus obtained is meager and often uncertain. It is fairly sure that the author of *Piers Plowman* was of Midland origin, that he lived for some time in London, that he was married and therefore not eligible to any of the higher offices of the church, that he himself had known the miseries of poverty which he so feelingly describes, and that his Christian name was William. The exact form of his surname is doubtful, but tradition has firmly established Langland in general use. The poem which passes under Langland's name is not a single, systematically organized work, but rather a group of closely related poems centering more or less about the figure of the Plowman. It is recorded in three quite distinct versions, the earliest composed about I 362, the second a revision and enlargement of this version made some fifteen years later, and the third a second revision probably made in the last decade of the fourteenth century. Certain interesting questions of technical scholarship have been raised by the existence of these three versions, the most important being whether the three versions are to be regarded as the work of a single poet or of two or more poets who revised and expanded the original theme as it was first developed by Langland. It is quite certain that Piers Plowman came to be in time a type figure about whom there gathered a

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considerable number of writings of generally similar style and purpose. He became thus in a way the eponymous hero of popular political and theological discussion of the times. But that the three versions of the poem known as *Piers Plowman* were the work of a school of popular alliterative poets, writing perhaps under the direct inspiration of Langland very much as Wiclif's poor priests preached and taught under the leadership of their master, though not inherently impossible, seems on the ground of the evidence less probable than that Langland himself revised and enlarged his own work. Whether the poem be regarded as the work of one or of several authors, however, the significant point is that the three versions exemplify a homogeneous and fully thought out method of literary expression.

Both the similarities and the differences of *Piers Plowman* as compared with the writings of Chaucer are significant. Like Chaucer, Langland accepted verse unquestioningly as the proper medium of literary expression and for general, popular appeal. He viewed life at a different angle from the courtly Chaucer, but he also in his degree was a literary artist, and in his art, the child of his own generation. Both poets used the standard literary speech of their day, for Chaucer's style was not pedantically learned, nor was Langland's extravagantly archaic or popular. The most striking characteristic of Langland which distinguishes him from Chaucer, the characteristic also which connects him directly with the study of the origins of English prose, is his use of metrical form. Chaucer wrote in the strictly regulated meter of numbered syllables and of rime which English borrowed from French and which the traditions of English poetry have established as the prevailing English meter. But Langland followed a different and native style of metrical composition, moribund but temporarily revived in his day and effectively employed by a number of different poets. This was the alliterative long line which came by direct descent from the Old English line of Cædmon and Cynewulf. It differs from the Old English line, however, in that the latter, in standard Old English poetry, is maintained more rigorously and in accordance with the rules of a more narrowly defined metrical system than in Langland's long line. With the later poet, we observe clearly the operation of that breaking down tendency which led ultimately to a complete loss of feeling for the alliterative long line as in any way a metrical form distinguished from prose. Even in the latter part of the Old English period, the pure tradition of Old English versification was not maintained, and Ælfric , in many respects possessed of a fine literary feeling, was guilty of a kind of prose poetry compounded of legitimate prose and degenerate Old English verse. With the obscuring and loss of native customs in general which attended the Danish and Norman conquests, the strict system of Old English meter disappeared, never again to be restored in the practice of English poetry. At no time, however, did the composition of alliterative English verse cease altogether. Side by side with the regular meter of Romance origin, which took upon itself the character of the standard literary meter, a corrupted form of the older alliterative long line continued to be used, especially as the meter appropriate to popular and patriotic writing. This popular alliterative meter was cultivated, at least in one or two regions of England, with special enthusiasm in Langland's own day, as evidenced not only by Langland's preference for it, but also by the writings of his contemporary, the unknown but highly accomplished author of *Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight* and other poems.

Structurally the old alliterative long line consisted of two approximately equal half-lines, each with its own independent scansion, which were held together as one line by the possession of a common alliterating sound. Each half-line contained two metrically stressed syllables, sometimes also a third secondarily stressed syllable, and a varying but on the whole rather narrowly limited number of unstressed syllables, the two kinds of syllables being arranged according to a small number of fixed patterns. The alliterating sounds were always the initial sounds of metrically stressed syllables, which at the same time must also bear a logical stress, and each half-line contained at least one, though either or both might contain two. Alliteration other than that between metrically stressed syllables did not count in the metrical scheme, and where it occurs is

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to be regarded as accidental. It was a fixed rule in this strict system of scansion that the first metrically stressed syllable of the second half-line must bear the alliteration and thus serve as a kind of key-word to the alliterative scheme of the line as a whole.

Many lines will be found in Langland which satisfy the demands of the strict system of Old English alliterative verse. The following, for example, are as regular as any written in the Old English period :

"And also Job the gentel what Joye hadde he on erthe,
How bittere he hit bouhte as the book telleth !"

Such lines are not uncommon in the poem, but the poet usually preserves the general rhythm of the style without paying much attention to the strict rules of Old English scansion. Sometimes the alliteration is altogether lacking, sometimes it falls on words so lightly stressed that they fail to take their place in the metrical structure of the line. Frequently the two half-lines contain separate and independent alliterating sounds. Many half-lines are found which can be read only with three and sometimes more heavy stresses, and the unstressed syllables are frequently so numerous and so disposed as to destroy altogether the feeling for the few type patterns of scansion characteristic of regular alliterative verse. The result of these various irregularities is to produce a line which often is without strict metrical structure, and when several of these lines come together the effect is not distinguishable from prose with a sprinkling of alliteration. It is true that the swing of the lines in *Piers Plowman* usually carries the reader over these unmetrical passages without a violent sense of interruption. But it is apparent that in the hands of a more careless versifier than Langland the meter would suffer still more and the distinction between prose and verse become completely effaced. As it is, often a slightly unusual order of words is all that distinguishes Langland's verse rhythm from prose rhythm.

The free alliterative line, as treated by Langland, is admirably suited to his somewhat rambling, often turgid and colloquial subject-matter. The style is not that of the scholar or the refined artist. Langland probably never submitted himself to the severe discipline in versification which Chaucer's early experiments in ballades and complaints illustrate. Discipline was not necessary to write the kind of verse he was trying to write. The main requisites were a feeling for rhythm, a vocabulary extensive enough to provide alliterating words, and, finally, volubility of expression.

Perhaps this last is the most persistent and striking characteristic of Langland's style, a characteristic which again connects him with the popular feeling for prose expression. Although many lines of admirable compression occur, they are usually proverbial in tone, or are short summaries of moral wisdom. The poem is not infrequently powerful, but it attains its effects by a tumultuous heaping of details rather than by the carefully weighed style of a classic artist, like Chaucer, who uses every word with a sense of its fullest effect and meaning. His own moral earnestness and the unfailing gift of a concrete and highly poetic imagination are all that save Langland from falling into rant and bombast. This quality of improvisation in the poem appears throughout in the selection of detail. Everything that came into the author's mind is included, the coarsest pictures of popular life standing side by side with poetical and profoundly spiritual allegorical imagery. Personal allusions abound, to Wat and to Tom Stowe, to Bet and to Beton the brewster, to Hick the hackneyman, and to dozens of others, who may or may not stand for real persons of Langland's acquaintance, but who are effectively real in the poem. Frequent references to places in London, to Cornhill, Westminster, Shoreditch, Southwark, Tyburn, and others, also often lend an air of easy familiarity to the narrative. The speech, even of very dignified characters, is often colored with the colloquialism of conversation. Truth responds to Mercy when the latter expounds the plan of the resurrection, that her story is "bote a tale of Walterot," a piece of nonsense. And the version of the sentiment, *Deniem pro dente, et oculum pro oculo*, which is put into the mouth of the Lord himself, picturesquely declares that whoso hitteth out a man's eye or else his front teeth or maimeth or hurteth any other limb, he shall suffer the same sore.

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Langland was fond of making up long fantastic compound names, such as Dame Work-when-time-is, the name of the wife of Piers, or Do-right-so-or-thy-dame-shall-thee-beat, the name of his daughter. Some of these names, as for example the name of Piers' son, are several lines in length and so unwieldy as to become grotesque. Picturesque words of popular color occur, and the main difference between the vocabulary of Langland and that of Chaucer consists in the presence of a certain number of outlandish words, as they seem to the modern reader, in the writings of Langland, which have been lost altogether to the language or have fallen from the literary speech to the dialects. Undoubtedly the alliteration, demanding as it does a wide range of vocabulary, is partly responsible for Langland's popular words, alliteration and the popular style naturally going together. Broad picturesque phrases abound, as in the description of Sir Harvey, the covetous man, "bitelbrowed and baberlipped," his beard beslobbered, like a bondman's, with his bacon; or when Langland calls Christ's disciples God's boys, merry-mouthed men, the minstrels of heaven. When occasion calls for them, Langland even uses freely words not to be repeated for modern readers. Plainness of speech is inherent in his mode of thought, and if plainness becomes vulgarity, Langland feels no necessity for apologizing, as Chaucer does when he defends his broad style on the artistic grounds that the manner must be appropriate to the matter. On the other hand, Langland is equally free in introducing learned Latin and French into the body of his narrative, not systematically in the manner of the later Macaronic writing, as in Skelton, but apparently as the fancy struck him.

The spirit of Langland's verse was not that of the school. Although the style was not without its technic, it was a free and easy technic. It called for the readiness and copiousness of the improviser, rather than the care and forethought of the literary artist. If impassioned prose had been possible in his day, Langland might well have chosen to write in that form, but lacking such a medium, he developed in his free metrical rhythms a form that approaches prose. By means of this form he expressed himself with an astonishing ease and abundance. There is a power in the mere sweep of his thought which would have been impossible in the regular rimed meters of Chaucer. And yet Langland's eloquence seldom reaches the lofty heights of great poetry. His art is crude, grotesque, and unformed, as compared with the art of later masters of the serious style, like Hooker in prose or Milton in verse. Lacking Langland's earnestness of thought, his style in the hands of his successors often degenerated into the blustering, robustious, but formless writing of a host of popular rimesters, pamphleteers, and preachers of the Tudor and Elizabethan periods. Even with Langland, the form of *Piers Plowman* occupied a position of unstable equilibrium between verse and prose, and not infrequently the free alliterative verse of this tradition passed over into popular alliterative prose. In its looseness of form and its picturesqueness and homely vigor this prose resembles the degraded survival of the older alliterative long line known as 'tumbling verse,' and perhaps no better name can be found for it than 'tumbling prose.' With all its crudities, this prose played a not inconspicuous part in the development of literary style in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and more must be said of it later.

The latter half of the fourteenth century presents no writers of equal eminence to Chaucer and Langland. Verse, as has already been pointed out, occupied almost the whole field of literary activity, and such prose as was written had usually an immediate practical or documentary purpose. Simple narration, however, was not beyond the powers of fourteenth-century prose, and the famous *Voiage and Travaile of Sir John Moundevile* and Trevisa's numerous translations, especially his version of Higden's *Poly-chronicon,* are the best representatives of this naive and rudimentary prose which had as yet hardly lifted itself to the literary level. The *Voiage and Travaile* is also a translation, preserved in three versions by unknown translators, which are all more or less freely adapted from the French original. Under the guise of a manual of directions for pilgrims making the journey to the Holy Land, the original author or compiler of the work, who also is unknown, really wrote a traveler's book, filled with all manner of picturesque misinformation about man and nature. How much faith the compiler of the book and its translators may have had in the

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marvelous stories it contained it is difficult to say. Everything is told with a most profound seriousness, equal to that of Defoe or Swift, which gives even the most absurd descriptions an air of verisimilitude. That a fourteenth-century reader would realize to some extent the contrast between the matter and the manner can hardly be questioned, but it is not probable that his attitude in general would be very skeptical. In fact, mixed with the other matters, the book contains a number of Bible stories which can scarcely have been told in any other than a spirit of simple belief. To the modern reader the book seems much more of an artistic feat than it would have seemed to the reader of the time of its compilation. And the same applies to the style in which the narrative is written. The distinguishing characteristic of this style is its utter, its guileless simplicity. The sentences are short and direct, never complex. Few connectives are used and those of the most obvious kind. The words are all familiar and never merely ornamental. The whole tone of the expression is naive, the language of a grown-up child :

"Also beyonde that Flome, more upward to the Desertes, is a gret Pleyn alle gravelly betwene the Mountaynes; and in that Playn every day at the Sonne risynge begynnen to growe smale Trees, and thei growen til mydday, berynge Frute; but no man dar taken of that Frute, for it is a thing of Fayrye. And aftre mydday thei discrecen and entren ayen in-to the Erthe; so that at the goynge down of the Sonne thei apperen no more; and so thei don every day : and that is a gret marvaylle."

And so it continues, the tone never rising, never falling. The simplicity of the book is the simplicity of nature, not of art. Much of its quaintness is imparted to it by the modern reader who feels keenly the contrast between its childlike and effortless style and the more mature manner of modern English expression. But no such contrast could have been intended in the last quarter of the fourteenth century, and the style is consistent because it reflects the naive simplicity of the medieval mind.

1.5 Trevisa

Though John de Trevisa was an industrious writer, he can scarcely be called a man of letters. A student and fellow of Oxford, he later became chaplain and vicar to Thomas, fourth baron Berkeley, at whose request his various translations were made. These consisted of a translation of Bartholomew de Glanville's *De Proprietatibus Rerum,* of Vegetius' *De Re Militari,* of Ægidius' *De Regimine Principum,* and of various other works interesting to his master, besides the most important of all, a version of Higden's *Polychronicon.* As a preface to the *Polychronicon,* Trevisa composed a *Dialogue between a Lord and a Clerk upon Translation,* in which he discusses interestingly the principles of the art of translation. Diversity of speech, says the lord, has brought it about that men of different nations understand each other "no more than gagling of geese."

Interpreters are therefore necessary, especially out of Latin, in which so many important books are written. The clerk presents various reasons why translations should not be made, one of them being that " a great deal of these books standeth much by holy writ, by holy doctors, and by philosophy," which should not be translated into English. The lord responds with arguments frequently used by the reformers of the sixteenth century, that St. Jerome translated from Hebrew into Latin, that the gospel and the faith must be preached to men who know no Latin, that "English preaching is very translation, and such English preaching is good and needful." The clerk finally sees the necessity of translation, as was fore-ordained, and asks the lord if he would "liefer have a translation of these chronicles in rhyme or in prose ?" "In prose," answers the lord, " for commonly prose is more clear than rhyme, more easy and more plain to know and understand."

The translation was accordingly made in prose, carried through and finished on the 18th of April, 1387. " In some place I shall set word for word," says Trevisa," "and active for active, and passive for passive, a-row right as it standeth, without changing of the order of words. But in some place I must change the order of words, and set active for passive and again-ward. And in some place

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I must set a reason for a word and tell what it meaneth. But for all such changing, the meaning shall stand and not be changed." To this program Trevisa faithfully adhered. His translation is usually close, though not literal, and his additions are few and unimportant. Occasional errors occur, due to misunderstanding of the original Latin. The most notable characteristic of Trevisa's English as compared with the compact and well-constructed Latin of the original, is its looseness of form and its verbosity. A single English word is seldom allowed to count as the equivalent of a Latin word. The simple Latin phrase of Higden, *in signum quod minoris virtutis est quaerere quam quaesita tueri,* became in Trevisa, " in tokeynge pat pis is lasse maistrie to wynne and to conquere pan it is to kepe and to save pat pat is conquered and i-wonne." The more earnest and the more careful he is, the more cumhersome Trevisa becomes. An unfamiliar allusion always calls for elaboration, as in the following sentence of Higden : *Cujus negotii, velut Daedalini labyrinthi, inextricabilem attendens intricationem, rogata sum veritus attemptare.* This is rendered by Trevisa as follows : "poo toke I hede pat pis matir, as laborintus, Dedalus hous, hap many halkes and hurnes, wonderful weies, wyndynges and wrynkelynges, pat wil noust be unwarled, me schamed and dradde to fynde so grete and so gostliche a bone to graunte." Awkward as this translation of Trevisa's is, however, it is better than that of the later fifteenth-century translator of the *Polychronicon,* who speaks in his Latin English of " the intricacion inextricable of this labor" and of "the obnubilous and clowdy processe of this matter." Trevisa, with all his faults, retains his feeling for native and familiar English. It had not yet occurred to him that English words could be made out of Latin by the simple process of bodily transference. His struggle was to render his original into intelligible English, not to write a high style or to create a new literary vocabulary. His attitude towards English is not that of the Renascence but of the Medieval mind. He uses the language naturally, crudely, laboriously, with no higher quality than occasionally the unconscious and naive charm of a simple-minded man writing as he speaks.

The latter fourteenth century was not, however, without more ambitious writers who attempted to develop a higher literary type of prose than the simple medieval narrative of Maundevile and Trevisa. These experimenters, like the earliest Greek prose stylists, endeavored to raise prose to the literary level by giving it some of the characteristics of verse. Or perhaps it would be truer to say that a kind of prose was derived by abstracting some of the most marked features of verse, leaving something which stood half-way between colloquial discourse and regular verse. An in-structive example of this type of English prose is a didactic treatise written about 1357 on the basis of a Latin original by John Thoresby, archbishop of York. The name of the translator, or paraphraser, was John de Taystek (Tavistock ?), a monk of St. Mary's Abbey at York, a name which seems to have been corrupted in later transcripts of the text to Gaytrigge, Gaytrik, Gaytringe, and other forms. The treatise was intended to be preached, as a manual of instruction, by parsons and vicars to their parishioners. It has been printed in three versions, one from the official records preserved at York, another from the manuscript of a Wiclifite version of Taystek's translation, and one from a later copy of it. The work treats of the ten commandments, the seven sacraments, the seven deadly sins, the seven virtues, and the seven works of mercy, and similar material, and it serves, so far as content goes, as a good example of popular discourse in the fourteenth century. The most notable stylistic feature of the treatise is its semi-metrical character. The metrical characteristics easily become obscured, however, and in the Wiclifite version many passages pass over into unqualified prose. In the version known as *Dan Jon Gaytrigge's Sermon,* the editors have felt so little the metrical elements in the text that they have simply printed it as prose. There can be no doubt, however, that Taystek in his paraphrase of Thoresby's original intended to produce a style which would be a safe compromise between plain prose and out-and-out verse. The metrical feature which survives most distinctly is the feeling for the cadence of the four-stress long line of alliterative verse. Occasional lines occur which are quite regular in scansion, both with respect to rhythm and alliteration. In general, however, alliteration is not well maintained, and apparently what Taystek endeavored to do was to discard alliteration and retain the general rhythmical

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structure of the alliterative long line. Rime occurs scarcely at all. Sometimes the rhythm of the line has been satisfied at the expense of an unusual word-order, but otherwise there is little in the text to warn the reader that he is not reading prose but verse. We can scarcely suppose that Taystek refrained from writing his treatise in a more regular verse style either from ignorance or inability. Quite probably he felt that ordinary alliterative verse, familiar to all in secular romance and story, was not appropriate for official instruction in the serious concerns of the religious life. And to have spoken to his audience merely as man to man, in the language of daily communication, was of course not to be thought of. It would be vain to seek for evidences of a genuinely creative attitude towards prose style in so crude a stylist as Taystek. To the worn-down verse which he employed, he added nothing in the way of stylistic ornament, except perhaps the frequent use of synonymous word-pairs, such as *of witt and of wisdome (p. 2), withouten travaile or trey (p. 4), to knowe and to kun (p. 4), comandes and biddes (p. 20), ordayned and bidden (p. 22), hiding or helyng (p. ,50).*

This was a trick of style not unknown to prose writers of the Old English period, and one which became almost a constant feature of oratorical and artistic prose of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Needless to say these word-pairs were used because of their appropriateness to the rotund oratorical style which the various writers affected, not at all for the sake of logical clearness or with any theories of the etymological origins of the words thus paired.

1.6 Richard Rolle

A much more skillful writer of prose and of prose poetry than Taystek was Richard Rolle, called of Hampole from the place of his death and burial. Although Richard Rolle died in the year 1349 at about the age of fifty, his influence was especially strong in the last quarter of the fourteenth century. At that time a revival of his fame took place, and with the popular growth of interest in religion and theology, Rolle was annexed by the reformers to their party. In one of the transcriptions of Rolle's English Psalter, dating from this time, the writer complains that the Psalter has been Lollardized and thus "ymped in with eresy." Various disciples who followed Rolle's methods in writing became active in the last quarter of the century. Of these the most important were William Nassyngton, Walter Hylton, and Juliana of Norwich. Doubtless there were other members of this group whose names have been lost, and whose works, if they have survived, are not distinguishable from the writings of the better known representatives of the school.

Rolle began his career in a dramatic manner. He had left Oxford at the age of nineteen, having spent his time there mainly in the study of the Bible and having become dissatisfied with the scholasticism which at that time held sway in the university. He returned home, and shortly after, dressing himself up in a costume made from a white and a gray gown of his sister's and a hood of his father's, and frightening off his sister, who thought that he had gone mad, he ran away and became a hermit. For the rest of his life Rolle led the life of a recluse, occupying himself with preaching, writing, and meditation, and according to his own testimony, passing through the various formal stages of mystical experience. He was not in holy orders, was not a priest or a monk, and though his whole life was passed in pious and religious activities, in the eyes of the church he was a layman. At first he appears to have attempted to spread his views by oral preaching, but perhaps he was limited in these endeavors because he was not a priest and so could not preach from church pulpits. Quite probably, however, he preached anyway, very much as Wiclif's poor priests did later, speaking to the people wherever he found them. Later he turned to writing, and in the composition both of verse and of prose treatises, he seems to have found a congenial and effective mode of expression.

As a thinker, Rolle makes no pretensions to a philosophic system. "His system is religious life, not theory." His prose pieces, consisting of prayers, meditations, sentences, epistles, tracts, translations from Bonaventura, Richard of St. Victor, and other mystics, are generally structureless and unrelated

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to each other, except as they all breathe the same feeling of pious and fervid devotion. The longer pieces are made up merely of a succession of spiritual reflections and ejaculations, especially on divine love. Few allusions to contemporary life occur, and the satirical note is altogether absent. Rolle has little of the righteous indignation of the reformer, and though the punishments of hell are eloquently described, his most frequent subject is the love of God.

It was a fervid and lyrical temperament which Rolle brought with him to the composition of his prose. His feeling for prose was by no means artless, although on the other hand, the use of his various devices of style is not persistent and regular enough to give him a carefully thought out and consistent style. At times he wrote quite simply. One of his most popular tracts was his *Form of Perfect Living,* addressed to Margaret, an anchoress, who was Rolle's disciple and with whom he seems to have enjoyed much spiritual communion. The tract recounts the various temptations to which one leading the lonely life of the hermit is subjected and also the ways by which the perfect love of God may be attained. Now thou hast heard, he says, a part of the subtle crafts of the devil, and if thou wilt thou shalt destroy his traps, and 'burn in the fire of love all the bands that he would bind thee with.' 'For that thou hast forsaken the solace and the joy of this world, and taken thee to solitary life, for God's love to suffer tribulation and anguish here, and sithen [afterwards] come to that bliss that nevermore blins [ceases] : I trow truly that the comfort of Jesus Christ and the sweetness of his love, with the fire of the Holy Ghost that purges all sin, shall be in thee and with thee, how thou shalt think, how thou shalt pray, what thou shalt work, so that in a few years thou shalt have more delight to be alone and speak to thy love and to thy spouse Jesus Christ, that high is in heaven, than if thou were lady here of a thousand worlds.' Many suppose, he continues, that we hermits are in pain and great penance. 'They see our body, but they see not our heart, where our solace is. If they saw that, many of them would forsake all that they have, for to follow us.' The love of God is the perfection of the religious life. 'Amore langueo. These two words are written in the book of love, that is called the song of love, or the song of songs.' The special gift of the solitary is to love God. 'In heaven the angels that are most burning in love are nearest God.' 'If thou love him mickle, mickle joy and sweetness and burning thou feelest, that is thy comfort and strength, night and day.'

The *Form of Perfect Living* is an example of Rolle's simpler prose style, the purpose of it being mainly expositional. Even here, however, there is considerable alliteration, some use of the metrical cadences of the long line, of oratorical, ejaculatory devices, in short a general tendency to fall into a dithyrambic kind of expression suited to the mood of the prose-poet. The sentences often have a fullness and roundness of phrasing which remind one of the cadences of later liturgical literature. Always one feels that Rolle's written style is merely a transference of the impassioned expression of the orator to the more permanent record of the manuscript page.

More characteristic of Rolle's popular style in its admixture of prose and verse is the tract *Ego dormio et cor meum vigilat.* In general this tract is similar in method to Taystek's sermon, and is representative of a kind of preaching and writing which Wiclif expressly condemned. At times, passages can be scanned as alliterative verse, though the piece is intended in the main to be prose. It is a disquisition, a kind of rhapsody, on divine love, and naturally the subject lends itself to a more lyric treatment than the *Form of Perfect Living :*

"All perisches & passes pat we with eghe see. It wanes in to wrechednes, pe welth of pis worlde. Robes & ritches rotes in dike. Prowde payntyng slakes in to sorow. Delites & drewryse stynk sal ful sone. paire golde & paire tresoure drawes pam til dede. Al pe wikked of pis worlde drawes til a dale, pat pai may se pare sorowyng whare waa es ever stabel. Bot he may syng of solace pat lufed Jhesu Criste : be wretchesse fra wele falles in to hell."

The tract continues with a passage of plain exposition in a more normal prose style, until it reaches a *Meditatio de passione Cristi,* where it again breaks out into a kind of rimed prose.

From the point of view of ingenuity of technic Rolle is without question the most effective writer

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of prose in the fourteenth century, though it cannot be said that hev accomplished much in the development of a practicable art of prose style. The distinction between prose and verse is not clearly maintained by him, and of prose dignified by thought and wisdom, he had no conception. Good English prose has generally appealed primarily to the reason, but Rolle's appeal is almost altogether to emotion. When his prose is normal it is least distinguished. It is only when his heart is kindled by the fire of love that a kind of vatic enthusiasm colors and exalts his expression, and at the same time lifts it into regions where only those equally inspired can follow him.

One further experiment in the writing of artistic prose in this period must be noted. This is Thomas Usk's *Testament of Love,* made about 1387, and formerly often attributed to Chaucer. The treatise is in fact based upon Chaucer's translation of Boethius, and is an attempt to give a testament, or witness, of the divine love in relation to a symbolic Margaret, the pearl beyond all price, who stands for various ideas, the Church, the grace of God, and others. The author of the treatise endeavored to write mystically, but being without genuine mystical fervor, he succeeded merely in furnishing an instructive illustration of what must happen when an uninspired writer tries to write an inspired style. Usk comments in some detail on his own theories of style. Many men, he says, so much swallow the deliciousness of gests and of rime by quaint knitting colors, that they take little heed of the goodness or bad-ness of the thought. But such craft of enditing, he continues, will not be of my acquaintance. He puts his trust in " rude wordes and boystous." Many delight in French and Latin, but Englishmen will do better to write in English, for "the understanding of Englishmen wol not strecche to the privy termes in Frenche, what-so-ever we bosten of straunge langage." He frequently speaks of his 'lewdness,' and his desire to write plainly in order to be easily understood. The reader of his *Testament* soon realizes, however, that this is all false modesty and affectation of simplicity, for the style of the work is highly artificial and ambitious. Although there is some use of alliteration, of rime, of puns, of violent antitheses, and of ingenious figures, Usk depends mainly for his stylistic effects upon an obscure and tortuous form of expression, derived apparently by taking the crudities of word-order and of unidiomatic phrasing found in Chaucer's *Boece* (and due there merely to Chaucer's difficulty in rendering the text of his original) and making these inadequacies of the *Boece* the marks of his own distinction of style. That Usk was striving after a literary prose style is apparent. He deserves some credit for rejecting the dithyrambic style of Rolle, but his own style, though different, is little better. His theme he felt to be lofty, but without a genuine or deep desire to express himself truly and lacking a model to follow, he invented a literary prose which saved itself from being merely colloquial and natural by being un-idiomatic and unintelligible.

Self-Assessment

1. Choose the correct options:

(*i*) The period of discovery in the history of Engish Literary Prose begins with the latter half of the ..... .

(*a*) 13th century (*b*) 14th century

(*c*) 15th century (*d*) None of these

(*ii*) The Tale of Melibeus was narrated by ..... .

(*a*) Chaucer (*b*) Spencer

(*c*) Dryden (*d*) None of these

(*iii*) Caroline Age belongs to the reign of ..... .

(*a*) James I (*b*) Charles II

(*c*) Charles I (*d*) None of these

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(*iv*) The New-classical period in English covers almost ..... .

(*a*) 100 years (*b*) 140 years

(*c*) 200 years (*d*) None of these.

1.7 Summary

- This unit covers the period of discovery in the history of English literary prose. It begins with the latter half of the fourteenth century, when the writing of prose first assumed importance in the life of the English people, and it ends with the first quarter of the seventeenth century, when practice and experiment had made of English prose, in the reigns of Elizabeth and James, a highly developed and efficient means of expression.
- The origins of English prose come relatively late in the development of English literary experience. This apparently is true of most prose literatures, and the explanation seems to lie in the nature of prose. Even in its beginnings the art of prose is never an unconscious, never a genuinely primitive art. The origins of prose literature can consequently be examined without venturing far into those misty regions of theory and speculation, where the student of poetry must wander in the attempt to explain beginnings which certainly precede the age of historical documents, and perhaps of human record of any kind. Poetry may be the more ancient, the more divine art, but prose lies nearer to us and is more practical and human.
- Being human, prose bears upon it, and early prose especially, some of the marks of human imperfection. Poetry of primitive origins, for example the ballad, often attains a finality of form which art cannot better, but not so with prose. Perhaps the explanation of this may be that poetry is concerned primarily with the emotions, and the emotions are among the original and perfect gifts of mankind, ever the same; whereas prose is concerned with the reasonable powers of man's nature, which have been and are being only slowly won by painful conquest. Whether this be a right explanation or not, it is certainly true that in its first efforts English prose is uncertain and faltering, that it often engages our sympathies more by what it attempts to do than by what it actually accomplishes.
- Historians normally divide English literature into periods for convenience of discussion. Sometimes the numbers, dates or the names of the periods seem to vary.
- The four and a half century between the Norman Conquest in 1600, which became the cause for radical changes in the language, life and culture of England, and about 1500, when the standard literary language has become "modern English" that is similar to the language of ours. The period from 1100 to 1350 is sometimes called the Anglo-Norman Period because the non-Latin literature of the era was written in Anglo-Norman. Among the important works of the period were Marie de France's "Lais" and Jean de Meun's "Roman de La Rose". When the native vernacular - descended from Anglo-Saxon period.
- Many historians consider this age an "early modern" age. It refers to a rebirth commonly applied to the period of European history following the Middle Ages. During this period the European arts of sculpture, painting and literature reached a peak. The development came late to England in the 16th century which didn't have its flowering until the emergence of Elizabethan or Jacobean period. In fact sometimes, John Milton (1608-74) is considered as the last greatest renaissance poet.
- English writers of the sixteenth century were self-consciously puzzled about the state of their language. They knew that it had changed markedly in the past two centuries, but they were not sure whether too rapid a change was good. They were aware also that its vocabulary was being influenced by other modern languages, especially French and Italian. They wondered

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whether it should be more like Latin, the international language of learning, or whether it should be true to its own native genius.

- The spread of printing meant that people who were not learned (who did not know Latin) could afford English books and would therefore read, as they had not done before. Notable defenses of the vernacular tongues of Italian and French had been published; some Englishmen felt that an equally valid defense of English could be made. As early as 1543 a translator, Peter Betham, proclaimed that he thought translators ought to use the usual terms of our English tongue, not borrowing terms from other languages, because, as he said, continual borrowing without repayment would make the language, as it would make a man, bankrupt. Furthermore, he deplored what he called "inkhorn" terms, learned words derived from Latin or invented by authors—words so obscure that he thought the ordinary Englishman would not be able to understand them. To be sure, he admitted, a few words of foreign origin must be allowed, since languages are clearly interlaced with each other, but the good writer of English is the one who follows Chaucer and other old writers, keeping English in its native tradition. The most notable theorist of language reform in the middle of the century was the famous classical scholar, Sir John Cheke, Regius Professor of Greek at Cambridge. His theory of phonetic spelling is demonstrated in his letter to the translator Sir Thomas Hoby. The most important translations of the sixteenth century were the renderings of the Bible into the vernaculars. In England William Tyndale began his translation in 1523; he had to do it surreptitiously and outside the country; he finally suffered martyrdom for his efforts. In 1530 a royal proclamation condemned Tyndale's translation and all other versions in the vulgar tongue. Then in 1535 Miles Coverdale published, in Zu¨ rich, the first complete Bible in English. By this time the official attitude was changing, and in 1540 the so-called Great Bible was published, the first English Bible issued with official sanction—evidence of the extent of the breach between the English church and the Church of Rome.

1.8 Key-Words

1. Elizabethan Age : Elizabethan Age is often used to describe the late 16th and early 17th centuries even after the death of Elizabeth. This was the time of swift expansion in English commerce and the development of nationalist feeling - the time of the defeat of Spanish Armada in 1588. It is considered as a great age English literature - the greatest in the field of drama.
2. Caroline Age : Caroline Age - the reign of Charles I (called "Carolus" in Latin). It was the time of English Civil War between the supporters of the King and supporters of the parliament.
3. The Neo-classical Period : The Neo-classical Period in England covers almost 140 years after the Restoration (1660). The authors such as John Dryden, Alexander Pope, Joseph Addition, Jonathan Swift, Oliver Gold Smith, Samuel Johnson, Edmund Burke contributed to neoclassic literature.

1.9 Review Questions

1. Write a short note on the history of English Literary Prose.
2. Discuss Chaucer's prose writing.
3. What is the development of English prose through Literary ages.

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Answers: Self-Assessment

1. (*i*) (*b*) (*ii*) (*a*) (*iii*) (*c*) (*iv*) (*b*)

1.10 Further Readings

1. Evans, History of English Literature.
2. George Philip Krapp, The Rise Eglish Literary Prose, Oxford University Press.

Unit 2: Francis Bacon-Of Studies: Introduction

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Objectives

After reading this Unit students will be able to:

- Know about Francis Bacon.
- Discuss Bacon's Life and Works.

Introduction

Francis Bacon was an English philosopher, statesman, scientist, jurist, and author. He served both as Attorney General and Lord Chancellor of England. Although his political career ended in disgrace, he remained extremely influential through his works, especially as philosophical advocate and practitioner of the scientific method during the scientific revolution.

Bacon has been called the creator of empiricism. His works established and popularised inductive methodologies for scientific inquiry, often called the *Baconian method*, or simply the scientific method. His demand for a planned procedure of investigating all things natural marked a new turn in the rhetorical and theoretical framework for science, much of which still surrounds conceptions of proper methodology today.

Bacon was knighted in 1603, and created both the Baron Verulam in 1618 and the Viscount St. Alban in 1621; as he died without heirs, both peerages became extinct upon his death. He famously died by contracting pneumonia while studying the effects of freezing on the preservation of meat.

2.1 Biography

Early life

Bacon was born on 22 January 1561 at York House near the Strand in London, the son of Sir Nicholas Bacon by his second wife Anne (Cooke) Bacon, the daughter of noted humanist Anthony Cooke. His mother's sister was married to William Cecil, 1st Baron Burghley, making Burghley Francis Bacon's uncle. Biographers believe that Bacon was educated at home in his early years owing to poor health (which plagued him throughout his life), receiving tuition from John Walsall, a graduate of Oxford with a strong leaning towards Puritanism. He entered Trinity College, Cambridge, on 5 April 1573 at the age of twelve, living for three years there together with his older

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brother Anthony Bacon under the personal tutelage of Dr John Whitgift, future Archbishop of Canterbury. Bacon's education was conducted largely in Latin and followed the medieval curriculum. He was also educated at the University of Poitiers.

His studies brought him to the belief that the methods and results of science as then practised were erroneous. His reverence for Aristotle conflicted with his loathing of Aristotelian philosophy, which seemed to him barren, disputatious, and wrong in its objectives.

On 27 June 1576, he and Anthony entered *de societate magistrorum* at Gray's Inn. A few months later, Francis went abroad with Sir Amias Paulet, the English ambassador at Paris, while Anthony continued his studies at home. The state of government and society in France under Henry III afforded him valuable political instruction. For the next three years he visited Blois, Poitiers, Tours, Italy, and Spain. During his travels, Bacon studied language, statecraft, and civil law while performing routine diplomatic tasks. On at least one occasion he delivered diplomatic letters to England for Walsingham, Burghley, and Leicester, as well as for the queen.

The sudden death of his father in February 1579 prompted Bacon to return to England. Sir Nicholas had laid up a considerable sum of money to purchase an estate for his youngest son, but he died before doing so, and Francis was left with only a fifth of that money. Having borrowed money, Bacon got into debt. To support himself, he took up his residence in law at Gray's Inn in 1579.

Did u know? It was at Cambridge that he first met Queen Elizabeth, who was impressed by his precocious intellect, and was accustomed to calling him "the young Lord Keeper".

Parliamentarian

Bacon had three goals: to uncover truth, to serve his country, and to serve his church. He sought to further these ends by seeking a prestigious post. In 1580, through his uncle, Lord Burghley, he applied for a post at court which might enable him to pursue a life of learning. His application failed. For two years he worked quietly at Gray's Inn, until he was admitted as an outer barrister in 1582.

His parliamentary career began when he was elected MP for Bossiney, Devon in a 1581 by-election. In 1584, he took his seat in parliament for Melcombe in Dorset, and subsequently for Taunton (1586). At this time, he began to write on the condition of parties in the church, as well as on the topic of philosophical reform in the lost tract, *Temporis Partus Maximus*. Yet he failed to gain a position he thought would lead him to success. He showed signs of sympathy to Puritanism, attending the sermons of the Puritan chaplain of Gray's Inn and accompanying his mother to the Temple Church to hear Walter Travers. This led to the publication of his earliest surviving tract, which criticised the English church's suppression of the Puritan clergy. In the Parliament of 1586, he openly urged execution for Mary, Queen of Scots.

About this time, he again approached his powerful uncle for help; this move was followed by his rapid progress at the bar. He became Bencher in 1586, and he was elected a reader in 1587, delivering his first set of lectures in Lent the following year. In 1589, he received the valuable appointment of reversion to the Clerkship of the Star Chamber, although he did not formally take office until 1608 – a post which was worth £16,000 a year.

In 1588 he became MP for Liverpool and then for Middlesex in 1593. He later sat three times for Ipswich (1597, 1601, 1604) and once for Cambridge University (1614).

He became known as a liberal-minded reformer, eager to amend and simplify the law. He opposed feudal privileges and dictatorial powers, though a friend of the crown. He was against religious persecution. He struck at the House of Lords in their usurpation of the Money Bills. He advocated

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for the union of England and Scotland, thus being one of the influences behind the consolidation of the United Kingdom; and also advocated, later on, for the integration of Ireland into the Union. Closer constitutional ties, he believed, would bring greater peace and strength to these countries.

Attorney General

Bacon soon became acquainted with Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex, Queen Elizabeth's favourite. By 1591, he acted as the earl's confidential adviser. In 1592, he was commissioned to write a tract in response to the Jesuit Robert Parson's anti-government polemic, which he titled *Certain observations made upon a libel*, identifying England with the ideals of democratic Athens against the belligerence of Spain.

Bacon took his third parliamentary seat for Middlesex when in February 1593 Elizabeth summoned Parliament to investigate a Roman Catholic plot against her. Bacon's opposition to a bill that would levy triple subsidies in half the usual time offended many people.Opponents accused him of seeking popularity. For a time, the royal court excluded him. When the Attorney-Generalship fell vacant in 1594, Lord Essex's influence was not enough to secure Bacon that office. Likewise, Bacon failed to secure the lesser office of Solicitor-General in 1595. To console him for these disappointments, Essex presented him with a property at Twickenham, which he sold subsequently for £ 1,800.

In 1596, Bacon became Queen's Counsel, but missed the appointment of Master of the Rolls. During the next few years, his financial situation remained bad. His friends could find no public office for him, and a scheme for retrieving his position by a marriage with the wealthy and young widow Lady Elizabeth Hatton failed after she broke off their relationship upon accepting marriage to a wealthier man. In 1598 Bacon was arrested for debt. Afterwards however, his standing in the Queen's eyes improved. Gradually, Bacon earned the standing of one of the learned counsels, though he had no commission or warrant and received no salary. His relationship with the Queen further improved when he severed ties with Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex, a shrewd move because Essex was executed for treason in 1601.

With others, Bacon was appointed to investigate the charges against Essex, his former friend and benefactor. A number of Essex's followers confessed that Essex had planned a rebellion against the Queen. Bacon was subsequently a part of the legal team headed by Attorney General Sir Edward Coke at Essex's treason trial. After the execution, the Queen ordered Bacon to write the official government account of the trial, which was later published as *A Declaration of the Practices and Treasons attempted and committed by Robert late Earle of Essex and his Complices, against her Majestie and her Kingdoms ...* after Bacon's first draft was heavily edited by the Queen and her ministers.

According to his personal secretary and chaplain, William Rawley, as a judge Bacon was always tender-hearted, "*looking upon the examples with the eye of severity, but upon the person with the eye of pity and compassion*". And also that "*he was free from malice*", "*no revenger of injuries*", and "*no defamer of any man*".

James I Comes to the Throne

The succession of James I brought Bacon into greater favour. He was knighted in 1603. In another shrewd move, Bacon wrote his *Apologie* in defence of his proceedings in the case of Essex, as Essex had favoured James to succeed to the throne.

The following year, during the course of the uneventful first parliament session, Bacon married Alice Barnham. In June 1607 he was at last rewarded with the office of Solicitor-General.[5] The following year, he began working as the Clerkship of the Star Chamber. In spite of a generous income, old debts still couldn't be paid. He sought further promotion and wealth by supporting King James and his arbitrary policies.

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In 1610 the fourth session of James' first parliament met. Despite Bacon's advice to him, James and the Commons found themselves at odds over royal prerogatives and the king's embarrassing extravagance. The House was finally dissolved in February 1611. Throughout this period Bacon managed to stay in the favour of the king while retaining the confidence of the Commons.

In 1613, Bacon was finally appointed attorney general, after advising the king to shuffle judicial appointments. As attorney general, Bacon successfully prosecuted Robert Carr, 1st Earl of Somerset and his wife, Frances Howard, Countess of Somerset for murder in 1616. The so-called "Prince's Parliament" of April 1614 objected to Bacon's presence in the seat for Cambridge and to the various royal plans which Bacon had supported. Although he was allowed to stay, parliament passed a law that forbade the attorney-general to sit in parliament. His influence over the king had evidently inspired resentment or apprehension in many of his peers. Bacon, however, continued to receive the King's favour, which led to his appointment in March 1617 as the temporary Regent of England (for a period of a month), and in 1618 as Lord Chancellor. On 12 July 1618 the king created Bacon **Baron Verulam**, of Verulam, in the Peerage of England. As a new peer he then styled himself as "Francis, Lord Verulam".

Bacon continued to use his influence with the king to mediate between the throne and Parliament and in this capacity he was further elevated in the same peerage, as **Viscount St Alban**, on 27 January 1621.

Lord Chancellor and Public Disgrace

Bacon's public career ended in disgrace in 1621. After he fell into debt, a Parliamentary Committee on the administration of the law charged him with twenty-three separate counts of corruption. To the lords, who sent a committee to enquire whether a confession was really his, he replied, "My lords, it is my act, my hand, and my heart; I beseech your lordships to be merciful to a broken reed." He was sentenced to a fine of £40,000 and committed to the Tower of London during the king's pleasure; the imprisonment lasted only a few days and the fine was remitted by the king.[12] More seriously, parliament declared Bacon incapable of holding future office or sitting in parliament. He narrowly escaped undergoing degradation, which would have stripped him of his titles of nobility. Subsequently the disgraced viscount devoted himself to study and writing.

There seems little doubt that Bacon had accepted gifts from litigants, but this was an accepted custom of the time and not necessarily evidence of deeply corrupt behaviour.[13] While acknowledging that his conduct had been lax, he countered that he had never allowed gifts to influence his judgement and, indeed, he had on occasion given a verdict against those who had paid him. The true reason for his acknowledgement of guilt is the subject of debate, but it may have been prompted by his sickness, or by a view that through his fame and the greatness of his office he would be spared harsh punishment. He may even have been blackmailed, with a threat to charge him with sodomy, into confession.

The British jurist Basil Montagu wrote in Bacon's defense, concerning the episode of his public disgrace:

> Bacon has been accused of servility, of dissimulation, of various base motives, and their filthy brood of base actions, all unworthy of his high birth, and incompatible with his great wisdom, and the estimation in which he was held by the noblest spirits of the age. It is true that there were men in his own time, and will be men in all times, who are better pleased to count spots in the sun than to rejoice in its glorious brightness. Such men have openly libelled him, like Dewes and Weldon, whose falsehoods were detected as soon as uttered, or have fastened upon certain ceremonious compliments and dedications, the fashion of his day, as a sample of his servility, passing over his noble letters to the Queen, his lofty contempt for the Lord Keeper Puckering, his open dealing with Sir Robert Cecil, and with others, who, powerful when he was nothing,

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might have blighted his opening fortunes for ever, forgetting his advocacy of the rights of the people in the face of the court, and the true and honest counsels, always given by him, in times of great difficulty, both to Elizabeth and her successor. When was a "base sycophant" loved and honoured by piety such as that of Herbert, Tennison, and Rawley, by noble spirits like Hobbes, Ben Jonson, and Selden, or followed to the grave, and beyond it, with devoted affection such as that of Sir Thomas Meautys.

2.2 Bacon's Personal Life

When he was 36, Bacon engaged in the courtship of Elizabeth Hatton, a young widow of 20. Reportedly, she broke off their relationship upon accepting marriage to a wealthier man—Edward Coke. Years later, Bacon still wrote of his regret that the marriage to Hatton had not taken place.

Bacon wrote two sonnets proclaiming his love for Alice. The first was written during his courtship and the second on his wedding day, 10 May 1606. When Bacon was appointed Lord Chancellor, "by special Warrant of the King", Lady Bacon was given precedence over all other Court ladies.

Reports of increasing friction in his marriage to Alice appeared, with speculation that some of this may have been due to financial resources not being as readily available to her as she was accustomed to having in the past. Alice was reportedly interested in fame and fortune, and when reserves of money were no longer available, there were complaints about where all the money was going. Alice Chambers Bunten wrote in her *Life of Alice Barnham* that, upon their descent into debt, she actually went on trips to ask for financial favours and assistance from their circle of friends. Bacon disinherited her upon discovering her secret romantic relationship with Sir John Underhill. He rewrote his will, which had previously been very generous to her (leaving her lands, goods, and income), revoking it all.

Did u know? At the age of forty-five, Bacon married Alice Barnham, the fourteen-year-old daughter of a well-connected London alderman and MP.

The well-connected antiquary John Aubrey noted in his *Brief Lives* concerning Bacon, "He was a Pederast. His Ganimeds and Favourites tooke Bribes",biographers continue to debate about Bacon's sexual inclinations and the precise nature of his personal relationships. Several authors believe that despite his marriage Bacon was primarily attracted to the same sex. Professor Forker for example has explored the "historically documentable sexual preferences" of both King James and Bacon – and concluded they were all oriented to "masculine love", a contemporary term that "seems to have been used exclusively to refer to the sexual preference of men for members of their own gender."The Jacobean antiquarian, Sir Simonds D'Ewes implied there had been a question of bringing him to trial for buggery.

This conclusion has been disputed by others,who point to lack of consistent evidence, and consider the sources to be more open to interpretation.

In his "New Atlantis", Bacon describes his utopian island as being "the chastest nation under heaven", in which there was no prostitution or adultery, and further saying that *"as for masculine love, they have no touch of it"*.

Men fear death as children fear to go in the dark; and as that natural fear in children is increased with tales, so is the other. **—"Of Death"**

Revenge is a kind of wild justice, which the more man's nature runs to, the more ought law to weed it out. **—"Of Revenge"**

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The virtue of prosperity is temperance; the virtue of adversity is fortitude. **—"Of Adversity"**

He that hath wife and children hath given hostages to fortune. **—"Of Marriage and Single Life"**

There was never proud man thought so absurdly well of himself as the lover doth of the person loved: And therefore it was well said, *That it is impossible to love and to be wise.* **—"Of Love"**

They that deny a God destroy man's nobility, for certainly man is of kin to the beasts by his body, and if he be not of kin to God by his spirit, he is a base and ignoble creature. **—"Of Atheism"**

A principal fruit of friendship is the ease and discharge of the fullness and swellings of the heart. **—"Of Friendship"**

A man's own observation, what he finds good of, and what he finds hurt of, is the best physic [medicine] to preserve health. **—"Of Regiment of Health"**

As the baggage is to an army, so is riches to virtue. **—"Of Riches"**

Death

On 9 April 1626 Bacon died of pneumonia while at Arundel mansion at Highgate outside London. An influential account of the circumstances of his death was given by John Aubrey's *Brief Lives*. Aubrey has been criticised for his evident credulousness in this and other works; on the other hand, he knew Thomas Hobbes, Bacon's fellow-philosopher and friend. Aubrey's vivid account, which portrays Bacon as a martyr to experimental scientific method, had him journeying to Highgate through the snow with the King's physician when he is suddenly inspired by the possibility of using the snow to preserve meat: "They were resolved they would try the experiment presently. They alighted out of the coach and went into a poor woman's house at the bottom of Highgate hill, and bought a fowl, and made the woman exenterate it".

After stuffing the fowl with snow, Bacon contracted a fatal case of pneumonia. Some people, including Aubrey, consider these two contiguous, possibly coincidental events as related and causative of his death: "The Snow so chilled him that he immediately fell so extremely ill, that he could not return to his Lodging ... but went to the Earle of Arundel's house at Highgate, where they put him into ... a damp bed that had not been layn-in ... which gave him such a cold that in 2 or 3 days as I remember Mr Hobbes told me, he died of Suffocation." Being unwittingly on his deathbed, the philosopher wrote his last letter to his absent host and friend Lord Arundel:

My very good Lord,—I was likely to have had the fortune of Caius Plinius the elder, who lost his life by trying an experiment about the burning of Mount Vesuvius; for I was also desirous to try an experiment or two touching the conservation and induration of bodies. As for the experiment itself, it succeeded excellently well; but in the journey between London and Highgate, I was taken with such a fit of casting as I know not whether it were the Stone, or some surfeit or cold, or indeed a touch of them all three. But when I came to your Lordship's House, I was not able to go back, and therefore was forced to take up my lodging here, where your housekeeper is very careful and diligent about me, which I assure myself your Lordship will not only pardon towards him, but think the better of him for it. For indeed your Lordship's House was happy to me, and I kiss your noble hands for the welcome which I am sure you give me to it. I know how unfit it is for me to write with any other hand than mine own, but by my troth my fingers are so disjointed with sickness that I cannot steadily hold a pen."

Another account appears in a biography by William Rawley, Bacon's personal secretary and chaplain: He died on the ninth day of April in the year 1626, in the early morning of the day then celebrated for our Saviour's resurrection, in the sixty-sixth year of his age, at the Earl of Arundel's house in Highgate, near London, to which place he casually repaired about a week before; God so ordaining that he should die there of a gentle fever, accidentally accompanied with a great cold, whereby the defluxion of rheum fell so plentifully upon his breast, that he died by suffocation.

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At the news of his death, over thirty great minds collected together their eulogies of him, which was then later published in Latin. He left personal assets of about £7,000 and lands that realised £6,000 when sold. His debts amounted to more than £23,000, equivalent to more than £3m at current value.


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Bacon's personal secretary and chaplain, William Rawley, however, wrote in his biography of Bacon that his inter-marriage with Alice Barnham was one of *"much conjugal love and respect"*, mentioning a robe of honour that he gave to her, and which *"she wore unto her dying day, being twenty years and more after his death"*.

2.3 Philosophy and Works

Francis Bacon's Philosophy is displayed in the vast and varied writings he left, which might be divided in three great branches:

- *Scientifical works* - in which his ideas for an universal reform of knowledge, scientific method and the improvement of mankind's state are presented.
- *Religious/literary works* - in which he presents his moral philosophy and theological meditations.
- *Juridical works* - in which his reforms in Law are proposed.

Influence

Science

Bacon's ideas were influential in the 1630s and 1650s among scholars, in particular Sir Thomas Browne, who in his encyclopaedia Pseudodoxia Epidemica (1646–1672) frequently adheres to a Baconian approach to his scientific enquiries. During the Restoration, Bacon was commonly invoked as a guiding spirit of the Royal Society founded under Charles II in 1660.

Bacon is also considered to be the philosophical influence behind the dawning of the Industrial age. In his works, Bacon called for a "spring of a progeny of inventions, which shall overcome, to some extent, and subdue our needs and miseries",always proposing that all scientific work should be done for charitable purposes, as matter of alleviating mankind's misery, and that therefore science should be practical and have as purpose the inventing of useful things for the improvement of mankind's estate. This changed the course of science in history, from a merely contemplative state, as it was found in ancient and medieval ages, to a practical, inventive state - that would have eventually led to the inventions that made possible the Industrial Revolutions of the following centuries.

The Industrial Revolution marks a major turning point in history. In the two centuries following 1800, the world's average per capita income increased over tenfold, while the world's population increased over sixfold. In the words of Nobel Prize winner Robert E. Lucas, Jr., "For the first time in history, the living standards of the masses of ordinary people have begun to undergo sustained growth ... Nothing remotely like this economic behavior has happened before".

He also wrote a long treatise on Medicine, *History of Life and Death*, with natural and experimental observations for the prolongation of life.

For one of his biographers, Hepworth Dixon, Bacon's influence in modern world is so great that every man who rides in a train, sends a telegram, follows a steam plough, sits in an easy chair, crosses the channel or the Atlantic, eats a good dinner, enjoys a beautiful garden, or undergoes a painless surgical operation, owes him something.

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In the nineteenth century his emphasis on induction was revived and developed by William Whewell, among others. He has been reputed as the "Father of Experimental Science".

North America

Some authors believe that Bacon's vision for a Utopian New World in North America was laid out in his novel *New Atlantis*, which depicts a mythical island, *Bensalem*, located somewhere between Peru and Japan. In this work he depicted a land where there would be freedom of religion - showing a Jew treated fairly and equally in an island of Christians, but it has been debated whether this work had influenced others reforms, such as greater rights for women, the abolition of slavery, elimination of debtors' prisons, separation of church and state, and freedom of political expression, although there is no hint of these reforms in *The New Atlantis* itself. His propositions of legal reform (which were not established in his life time), though, are considered to have been one of the influences behind the Napoleonic Code, and therefore could show some resemblance with or influence in the drafting of other liberal constitutions that came in the centuries after Bacon's lifetime, such as the American.

Francis Bacon played a leading role in creating the British colonies, especially in Virginia, the Carolinas, and Newfoundland in northeastern Canada. His government report on "The Virginia Colony" was submitted in 1609. In 1610 Bacon and his associates received a charter from the king to form *the Tresurer and the Companye of Adventurers and planter of the Cittye of London and Bristoll for the Collonye or plantacon in Newfoundland* and sent John Guy to found a colony there. In 1910 Newfoundland issued a postage stamp to commemorate Bacon's role in establishing the province. The stamp describes Bacon as, "the guiding spirit in Colonization Schemes in 1610." Moreover, some scholars believe he was largely responsible for the drafting, in 1609 and 1612, of two charters of government for the Virginia Colony. Biography Thomas Jefferson, the third President of the United States and author of the Declaration of Independence, wrote: *"Bacon, Locke and Newton. I consider them as the three greatest men that have ever lived, without any exception, and as having laid the foundation of those superstructures which have been raised in the Physical and Moral sciences"*. Historian and biographer William Hepworth Dixon considered that Bacon's name could be included in the list of Founders of the United States of America.

It is also believed by the Rosicrucian organization AMORC, that Bacon would have influenced a settlement of mystics in North America, stating that his work *"The New Atlantis"* inspired a colony of Rosicrucians led by Johannes Kelpius, to journey across the Atlantic Ocean in a chartered vessel called *Sarah Mariah*, and move on to Pennsylvania in late XVII Century. According to their claims, these rosicrucian communities *"made valuable contributions to the newly emerging American culture in the fields of printing, philosophy, the sciences and arts"*.

Johannes Kelpius and his fellows moved to Wissahickon Creek, in Pennsylvania, and became known as "Hermits of Mystics of the Wissahickon" or simply "Monks of the Wissahickon".

Law

Although much of his legal reform proposals were not established in his life time, his legal legacy was considered by the magazine New Scientist, in a publication of 1961, as having influenced the drafting of the Code Napoleon, and the law reforms introduced by Sir Robert Peel.

The historian William Hepworth Dixon referred to the Code Napoleon as *"the sole embodiment of Bacon's thought"*, saying that Bacon's legal work *"has had more success abroad than it has found at home"*, and that in France *"it has blossomed and come into fruit"*.

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The scholar Harvey Wheeler attributed to Bacon, in his work "Francis Bacon's Verulamium - the Common Law Template of The Modern in English Science and Culture", the creation of these distinguishing features of the modern common law system:

- Using cases as repositories of evidence about the "unwritten law";
- Determining the relevance of precedents by exclusionary principles of evidence and logic;
- Treating opposing legal briefs as adversarial hypotheses about the application of the "unwritten law" to a new set of facts.

As late as the eighteenth-century some juries still declared the law rather than the fact, but already before the end of the seventeenth century Sir Matthew Hale explained modern common law adjudication procedure and acknowledged Bacon as the inventor of the process of discovering unwritten laws from the evidences of their applications. The method combined empiricism and inductivism in a new way that was to imprint its signature on many of the distinctive features of modern English society.

In brief, Bacon is considered by some jurists to be the father of modern Jurisprudence. Political scientist James McClellan, from the University of Virginia, considered Bacon to have had "a great following" in the American colonies.

Self-Assessment

1. Choose the correct options:

(*i*) Bacon had the goals ..... .

(*a*) To uncover truth (*b*) To serve his country

(*c*) To serve his church (*d*) All of these

(*ii*) The King created Bacon Baron Verulam, of Verulam, in the peerage of England on ..... .

(*a*) 14th July, 1615 (*b*) 12th June, 1618

(*c*) 12th July, 1618 (*d*) None of these

(*iii*) The Government's report on 'the Virginia Colony' was submitted in ..... .

(*a*) 1609 (*b*) 1705

(*c*) 1805 (*d*) 1510

(*iv*) The magazine 'New Scientist' was published in ..... .

(*a*) 1961 (*b*) 1960

(*c*) 1958 (*d*) 1962

2.4 Summary

- It was at Cambridge that he first met Queen Elizabeth, who was impressed by his precocious intellect, and was accustomed to calling him "the young Lord Keeper".
- Bacon had three goals: to uncover truth, to serve his country, and to serve his church.
- On 12 July 1618 the king created Bacon **Baron Verulam**, of Verulam, in the Peerage of England.
- In the nineteenth century his emphasis on induction was revived and developed by William Whewell, among others. He has been reputed as the "Father of Experimental Science".
- *History of Life and Death*, with natural and experimental observations for the prolongation of life.
- Johannes Kelpius and his fellows moved to Wissahickon Creek, in Pennsylvania, and became known as "Hermits of Mystics of the Wissahickon" or simply "Monks of the Wissahickon".

Notes

2.5 Key-Words

1. Baconian method : This method developed by Sir Francis Bacon. It means the ability to gradually generalise a finding based on accumulating data—he advised proceeding by this method.
2. Exerterate : To remove the contents of a part of the body especially the orbit of the eye or the paranasal sinuses.

2.6 Review Questions

1. Explain Francis Bacon as a Philosopher.
2. Bacon's essays reflect his deep understanding of human nature and ripe experiences of life. Discuss.
3. What are the three gools of Bacon?
4. Discuss Bacon's life and works.

Answers: Self-Assessment

1. (*i*) (*d*) (*ii*) (*c*) (*iii*) (*a*) (*iv*) (*a*)

2.7 Further Readings

1. Rai Vikramadity: Bacon Essays, Doaba House.

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Unit 3: Francis Bacon—Of Studies: Detailed Study and Critical Analysis

CONTENTS

Objectives

After reading this Unit students will be able to:

- Understand the essay Of Studies.
- Make the critical analysis of the essay 'Of Studies'.

Introduction

Of Studies is the first essay of the first collection of ten essays of Francis Bacon which was published in 1597. But it was revised for the edition of 1612. More than dozen new sentences were added and some words were also altered. Of Studies is typically Baconian essay with an astonishing terseness, freshness of illustrations, logical analysis, highly Latinized vocabulary, worldly wisdom and Renaissance enlightenment.

The purpose of this work is to analyze Sixteen Century Francis Bacon's essay "Of Studies" by summarizing its main points and the relevance of its statements to this day. Francis Bacon was an English Philosopher and writer best known as a founder of the modern empirical tradition based on the rational analysis of data obtained by observation and experimentation of the physical world.

Of Studies contains almost all the techniques of Bacon's essay writing and the world of his mind. It is full of wisdom, teachings and didacticism. In style, the essay is epigrammatic proverbial form, of balance and force. It is full of warmth and colour, profound wit and knowledge, experience and observation.

3.1 Text-Of Studies

Studies serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability. Their chief use for delight, is in privateness and retiring; for ornament, is in discourse; and for ability, is in the judgment, and disposition of business. For expert men can execute, and perhaps judge of particulars, one by one; but the general counsels, and the plots and marshalling of affairs, come best, from those that are learned. To spend too much time in studies is sloth; to use them too much for ornament, is affectation; to make judgment wholly by their rules, is the humor of a scholar. They perfect nature, and are perfected by experience: for natural abilities are like natural plants, that need pruning by study;

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and studies themselves, do give forth directions too much at large, except they be bounded in by experience. Crafty men contemn studies, simple men admire them, and wise men use them; for they teach not their own use; but that is a wisdom without them, and above them, won by observation. Read not to contradict and confute; nor to believe and take for granted; nor to find talk and discourse; but to weigh and consider. Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested; that is, some books are to be read only in parts; others to be read, but not curiously; and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention. Some books also may be read by deputy, and extracts made of them by others; but that would be only in the less important arguments, and the meaner sort of books, else distilled books are like common distilled waters, flashy things. Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man. And therefore, if a man write little, he had need have a great memory; if he confer little, he had need have a present wit: and if he read little, he had need have much cunning, to seem to know, that he doth not. Histories make men wise; poets witty; the mathematics subtile; natural philosophy deep; moral grave; logic and rhetoric able to contend. Abeunt studia in mores. Nay, there is no stond or impediment in the wit, but may be wrought out by fit studies; like as diseases of the body, may have appropriate exercises. Bowling is good for the stone and reins; shooting for the lungs and breast; gentle walking for the stomach; riding for the head; and the like. So if a man's wit be wandering, let him study the mathematics; for in demonstrations, if his wit be called away never so little, he must begin again. If his wit be not apt to distinguish or find differences, let him study the Schoolmen; for they are cymini sectores. If he be not apt to beat over matters, and to call up one thing to prove and illustrate another, let him study 197 the lawyers' cases. So every defect of the mind, may have a special receipt.

Did u know? Crafty men contemn studies, simple men admire them, and wise men use them.

Many have an opinion not wise, that for a prince to govern his estate, or for a great person to govern his proceedings, according to the respect of factions, is a principal part of policy; whereas contrariwise, the chiefest wisdom, is either in ordering those things which are general, and wherein men of several factions do nevertheless agree; or in dealing with correspondence to particular persons, one by one. But I say not that the considerations of factions, is to be neglected. Mean men, in their rising, must adhere; but great men, that have strength in themselves, were better to maintain themselves indifferent, and neutral. Yet even in beginners, to adhere so moderately, as he be a man of the one faction, which is most passable with the other, commonly giveth best way. The lower and weaker faction, is the firmer in conjunction; and it is often seen, that a few that are stiff, do tire out a greater number, that are more moderate. When one of the factions is extinguished, the remaining subdivideth; as the faction between Lucullus, and the rest of the nobles of the senate (which they called Optimates) held out awhile, against the faction of Pompey and Caesar; but when the senate's authority was pulled down, Caesar and Pompey soon after brake. The faction or party of Antonius and Octavianus Caesar, against Brutus and Cassius, held out likewise for a time; but when Brutus and Cassius were overthrown, then soon after, Antonius and Octavianus brake and subdivided. These examples are of wars, but the same holdeth in private factions. And therefore, those that are seconds in factions, do many times, when the faction subdivideth, prove principals; but many times also, they prove ciphers and cashiered; for many a man's strength is in opposition; and when that faileth, he groweth out of use. It is commonly seen, that men, once placed, take in with the contrary faction, to that by which they enter: thinking belike, that they have the first sure, and now are ready for a new purchase. The traitor in faction, lightly goeth

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away with it; for when matters have stuck long in balancing, the winning of some one man casteth them, and he getteth all the thanks. The even carriage between two factions, proceedeth not always of moderation, but of a trueness to a man's self, with end to make use of both. Certainly in Italy, they hold it a little suspect in popes, when they have often in their mouth Padre commune: and take it to be a sign of one, that meaneth to refer all to the greatness of his own house. Kings had need beware, how they side themselves, and make themselves as of a faction or party; for leagues within the state, are ever pernicious to monarchies: for they raise an obligation, paramount to obligation of sovereignty, and make the king tanquam unus ex nobis; as was to be seen in the League of France. When factions are carried too high and too violently, it is a sign of weakness in princes; and much to the prejudice, both of their authority and business. The motions of factions under kings ought to be, like the motions (as the astronomers speak) of the inferior orbs, which may have their proper motions, but yet still are quietly carried, by the higher motion of primum mobile.

Did u know? Read not to contradict and confute; nor to believe and take for granted; nor to find talk and discourse; but to weigh and consider.

He that is only real, had need have exceeding great parts of virtue; as the stone had need to be rich, that is set without foil. But if a man mark it well, it is, in praise and commendation of men, as it is in gettings and gains: for the proverb is true, That light gains make heavy purses; for light gains come thick, whereas great, come but now and then. So it is true, that small matters win great commendation, because they are continually in use and in note: whereas the occasion of any great virtue, cometh but on festivals. Therefore it doth much add to a man's reputation, and is (as Queen Isabella said) like perpetual letters commendatory, to have good forms. To attain them, it almost sufficeth not to despise them; for so shall a man observe them in others; and let him trust himself with the rest. For if he labor too much to express them, he shall lose their grace; which is to be natural and unaffected. Some men's behavior is like a verse, wherein every syllable is measured; how can a man comprehend great matters, that breaketh his mind too much, to small observations? Not to use ceremonies at all, is to teach others not to use them again; and so diminisheth respect to himself; especially they be not to be omitted, to strangers and formal natures; but the dwelling upon them, and exalting them above the moon, is not only tedious, but doth diminish the faith and credit of him that speaks. And certainly, there is a kind of conveying, of effectual and imprinting passages amongst compliments, which is of singular use, if a man can hit upon it. Amongst a man's peers, a man shall be sure of familiarity; and therefore it is good, a little to keep state. Amongst a man's inferiors one shall be sure of reverence; and therefore it is good, a little to be familiar. He that is too much in anything, so that he giveth another occasion of satiety, maketh himself cheap. To apply one's self to others, is good; so it be with demonstration, that a man doth it upon regard, and not upon facility. It is a good precept generally, in seconding another, yet to add somewhat of one's own: as if you will grant his opinion, let it be with some distinction; if you will follow his motion, let it be with condition; if you allow his counsel, let it be with alleging further reason. Men had need beware, how they be too perfect in compliments; for be they never so sufficient otherwise, their enviers will be sure to give them that attribute, to the disadvantage of their greater virtues. It is loss also in business, to be too full of respects, or to be curious, in observing times and opportunities. Solomon saith, He that considereth the wind, shall not sow, and he that looketh to the clouds, shall not reap. A wise man will make more opportunities, than he finds. Men's behavior should be, like their apparel, not too strait or point device, but free for exercise or motion.

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3.2 Critical Analysis

The main focus of Bacon's essay rests on explaining to the reader the importance of *study knowledge* in terms of its practical application towards the individual and its society. Bacon through a syllogistic tripartite statement begins his argument to validate the usefulness and advantage of study in our life. Bacon has the power of compressing into a few words a great body of thought. Thus he puts forward the three basic purposes of studies: "Studies serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability". He later expands his sentence to bring lucidity and clearness. Studies fill us delight and aesthetic pleasure when we remain private and solitary. While we discourse, our studies add decoration to our speech. Further, the men of study can decide best on the right lines in business and politics. Bacon deprecates too much studies and the scholar's habit to make his judgment from his reading instead of using his independent views.

Bacon is a consummate artist of Renaissance spirit. Thus he knows the expanse of knowledge and utility of studies. He advocates a scientific enquiry of studies. Through an exquisite metaphor drawn from Botany he compares human mind to a growing plant. As the growing plants need to be pruned and watered and manured for optimum development, the new growing conscience of us are to be tutored, mounded, oriented and devised by studies. But it is experience which ultimately matures our perception and leads us to perfection:

"They perfect nature, and are perfected by experience: for natural abilities are like natural plants that need pruning by study".

Next Bacon considers what persons despise studies and what people praise them and what people make practical use of them. The crafty men condemn studies; simple men admire them while the wise men make ultimate use of it. But it should be remembered that the inquisitive mind and keen observation cultivate the real wisdom. Bacon advises his readers to apply studies to 'weigh and consider' rather than useless contradictions and grandiloquence.

In The Advancement of Learning Bacon makes systematic classifications of studies and considers different modes to be employed with different kinds of books: "Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed and some few to be chewed and digested".

Did u know? Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested.

The books according to its value and utility are to be devised into various modes of articulations. The worthy classical pragmatic sort are to be adorned by expertise reading with diligence while the meaner sort of books or less important books are to be read in summary or by deputy. Again the global span of knowledge is revealed in his analysis of various subjects and their beneficent categories. The scholarly mind of Bacon here makes the subtle observation:

"Histories make men wise; poets witty; the mathematics subtle; natural philosophy deep; moral grave; logic and rhetoric able to contend".

Studies do not shape a perfect man without the needed conference and writing. "And therefore if a man write little, he had need have a great memory; if he confer little he had need have much cunning, to seem to know that he doth' not". Bacon further tells us that our studies pass into our character (Abeunt studia in mores). Rightly so the constitution of our moral disposition is the outcome of our learning and experience.

Every defect of the mind, Bacon says, may be cured by a proper choice of reading. Bacon here draws a parallel between the physical exercise and intellectual exercise. As different games, sports,

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exercises beget growth and development, the different branches of studies cures the in capability of logic, wondering of wit, lack of distinguish etc. Bacon emphatically concludes that every defect of the mind may have a special receipt and remedial assurance.

His first analysis is an exposition on the purposes or uses that different individuals can have by approaching *Study* –"…for delight, ornament, and for ability"- And how certain professions are better served by individuals with *study knowledge*. As he mentions the virtues of *Study* he also points out its vices: –"To spend too much time in study is sloth…" Also, how *Study* influences our understanding of Nature, and in opposition, how our experience of Nature bounds our acquired knowledge. After that, the Author presents the concept of how different individuals with different mental abilities and interests in life, approach the idea of studying.

"Crafty men contemn studies…"- and offers advice on how study should be applied: –"…but to weight and consider"- Then Bacon goes into expressing his ideas in how the means to acquire *study knowledge*, books, can be categorized and read according to their content and value to the individual. The benefits of *studying* are Bacon's final approach. Benefits in terms of defining a "Man" by its ability to read, write or confer, and in terms of being the medicine for any "impediment in the wit" and by giving "receipts" to "every defect of the mind".

Certainly, some of Francis Bacon's insights in this subject are of value after 400 years of societal evolution. We can ascertain this when we read the phrase "They perfect Nature, and are perfected by experience…" Nevertheless some of the concepts expressed in his Essay have to be understood through the glass of time. By this I mean Society values and concepts were different altogethers to what we know today. By that time Society was strongly influenced by the idea of literacy and illiteracy (relatively few were educated and could read and write). Only educated people had access to knowledge and by that, to social status and opportunity. Nowadays would be difficult to accept ideas which relate skills or professions towards an attitude to approach *studying*. Today, a skilled machinist or carpenter can certainly be a studied person. Nowadays most people in our Society have the possibility to read and by that, to obtain knowledge independently of what our personal choices are in terms of profession. Also we must consider how today we value the specialization of knowledge which in the past, characterized by a more generic and limited access to knowledge, wasn't a major factor into the conceptualization and understanding of *study knowledge* as to the extent we see it today.

Finally, it is doubtful that the benefits of *studying* can be approached as a recipe for any "intellectual illness". We now know that the real illnesses are related to mental conditions and not necessarily to our mental skills, abilities or lack of them and by that I mean that Bacon's solutions to those conditions are substantially naïve under the actual understanding of Human Psychology.

Concepts and ideas evolve at the same time as the Human condition changes in all social, scientific, political and economic aspects. By looking through the glass of time and comparing the past to the present we come to the realization of the universality and endurance of some concepts and the fragility and impermanence of some others.

Self-Assessment

1. Choose the correct options:

(*i*) Of Studies was published in ..... .

(*a*) 1597 (*b*) 1600

(*c*) 1585 (*d*) 1590

(*ii*) Of Studies is the ..... essay of the first collections of ten essays.

(*a*) Second (*b*) First

(*c*) Third (*d*) Fourth

Notes

(*iii*) The main focus of Bacon's essay rests on explaining to the reader the importance of ..... .

(*a*) Education (*b*) Writing

(*c*) Study knowledge (*d*) None of these

(*iv*) Studies serve for ..... .

(*a*) Ornament (*b*) Ability

(*c*) Delight (*d*) All of these.

3.3 Summary

- Francis Bacon was an English Philosopher and writer best known as a founder of the modern empirical tradition based on the rational analysis of data obtained by observation and experimentation of the physical world.
- The main focus of Bacon's essay rests on explaining to the reader the importance of *study knowledge* in terms of its practical application towards the individual and its society.
- Bacon is a consummate artist of Renaissance spirit.
- The benefits of *studying* are Bacon's final approach.
- In his essay entitled Of Studies, Francis Bacon examines the benefits and effects of studies, maintaining that when studies are balanced by experience, diverse studies may help counteract personal imperfections.
- Bacon proposes that study may be done for three purposes: for one's own entertainment, such as reading book on a favorite author, to impress others and bring attention to oneself, such as by touting one's academic accomplishments in hopes of gaining a pretty girl's admiration, or to gain competence and proficiency, an example would be by studying for an upcoming exam.
- Too much study may be considered a downfall, as the individual studying may be considered by others to be self-indulgent or even lazy if they appear to be studying and not much else. Just to do what books tell you to do and nothing else is characteristic of an academic/ bookish individual.
- Studying alone is insufficient; learning must also be accompanied by real life experience, as they are counter-balances of one another. Abilities are strengthened and capabilities balanced by studies.
- Cunning individuals regard studies with contempt because concepts learned from books might thwart their devious goals; unpretentious individuals admire studies because they themselves may have had little opportunity for study, and an astute individual makes good use of studies and knowledge gained by studying as a tool to glean more information.
- Study and take time to meditate on the information learned rather than taking what is learned as gospel, or arguing about the information, even discussing it.
- Three types of literature that are widely available include that which is be read in parts and not spent a lot of time on, that which is to be read through and enjoyed, and that which is to be read thoroughly with attention and sincerity.
- Studying makes people complete, discussion makes a prepared person, and writing makes an exact person by communicating well.

Notes

3.4 Key-Words

1. Abridgment : Miniature
2. Absurd : Stupid, unpolished
3. Abuse : Cheat, deceive
4. Aculeate : Stinging

3.5 Review Questions

1. Bacon says that only a few books are to be "chewed and digested." What books would be on your list in this category? Why would you include them?

2. Bacon says that too much studying is laziness. Do you agree? Explain how this **paradox**, or seeming contradiction, can be true.

3. Bacon had the reputation of being a hard, ambitious man, and his essays are frequently said to be cynical and lacking in warmth. Find remarks in "Of Studies" that could support this view. How did *you* feel about the person behind this essay?

4. Bacon's fondness for **parallel structure** and balanced sentences is apparent in "Of Studies." For example: "Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested." Find and read aloud other examples of Bacon's parallelism and balance.

5. Why do *you* read? Compare your reasons with Bacon's arguments for reading.

6. What passages in "Of Studies" do you think could apply especially well to today's arguments about the value of education?

7. "Of Studies" was written almost four hundred years ago. Are any of its points dated? Do you disagree with anything Bacon says?

Answers: Self-Assessment

1. (*i*) (*a*) (*ii*) (*b*) (*iii*) (*c*) (*iv*) (*d*)

3.6 Further Readings

1. Rai Vikramadity: Bacon Essays, Doaba House.

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Unit 4 : Francis Bacon–Of Truth: Detailed Study

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Objectives

After reading this Unit students will be able to:

- Discuss Bacon as a thinker.
- Explain the essay 'Of Truth'.

Introduction

As a pragmatic and as an empirical thinker Bacon subscribed two fundamental Renaissance ideals— Sepantia (search for knowledge) and Eloquentia (the art of rhetoric). Here in the essay Of Truth he supplements his search for truth by going back to the theories of the classical thinkers and also by taking out analogies from everyday life. It is to be noted here that his explication of the theme is impassioned and he succeeds in providing almost neutral judgements on the matter. Again, it is seen that Bacon's last essays, though written in the same aphoristic manner, stylistically are different in that he supplied more analogies and examples to support or explain his arguments. As this essay belongs to the latter group, we find ample analogies and examples. Bacon, while explaining the reasons as to why people evade truth, talks of the Greek philosophical school of sceptics, set up by Pyrro. Those philosophers would question the validity of truth and constantly change their opinions. Bacon says that now people are like those philosophers with the important difference that they lack their force and tenacity of argument. He says that like him the Greek philosopher Lucian was equally puzzled at the fact that people are more attracted to lies and are averse to truth. Bacon is surprised by the fact that people are loathed to find out or even acknowledge truth in life. It seems to him that this is an innate human tendency to do so. He finds evidence in support of his arguments in the behaviour of the ancient Greek sceptics who used to question the validity of truth and would have no fixed beliefs. Bacon thinks that people behave like those philosophers. But he understands that they lack their strength of arguments. He then finds the Greek philosopher Lucian, while considering the matter, was equally baffled. Lucian investigated and found that poets like lies because those provides pleasure, and that businessmen have to tell lies for making profit. But he could not come to a definite conclusion as to why people should love lies. Bacon says that men love falsehood because truth is like the bright light of the day and would show up pomp and splendour of human life for what they are. They look attractive and colourful in the dim light of lies. Men prefer to cherish illusions, which make life more interesting. Bacon here gives an interesting analogy of truth and falsehood. He says that the value of truth is like that of a pearl, which shines best in the day-light, while a lie is like a diamond or carbuncle, which shines best producing varied rays in dim light of candles. He comes to the conclusion that people

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love falsehood because it produces imaginary pleasure about life. Bacon also examines the statement of one of the early Church authorities, which severely condemned poetry as the wine of the devils. Bacon here shows that even the highest art of man—poetry, is composed of lies. He seems to have compounded the two statements made by two early Christian thinkers. The equation is that, since the devil or Satan works by falsehood, lies are its food. Poetry tends to be Satanic because it resorts to falsehood while producing artistic pleasure. Bacon, however, makes a distinction here between poetic untruth and fascination with falsehood in everyday life. He thinks that poetic untruth is not harmful, as it does not leave lasting impressions on the mind and character of a person. On the other hand, the lies, which are embedded in the mind and control and regulate every thought and action of a person, are harmful. Bacon refers to the Epicurean doctrine of pleasure, beautifully expressed by the famous poet of that school, Lucretius, who considered the realization of truth to be the highest pleasure of life. Bacon says that the value of truth is understood by those who have experienced it. The inquiry, knowledge and the belief of truth are the highest achievements that human beings can pursue. He amplifies the matter by giving an analogy from the Bible. Bacon here interestingly comments that, since he finished the work of Creation, God has been diffusing the light of His spirit in mankind. He supports his argument by referring to the Epicurean theory of pleasure beautifully expressed by Lucretius who held that there is no greater pleasure than that given by the realization of truth. The summit of truth cannot be conquered and there is tranquillity on this peak from which one can survey the errors and follies of men as they go through their trials; but this survey should not fill the watcher with pity and not with pride. The essence of heavenly life on this earth lies in the constant love of charity, an unshakable trust in God, and steady allegiance to truth. At the concluding section of the essay Bacon explains the value of truth in civil affairs of life. He is conscious of the fact that civil life goes on with both truth and falsehood. He feels that the mixture of falsehood with truth may sometimes turn out to be profitable. But it shows the inferiority of the man who entertains it. This is, he says, like the composition of an alloy, which is stronger but inferior in purity. He then compares this kind of way of life to that of a serpent, which is a symbol of Satan itself. Bacon finds a striking similarity between the crooked and mean devices adopted by people and the zigzag movements of a serpent. To clarify his point more clearly, Bacon quotes Montaigne who said that a man, who tells lies, is afraid of his fellow men but is unafraid of God who is all perceiving. Bacon concludes his arguments by saying that falsehood is the height of wickedness, and such that it will invite the wrath of God on Doomsday.

Did u know? He agrees with St Augustine who criticized poetry as "the wine of error", and with Hironymous, who condemned poetry as "the food of demons".

4.1 Essay–Of Truth

What is truth? said jesting Pilate, and would not stay for an answer. Certainly there be, that delight in giddiness, and count it a bondage to fix a belief; affecting free-will in thinking, as well as in acting. And though the sects of philosophers of that kind be gone, yet there remain certain discoursing wits, which are of the same veins, though there be not so much blood in them, as was in those of the ancients. But it is not only the difficulty and labor, which men take in finding out of truth, nor again, that when it is found, it imposeth upon men's thoughts, that doth bring lies in favor; but a natural though corrupt love, of the lie itself. One of the later school of the Grecians, examineth the matter, and is at a stand, to think what should be in it, that men should love lies; where neither they make for pleasure, as with poets, nor for advantage, as with the merchant; but for the lie's sake. But I cannot tell; this same truth, is a naked, and open day-light, that doth not

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show the masks, and mummeries, and triumphs, of the world, half so stately and daintily as candle-lights. Truth may perhaps come to the price of a pearl, that showeth best by day; but it will not rise to the price of a diamond, or carbuncle, that showeth best in varied lights. A mixture of a lie doth ever add pleasure. Doth any man doubt, that if there were taken out of men's minds, vain opinions, flattering hopes, false valuations, imaginations as one would, and the like, but it would leave the minds, of a number of men, poor shrunken things, full of melancholy and indisposition, and unpleasing to themselves? One of the fathers, in great severity, called poesy vinum doemonum, because it filleth the imagination; and yet, it is but with the shadow of a lie. But it is not the lie that passeth through the mind, but the lie that sinketh in, and settleth in it, that doth the hurt; such as we spake of before. But, howsoever these things are thus in men's depraved judgments, and affections, yet truth, which only doth judge itself, teacheth that the inquiry of truth, which is the love-making, or wooing of it, the knowledge of truth, which is the presence of it, and the belief of truth, which is the enjoying of it, is the sovereign good of human nature. The first creature of God, in the works of the days, was the light of the sense; the last, was the light of reason; and his sabbath work ever since, is the illumination of his Spirit. First he breathed light, upon the face of the matter or chaos; then he breathed light, into the face of man; and still he breatheth and inspireth light, into the face of his chosen. The poet, that beautified the sect, that was otherwise inferior to the rest, saith yet excellently well: It is a pleasure, to stand upon the shore, and to see ships tossed upon the sea; a pleasure, to stand in the window of a castle, and to see a battle, and the adventures thereof below: but no pleasure is comparable to the standing upon the vantage ground of truth (a hill not to be commanded, and where the air is always clear and serene), and to see the errors, and wanderings, and mists, and tempests, in the vale below; so always that this prospect be with pity, and not with swelling, or pride. Certainly, it is heaven upon earth, to have a man's mind move in charity, rest in providence, and turn upon the poles of truth. To pass from theological, and philosophical truth, to the truth of civil business; it will be acknowledged, even by those that practise it not, that clear, and round dealing, is the honor of man's nature; and that mixture of falsehoods, is like alloy in coin of gold and silver, which may make the metal work the better, but it embaseth it. For these winding, and crooked courses, are the goings of the serpent; which goeth basely upon the belly, and not upon the feet. There is no vice, that doth so cover a man with shame, as to be found false and perfidious. And therefore Montaigne saith prettily, when he inquired the reason, why the word of the lie should be such a disgrace, and such an odious charge? Saith he, If it be well weighed, to say that a man lieth, is as much to say, as that he is brave towards God, and a coward towards men. For a lie faces God, and shrinks from man. Surely the wickedness of falsehood, and breach of faith, cannot possibly be so highly expressed, as in that it shall be the last peal, to call the judgments of God upon the generations of men; it being foretold, that when Christ cometh, he shall not find faith upon the earth.

According to him, God created the light of the senses first so that men could see the world around them. The last thing he created, according to him, was the light of reason, that is, the rational faculty.

Self Assessment

1. Choose the correct options:

(*i*) Sepantia means

(*a*) Search for knowledge
(*b*) The art of rhetoric
(*c*) Judgment on the matter
(*d*) None of these

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(*ii*) ..... criticized poetry as "the wine of error

(*a*) St. Augustine (*b*) Hironymous

(*c*) Bacon (*d*) None of these

(*iii*) Who condemned poetry as "the food of demons"?

(*a*) Hazlit (*b*) Charles Lamb

(*c*) Jesting Pilate (*d*) Hironymous

(*iv*) According to Bacon, the first creature of God was the

(*a*) Truth (*b*) Coin of Gold

(*c*) Light of reason (*d*) None of these

4.2 Summary

- *"Of Truth"* raises the interesting problem of our difficulty in defining lies, especially when we consider theology as a view with a higher and more profound standard of truth than mere mortal philosophy. More dangerously, he speculates "A mixture of a lie doth ever add pleasure" (1259). When moving into ordinary language of "civil business" (see the preface regarding his career!), he turns openly censorious of lies, even though such a world is obviously full of them.
- He agrees with St Augustine who criticized poetry as "the wine of error", and with Hironymous, who condemned poetry as "the food of demons".
- According to him, God created the light of the senses first so that men could see the world around them.

4.3 Key-Words

1. Sepantia : Search for knowledge
2. Eloquentia : the art of rhetoric

4.4 Review Questions

1. Discuss the Essay 'of Truth'
2. Bacon raises the interesting problems of our difficulty through 'Of Truth'. Discuss
3. Discuss Bacon as a pragmatic thinker.

Answers: Self-Assessment

1. (*i*) (*a*) (*ii*) (*a*) (*iii*) (*d*) (*iv*) (*c*)

4.5 Further Readings

1. Rai Vikramadity: Bacon Essays, Doaba House.

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Unit 5: Francis Bacon - Of Truth: Critical Analysis

CONTENTS

Objectives

After reading this Unit students will be able to:

- Analyse Bacon's Essay 'Of Truth'.

Introduction

Bacon's essay *Of Truth is,* considered as an apology for poetical fiction, and for the masking and mumming of his theatre, on the score of man's absolute love of lies, and hatred of truth. The modern love of novels is a very strong corroboration of this statement. Put a profound truth in the form of a problem novel and thousands will read it, attracted by its outward dress, whereas written as a treatise it would attract little attention! How many readers have Lord Bacon's works compared to the plays attributed to Shakespeare!

5.1 Of Truth-Critical Analysis

It is very important to observe that Bacon's essay *Of Truth* occupies the first or foremost place in the collection. Also that this essay opens and concludes with the allusion to our Savior, who was the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Bacon commences with the words "What is truth? said jesting Pilate, *and would not stay for an answer."* And the essay ends with the words, " Surely the wickedness of falsehood and breach of faith cannot possibly be so highly expressed, as in that it shall be the last peal to call the judgment of God upon the generations of men. It being foretold that when Christ cometh He shall not find faith upon the earth." This is repeated in the essay "Of Counsel."

It is worthy of note, too, what Bacon says of Pilate, that he*"would not stay for an answer"* implying that there was an answer, but that he did not want to hear it, and this is often the attitude of the world towards any problem that offends it's prejudices, rouses its passions, or dares to challenge its universal consent upon some echoed tradition which has never hitherto been looked into or examined. In his essay "Of Atheism," Bacon points out, how the judgment is prejudiced by the feelings or affections, and how the mind is deprived of free judgment by the inclinations of the heart.

"The Scripture saith, 'The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God'; it is not said, The fool hath thought in his heart,' so as he rather saith it by rote to himself, as that he would have, than that he can thoroughly believe it or be persuaded of it."

This equally applies to the nature of all human beliefs that are allied by custom with consent and sentiment —and perhaps most of all to the opposers of the Bacon authorship of the plays. They,

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like Pilate, "*will not stay for an answer,*" or give a "learning patience" to the problem, and in their hearts declare the theory a heresy, a foolish fad, an impossibility.

Mark Twain has recently drawn a parallel, comparing Shakespeare to Satan, and there is something in it, for all denial is of the badge of Antichrist; and has not the great German poet, Goethe described Mephistopheles (and his followers?) with the words "*der stets verneint,*" – who everlasting denies? After all, rebutting evidence is always easier than proof, for the thing saves trouble if one only takes one's ignorance seriously, or affirmatively, setting up for a judge instead of a learner, and imagining a faculty of not knowing can be a criterion for passing judgments upon new discoveries.

"*Coming in a man's own name,*" Bacon declares, "is no infallible sign of truth. For certainly there cometh to pass, and hath place in human truth, that which was noted and pronounced in the highest truth." *Veni in nomine patris, nec recipitis me; si quis venetit in nomine suo, eum recipietis* (I came in the name of the Father, but ye did not receive Me; if any one shall come in his own name, him ye receive).

But in this divine aphorism (considering to whom it was applied, namely, to Antichrist, the highest deceiver) we may discern well *that the coming in a man's own name, without regard of antiquity or paternity, is no good sign of truth,* although it be joined with the fortune and success of an *eum recipietis*" (and book *Advancement of Learning,* p.99).

Therefore the coming of Shakespeare in his own name, although he has been received without question, is not an infallible sign of truth. In Aphorism 84 of the first book of the *Novum Organum*: "Again men have been kept back as by a kind of enchantment from progress in the sciences, by reverence for antiquity, by the authority of men accounted great in philosophy, *and then by general consent.* And with regard to authority it shows a feeble mind to grant so much to authors, and yet deny Time his rights, who is the author of authors, nay, rather of all authority. For rightly is truth called the daughter of time."

By "*consent*" Bacon means, the world's general or universal assent, or tradition; as, for example, that Shakespeare is the author of the 1623 Folio plays. The world often mistakes *echoes for volume,* and there is the popular fallacy that counting of heads is proof of truth. But in matters intellectual it is not as with physical power or wealth—there is no aggregate or arithmetical sum total, as, for example, when men pull on a rope or heap up money. But it is rather as in a race, where only a few can be first, and there is no addition of speeds.

Hear Bacon: "*For the worst of all auguries is from consent in matters intellectual* (Divinity excepted, and politics where there is right of vote). For nothing pleases the many unless it strikes the imagination, or binds the understanding with the bonds of common notions" (Aphorism 77, *Novum Organum).*

Therefore the saying,"That the world says, or the world believes," though to be respected, is not final, and should not deter us from examining anew problems which the past generations had probably no time or curiosity to question. Besides, as Bacon says, in this essay *Of Truth,*

" The first creature of God, in the work of the days, *was the light of the senses, the last was the light of reason;* and His Sabbath work ever since is the illumination of His Spirit."

The Vedas say, "In the midst of the sun is the light, in the midst of light is truth, and in the midst of truth is the imperishable Being." " Truth," says Chaucer, " is the highest thing that man can keep." In this essay *of Truth* Bacon says,"

" One of the late school of the Grecians examineth the matter, and is at a stand to think what should be in it, that men should love lies, *where neither they make for pleasure, as with poets;* nor for advantage, as with the merchant; but for the lies sake. *But I cannot tell* : this same truth is a naked and open day light, that doth not show the *masques, and mummeries, and triumphs* of the world, half so stately and daintily as candle lights."

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Compare Omar Khayham on the world as a theatre by candle-light : "For in and out, above, about, below,' Tis nothing but a Magic Shadow Show,Play'd in a box whose candle is the sun, Round which we phantom figures come and go!"

Bacon continues,

"Truth may perhaps come to the price of a pearl, that showeth best by day; but it will not rise to the price of a diamond, or carbuncle, that showeth best in varied lights. A mixture of a lie doth ever add pleasure."

Observe the apology for poetical fiction in this passage, which presently we find repeated with something of an explanation:

"One of the Fathers, in great severity, called poesy *vinum daemonum* (the wine of the devils),because it filleth the imagination, and yet it is but with *the shadow of a lie."*

That is to say, poetical fiction or invention, although it obscures truth, or veils it, is not all falsehood, and all parabolical poetry *shadows,* under tropes of similitude's, a concealed meaning of truth. It would seem, then, that this essay *Of Truth* is a sort of apology for the poetical veil, or masque of Truth, upon the score of man's dislike, or incapability, of receiving unadulterated truth itself? Bacon uses the expression *"I cannot tell"* to excuse himself explanation of the world's love of lies. In the play of *Richard III* the same phrase in introduced, together with what would seem to answer the question in context with it:— *"I cannot tell: the world is grown so bad* That wrens may prey where eagles dare not perch." (I. 3).

Christ exclaimed "That the world cannot receive truth," and Bacon implies the same thing, and he then proceeds to explain that the disguises and actings of the world's stage are better adapted, *than* the searchlight of open daylight, for the half-lights of the theatre. If the reader will turn to the essay entitled *Of Masques and Triumphs,* he will find complete proof that this is an allusion to the stage in the essay *Of Truth.* And it would seem as if there existed some sort of antithesis between these two essays, i.e., the world's love of pleasure is so great, *"Satis alter alteri magnum theatrum sumus"* (We are sufficently the great theatre of each other),—"All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players," —and acting has little consonance with truth. Observe, too, in both essays there is the same allusion to candle-light.

In the plays candlelight is used as a metaphor for starlight:

"For by these blessed candles of the night." (*Merchant of Venice,* V.i). "There's husbandry in heaven; Their candles are all out." (*Macbeth* II. i). Night's candles are burnt out." (*Romeo and Juliet* III.5). See Sonnet 21, "As those gold candles fixed in heaven's air."

This point seems to me very pertinent to the entire subject of the essay (and authorship of the plays), and is a hint of the very first importance as to whether Bacon wore a mask known as Shakespeare. But the introduction of this subject, in connection with poetry, and with an apology for the poets' *"shadow of a lie,"* on account of the pleasure afforded by the dainty shows of the theatre, seen by candlelight, is a hint that only the most obstinately blind or obtuse person can decline to perceive. The first Masque, in England, was held at Greenwhich Palace (where King Henry the Eighth was born), "the first disguise(in the year 1513, on the day of the Epiphany), after the manner of Italy called a *Masque*, a thing not seen afore in England." In *Love's Labour Lost* we have a masque introduced, and also scene in *King Henry the Eighth* where the royal dancers are masked. Triumphs were processional pageants, or shows by Torchlight. Bacon is telling us that man does not care about abstract truth, and when he says men do not care for open daylight, he is speaking very truly. For he points out that "*the archflatterer* with whom all the petty flatterers have intelligence, *is a man's self*" (essay Of *Love*). And in this essay *of Truth* :

"A mixture of a lie doth ever add pleasure. Doth any man doubt, that if there were taken out of men's minds vain opinions, flattering hopes, false valuations, imaginations as one would, and the

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like, but it would leave the minds of a number of men poor shrunken things full of melancholy and indisposition, and unpleasing to themselves?"

This is as much as to say, that most men "walk in a vain show," and are actors, i.e., play up rather to the parts they imagine they possess, than are what they really are by nature. In the essay *Of Love*, Bacon says

"It is a poor saying of Epicurus, "We are a sufficiently great theatre to each other ". That Bacon should introduce this saying of Seneca (to be found in his Epistles, Moral I., 17) in the essay *Of Love* is not strange. For Bacon knew that love is one of the greatest of actors (and cause of acting) in life, as well as the motive for stage comedies in the theatre. He writes, "The stage is more beholding to love than the life of man. For as to the stage, love is ever a matter of *Comedies,* and now and then of *tragedies*. It is strange to note the excess of this passion; and how it braves the nature and value of things, that the speaking in a perpetual hyperbole is comely in nothing but love."

The ancients painted Cupid blind, because people in love are deprived of reason and sound judgment, and see everything by a candlelight of glamour an illusion, where all is appearance, as in a theatre. The lover conceals his real character, and pretends to all sorts of parts which he plays in order to attract the one beloved, just, as in natural selection, we find at the courting season, male birds spreading their peacock feathers to attract the female, that is to say, this passion consists of every sort of exaggeration both in action and in speech, which, to the onlooker, is ever a source of amusement and comedy because of its divagation from all semblance of truth. Observe how Bacon classes love with envy:

" There be none of the affections which have been noted to fascinate, or bewitch, but love and envy." He then makes this profound observation of envy, which is equally applicable to love :

" A man that is busy and inquisitive is commonly envious..... therefore *it must needs be, that he taketh a kind of play pleasure in looking upon the fortunes of others."* —essay *Of Envy*

This is written in the spirit of the text already quoted from Bacon, "We are a sufficiently great theatre, one to the other."

That is to say, all life is a theatre, and it may be noted, that love, of all passions, is the one that attracts most attention from those within the circle, or theatre of its influence. People of all classes are everlastingly watching it, or contemplating it, or talking about it. For it brings with it other passions into play, such as envy, or jealousy, and often ends in the tragedies we read every day in the papers. In the 1st Book of the *Advancement of Learning,* Bacon once more quotes this saying with an apology which would seem to be pointed at himself:—

"Another fault incident commonly to learned men, which may be more probably defended than truly denied, is that they fail sometimes in applying themselves to particular persons, which want of exact application ariseth from two causes— the one, because the largeness of their mind can hardly confine itself to dwell in the exquisite observation or examination of the nature and customs of one person; for it is a speech for a lover, and not for a wise man. We are sufficiently a great theatre to each other".

It is very possible Bacon was thinking of Seneca, the dramatist, from whom he quotes this Latin saying (to whom he compares himself in the *De Augmentis* of 1623), particularly as he mentions him in the preceding paragraph but one. But this passage appears as an apology written *for Bacon himself,* who was a learned man after the pattern of Demosthenes and Cicero, whom he has just previously cited. He is covertly telling us he is a lover of the theatre—of the contemplation of life as a stage, but that he is not wise to tell us so. In the 2nd book of the *Advancement of Learning* he again introduces some part of the above passage, *and this time directly pointed at himself* :

"My hope is that, if my extreme love to learning carry me too far, I may obtain the excuse of affection; for that it is not granted to man to love and be wise" (p.75 2nd book *Advancement).*

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I should like to point out that the poet is compared with lover in the *Midsummer's Night Dream,* and in his essay *Of Truth* he says:

" But howsoever these things are thus in men's depraved judgments and affections, yet truth, which only doth judge itself, teacheth that the inquiry of truth, *which is the love making or wooing of it,* the knowledge of of truth, which is the presence of it, and the belief of truth, which is the enjoying of it,— is the sovereign good of human nature." and from :*Midsummer Night Dream*

"The lunatic, the lover, and the poet, Are of imagination all compact. One sees more devils than vast hell can hold; That is the madman. The Lover, all as frantic, Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt. The poet's eye in a fine frenzy rolling doth glance From heaven to earth, from earth to heaven. And as imagination bodies forth the forms of things Unknown; the poet's pen turns them to shapes, And gives to airy nothing a local habitation And a name." Act V. i. Observe how Helen is compared to Cleopatra, and observe that we have in the lunatic's and poet's frenzy a hint for the divine madness connected with Bacchus, which was called mania, and which fury was sometimes the effect of wine. The lover, Bacon identifies with the madness (in his essay *Of Love*—"mad degree of love"). But it is poetic creation through love that Bacon is really thinking of, such as Plato describes the love of wisdom, the begetting the truth upon the body of beauty.

It is somewhat strange to consider how the true character of Bacon's essay *Of Truth* has so long escaped discovery at the hands of critics— I mean the mingling, in this essay, of Truth and Poetry, and their interrelationship after the manner (to borrow a title from the German poet, Goethe) of *Warheit und Dichtung.* For the entire essay is an apology of the veils of poetry—that is to say, for its shadows and outlines, its bare suggestions, its parabolical character, its complete reserve. What I mean will be best understood by a study of Bacon's introduction to the series of poetical and classical myths entitled *The Wisdom of the Ancients,* in which collection Bacon has endeavored to rationalize and explain away *the shadows and veils* in which the kernels of this ancient wisdom are enwrapped. His efforts to discover the *true forms,* hidden behind poetical fancy in these pieces, are just what he would have us apply to his theatre, with the help of his prose works. Just what Bacon, in his essay *Of Truth* , calls *"a shadow of a lie,"* constitutes the outward poetical garb of all myth containing inner meaning. "Aesop's Fables" belong to this class of parable. *The Fox and the Grapes,* outwardly, is the shadow of a lie, which conveys (and veils at the same time) the inner moral truth—"We affect to despise everything unattainable."

Men being for the most part of the nature of children in their intellects, are only held and interested in sensible objects, and in pictures, or emblems, which poetry can present to their imagination. Two objects are served by creative poetry that embodies wisdom in poetic imagery and parable. It serves to preserve and to reveal. Like the fly embalmed in amber, great truths may be handed down to posterity and preserved intact through barbarous ages. The secrets of a society of learned men can thus be transmitted to after times. This indeed is living art, and probably it has been carried out to an almost incredible degree of perfection and completeness in the art we are now discussing.

"And therefore in the infancy of learning, and in rude times, when those conceits which are now trivial were then new, the world was full of parables and similitudes; for else would men either have passed over without mark, or else rejected for paradoxes that which was offered, before they had understood or judged. So in divine learning, we see how frequent parables and tropes are. For it is a rule, that whatsoever science is not consonant to presuppositions, must pray in aid of similitude's." (2nd book *Advancement of Learning,* p. 153)

Tennyson once made the remark "*that the world was the shadow of God,*" meaning that it not only argued , as all shadows do, a great light to produce shadow, but also concealed God. In Esdras the dead are said to "flee the shadow of the world," and "which are departed from the shadow of the world." So, in *like* manner, I would suggest, Bacon's theatre shadows a great rational interpretation, or revelation, with which latter Bacon has particularly identified his own unmasking in glory to man.

Notes

Bacon describes poesy (poetry) in respect of matter, (and not words), as, "one of the principal portions of learning, and is nothing else but *feigned history* , which may be styled as well in prose as verse" —*Advancement* , p.90. So in the play of *As You Like It* , "The truest poetry is the most feigning." That is to say, *the shadow of the lie* is only the envelope (Act III. ii) of the inward truth, or form, imprinted on it.

Schopenhauer called matter " a false truth," and in parabolic poetry (which is the "*shadow of a lie"),* the vehicle of truth is the veil which shadows forth the truth. Spiritual truths are always immeasurably greater than their vehicles of utterance, and are those forms, or philosophical ideas, which are conveyed by means of poetic myth and fable.

"Truth in closet words shall fail, When truth embodied in a tale Shall enter in at lowly doors." More than half the force of language, especially of poetical language, consists in its hints, suggestions, half-lights, which its words do not directly imply, yet habitually convey indirectly.

Self-Assessment

1. Choose the correct options:

(*i*) Of Truth is a sort of ..... for the poetical veil

(*a*) Command (*b*) Shadows

(*c*) Apology (*d*) None of these

(*ii*) The remark 'that the world was the shadow of God' made by

(*a*) Shakespeare (*b*) Tennyson

(*c*) Bacon (*d*) None of these

(*iii*) The matter called as " a False truth" by

(*a*) Tennyson (*b*) Plato

(*c*) Schopenhauer (*d*) None of these

(*iv*) 'The Fox and the Grapes is the

(*a*) Wisdom (*b*) Truth

(*c*) Shadow of a life (*d*) None of these

5.2 Summary

- *"Of Truth"* raises the interesting problem of our difficulty in defining lies, especially when we consider theology as a view with a higher and more profound standard of truth than mere mortal philosophy. More dangerously, he speculates "A mixture of a lie doth ever add pleasure" (1259). When moving into ordinary language of "civil business" (see the preface regarding his career!), he turns openly censorious of lies, even though such a world is obviously full of them.
- In Francis Bacon's "Of Truth", why did Bacon say that truth may come to the price of a pearl instead of a diamond?
- Bacon's essay *Of Truth* occupies the first or foremost place in the collection. Also that this essay opens and concludes with the allusion to our Savior, who was the Way, the Truth, and the Life.
- Bacon points out, how the judgment is prejudiced by the feelings or affections, and how the mind is deprived of free judgment by the inclinations of the heart.
- This equally applies to the nature of all human beliefs that are allied by custom with consent and sentiment —and perhaps most of all to the opposers of the Bacon authorship of the plays. They, like Pilate, "*will not stay for an answer,*" or give a "learning patience" to the problem, and in their hearts declare the theory a heresy, a foolish fad, an impossibility.

Notes

- Bacon describes poesy (poetry) in respect of matter, (and not words), as, "one of the principal portions of learning, and is nothing else but *feigned history* , which may be styled as well in prose as verse" —*Advancement* , p.90. So in the play of *As You Like It* , "The truest poetry is the most feigning."

5.3 Key-Words

1. Vinum daemonum : Wine of the devils

5.4 Review Questions

1. Do you see the apology for poetical fiction in the passage of Truth? Discuss.
2. Critically explain Bacon as essay Of Truth

Answers: Self-Assessment

1. (*i*) (*c*) (*ii*) (*b*) (*iii*) (*c*) (*iv*) (*c*)

5.5 Further Readings

1. Rai Vikramadity: Bacon Essays, Doaba House.

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Unit 6: Charles Lamb -Dream Children : Detailed Study

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Objectives

After reading this Unit students will be able to:

- Know about the life and works of Charles Lamb
- Discuss Dream Children

Introduction

Charles Lamb was an English essayist, best known for his Essays of Elia and for the children's book Tales from Shakespeare, which he produced with his sister, Mary Lamb. Lamb has been referred to by E.V. Lucas, his principal biographer, as the most lovable figure in English literature. Lamb was honoured by The Latymer School, a grammar school in Edmonton, a suburb of London where he lived for a time; it has six houses, one of which, "Lamb", is named after Charles.

6.1 Biography

Charles Lamb was the youngest child of John Lamb, a lawyer's clerk. He was born in the Inner Temple and spent his youth there, later going away to school at Christ's Hospital. There he formed a friendship with Samuel Taylor Coleridge which would last for many years. After leaving school in 1789, he went to work for the South Sea House, whose subsequent downfall in a pyramid scheme after Lamb left would be contrasted to the company's prosperity in the first Elia essay. In 1792 he went to work for British East India Company, the death of his father's employer having ruined the family's fortunes. Charles and his sister Mary both suffered periods of mental illness, and Charles spent six weeks in an psychiatric hospital during 1795. He was, however, already making his name as a poet.

In 1799, John Lamb died and Charles became guardian to Mary, whose mental instability prevented her from looking after herself. Lamb continued to work as a clerk for the East India Company and doubled as a writer in various genres, his tragedy, John Woodvil, being published in 1802. His farce, Mr H, was performed at Drury Lane in 1807. In the same year, Tales from Shakespeare (Charles handled the tragedies and Mary the comedies) was published, and became a best-seller for William Godwin's "Children's Library".

Notes

Charles, who had never married because of his family commitments, fell in love with an actress, Fanny Kelly, of Covent Garden, but she refused him and he remained until his death a bachelor. His collected essays, under the title, Essays of Elia, were published in 1823 ("Elia" being the pen-name Lamb used as a contributor to The London Magazine). A further collection was published ten years later, shortly before Lamb's death. He died of an infection, erysipelas, contracted from a cut on his face. His sister, who was ten years his senior, survived him. Lamb was honoured by The Latymer School, a grammar school in Edmonton, a suburb of London where he lived for a time; it has six houses, one of which, "Lamb", is named after Charles.

6.2 Youth and Schooling

Lamb was the son of Elizabeth Field and John Lamb. Lamb was the youngest child, with an 11 year older sister Mary, an even older brother John, and 4 other siblings who did not survive their infancy. John Lamb (father), who was a lawyer's clerk, spent most of his professional life as the assistant and servant to a barrister by the name of Samuel Salt who lived in the Inner Temple in London. It was there in the Inner Temple in Crown Office Row, that Charles Lamb was born and spent his youth. Lamb created a portrait of his father in his "Elia on the Old Benchers" under the name Lovel. Lamb's older brother was too much his senior to be a youthful companion to the boy but his sister Mary, being born eleven years before him, was probably his closest playmate. Lamb was also cared for by his paternal aunt Hetty, who seems to have had a particular fondness for him. A number of writings by both Charles and Mary suggest that the conflict between Aunt Hetty and her sister-in-law created a certain degree of tension in the Lamb household. However, Charles speaks fondly of her and her presence in the house seems to have brought a great deal of comfort to him.

Some of Lamb's fondest childhood memories were of time spent with Mrs. Field, his maternal grandmother, who was for many years a servant to the Plummer family, who owned a large country house called Blakesware, near Widford, Hertfordshire. After the death of Mrs. Plummer, Lamb's grandmother was in sole charge of the large home and, as Mr. Plummer was often absent, Charles had free rein of the place during his visits. A picture of these visits can be glimpsed in the Elia essay Blakesmoor in H—shire.

"Why, every plank and panel of that house for me had magic in it. The tapestried [sic] bed-rooms – tapestry so much better than painting – not adorning merely, but peopling the wainscots – at which childhood ever and anon would steal a look, shifting its coverlid (replaced as quickly) to exercise its tender courage in a momentary eye-encounter with those stern bright visages, staring reciprocally – all Ovid on the walls, in colours vivider than his descriptions."

Little is known about Charles's life before the age of seven. We know that Mary taught him to read at a very early age and he read voraciously. It is believed that he suffered from smallpox during his early years which forced him into a long period of convalescence. After this period of recovery Lamb began to take lessons from Mrs. Reynolds, a woman who lived in the Temple and is believed to have been the former wife of a lawyer. Mrs. Reynolds must have been a sympathetic schoolmistress because Lamb maintained a relationship with her throughout his life and she is known to have attended dinner parties held by Mary and Charles in the 1820s. E.V. Lucas suggests that sometime in 1781 Charles left Mrs. Reynolds and began to study at the Academy of William Bird.

His time with William Bird did not last long, however, because by October 1782 Lamb was enrolled in Christ's Hospital, a charity boarding school chartered by King Edward VI in 1552. Christ's Hospital was a traditional English boarding school; bleak and full of violence. The headmaster, Mr. Boyer, has become famous for his teaching in Latin and Greek, but also for his brutality. A thorough record of Christ's Hospital in Several essays by Lamb as well as the Autobiography of Leigh Hunt and the Biographia Literaria of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, with whom Charles developed

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a friendship that would last for their entire lives. Despite the brutality Lamb got along well at Christ's Hospital, due in part, perhaps, to the fact that his home was not far distant thus enabling him, unlike many other boys, to return often to the safety of home. Years later, in his essay "Christ's Hospital Five and Thirty Years Ago," Lamb described these events, speaking of himself in the third person as "L."

"I remember L. at school; and can well recollect that he had some peculiar advantages, which I and other of his ***schoolfellows had not. His friends lived in town, and were near at hand; and he had the privilege of going to see them, almost as often as he wished, through some invidious distinction, which was denied to us."***

Christ's Hospital was a typical English boarding school and many students later wrote of the terrible violence they suffered there. The upper master of the school from 1778 to 1799 was Reverend James Boyer, a man renowned for his unpredictable and capricious temper. In one famous story Boyer was said to have knocked one of Lee Hunt's teeth out by throwing a copy of Homer at him from across the room. Lamb seemed to have escaped much of this brutality, in part because of his amiable personality and in part because Samuel Salt, his father's employer and Lamb's sponsor at the school was one of the institute's Governors.

Charles Lamb suffered from a stutter and this "an inconquerable impediment" in his speech deprived him of Grecian status at Christ's Hospital and thus disqualifying him for a clerical career. While Coleridge and other scholarly boys were able to go on to Cambridge, Lamb left school at fourteen and was forced to find a more prosaic career. For a short time he worked in the office of Joseph Paice, a London merchant and then, for 23 weeks, until 8 February 1792, held a small post in the Examiner's Office of the South Sea House. Its subsequent downfall in a pyramid scheme after Lamb left would be contrasted to the company's prosperity in the first Elia essay. On 5 April 1792 he went to work in the Accountant's Office for British East India Company, the death of his father's employer having ruined the family's fortunes.Charles would continue to work there for 25 years, until his retirement with pension.


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LAMB is the heir of the eighteenth-century essayists, but with a richer imagination and a more delicate sensibility. He is an essayist rather than a story-teller,—an essayist of an intense individuality. But he could dream dreams as the other poets have done; and here is one of them, contained in the "Essays of Elia," published in 1822.

In 1792 while tending to his grandmother, Mary Field, in Hertfordshire, Charles Lamb fell in love with a young woman named Ann Simmons. Although no epistolary record exists of the relationship between the two, Lamb seems to have spent years wooing Miss Simmons. The record of the love exists in several accounts of Lamb's writing. Rosamund Gray is a story of a young man named Allen Clare who loves Rosamund Gray but their relationship comes to nothing because of the sudden death of Miss Gray. Miss Simmons also appears in several Elia essays under the name "Alice M." The essays "Dream Children," "New Year's Eve," and several others, speak of the many years that Lamb spent pursuing his love that ultimately failed. Miss Simmons eventually went on to marry a silversmith by the name of Bartram and Lamb called the failure of the affair his 'great disappointment.'

Family tragedy Charles and his sister Mary both suffered periods of mental illness. Charles spent six weeks in a psychiatric hospital during 1795. He was, however, already making his name as a poet.

On 22 September 1796, a terrible event occurred: Mary, "worn down to a state of extreme nervous misery by attention to needlework by day and to her mother at night," was seized with acute mania and stabbed her mother to the heart with a table knife.

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Although there was no legal status of 'insanity' at the time, a jury returned a verdict of 'Lunacy' and therefore freed her from guilt of willful murder. With the help of friends Lamb succeeded in obtaining his sister's release from what would otherwise have been lifelong imprisonment, on the condition that he take personal responsibility for her safekeeping. Lamb used a large part of his relatively meagre income to keep his beloved sister in a private 'madhouse' in Islington called Fisher House.

The 1799 death of John Lamb was something of a relief to Charles because his father had been mentally incapacitated for a number of years since suffering a stroke. The death of his father also meant that Mary could come to live again with him in Pentonville, and in 1800 they set up a shared home at Mitre Court Buildings in the Temple, where they lived until 1809.

Despite Lamb's bouts of melancholia and alcoholism, both he and his sister enjoyed an active and rich social life. Their London quarters became a kind of weekly salon for many of the most outstanding theatrical and literary figures of the day. Charles Lamb, having been to school with Samuel Coleridge, counted Coleridge as perhaps his closest, and certainly his oldest, friend. On his deathbed, Coleridge had a mourning ring sent to Lamb and his sister. Fortuitously, Lamb's first publication was in 1796, when four sonnets by "Mr. Charles Lamb of the India House" appeared in Coleridge's Poems on Various Subjects. In 1797 he contributed additional blank verse to the second edition, and met the Wordsworths, William and Dorothy, on his short summer holiday with Coleridge at Nether Stowey, thereby also striking up a lifelong friendship with William. In London, Lamb became familiar with a group of young writers who favoured political reform, including Percy Bysshe Shelley, William Hazlitt, and Leigh Hunt.

Lamb continued to clerk for the East India Company and doubled as a writer in various genres, his tragedy, John Woodvil, being published in 1802. His farce, Mr H, was performed at Drury Lane in 1807, where it was roundly booed. In the same year, Tales from Shakespeare (Charles handled the tragedies; his sister Mary, the comedies) was published, and became a best seller for William Godwin's "Children's Library."

In 1819, at age 44, Lamb, who, because of family commitments, had never married, fell in love with an actress, Fanny Kelly, of Covent Garden, and proposed marriage. She refused him, and he died a bachelor. His collected essays, under the title Essays of Elia, were published in 1823 ("Elia" being the pen name Lamb used as a contributor to the London Magazine). A further collection was published ten years or so later, shortly before Lamb's death. He died of a streptococcal infection, erysipelas, contracted from a minor graze on his face sustained after slipping in the street, on 27 December 1834, just a few months after Coleridge. He was 59. From 1833 till their deaths Charles and Mary lived at Bay Cottage, Church Street, Edmonton north of London (now part of the London Borough of Enfield. Lamb is buried in All Saints' Churchyard, Edmonton. His sister, who was ten years his senior, survived him for more than a dozen years. She is buried beside him. Work Lamb's first publication was the inclusion of four sonnets in the Coleridge's Poems on Various Subjects published in 1796 by Joseph Cottle. The sonnets were significantly influenced by the poems of Burns and the sonnets of William Bowles, a largely forgotten poet of the late 18th century. His poems garnered little attention and are seldom read today. Lamb's contributions to the second edition of the Poems showed significant growth as a poet. These poems included The Tomb of Douglas and A Vision of Repentance. Because of a temporary fall-out with Coleridge, Lamb's poems were to be excluded in the third edition of the Poems. As it turned out, a third edition never emerged and instead Coleridge's next publication was the monumentally influential Lyrical Ballads co-published with Wordsworth. Lamb, on the other hand, published a book entitled Blank Verse with Charles Lloyd, the mentally unstable son of the founder of Lloyd's Bank. Lamb's most famous poem was written at this time entitled The Old Familiar Faces. Like most of Lamb's poems it is particularly sentimental but it is still remembered and widely read, often included in Poetic Collections. Of particular interest to Lambarians is the opening verse of the original version

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of The Old Familiar Faces which is concerned with Lamb's mother. It was a verse that Lamb chose to remove from the edition of his Collected Work published in 1818.

I had a mother, but she died, and left me, Died prematurely in a day of horrors - All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

From a fairly young age Lamb desired to be a poet but never gained the success that he had hoped. Lamb lived under the poetic shadow of his friend Coleridge. In the final years of the 18th century Lamb began to work on prose with the novella entitled Rosamund Gray, a story of a young girl who was thought to be inspired by Ann Simmonds, with whom Charles Lamb was thought to be in love. Although the story is not particularly successful as a narrative because of Lamb's poor sense of plot, it was well thought of by Lamb's contemporaries and led Shelley to observe "what a lovely thing is Rosamund Gray! How much knowledge of the sweetest part of our nature in it!"

In the first years of the 19th century Lamb began his fruitful literary cooperation with his sister Mary. Together they wrote at least three books for William Godwin's Juvenile Library. The most successful of these was of course Tales From Shakespeare which ran through two editions for Godwin and has now been published dozens of times in countless editions, many of them illustrated. Lamb also contributed a footnote to Shakespearean studies at this time with his essay "On the Tragedies of Shakespeare," in which he argues that Shakespeare should be read rather than performed in order to gain the proper effect of his dramatic genius. Beside contributing to Shakespeare studies with his book Tales From Shakespeare, Lamb also contributed to the popularization of Shakespeare's contemporaries with his book Specimens of the English Dramatic Poets Who Lived About the Time of Shakespeare.

Although he did not write his first Elia essay until 1820, Lamb's gradual perfection of the essay form for which he eventually became famous began as early 1802 in a series of open letters to Leigh Hunt's Reflector. The most famous of these is called "The Londoner" in which Lamb famously derides the contemporary fascination with nature and the countryside

6.3 Dream Children

Children love to listen to stories about their elders, when they were children; to stretch their imagination to the conception of a traditionary great-uncle, or grandame, whom they never saw. It was in this spirit that my little ones crept about, me the other evening to hear about their great-grandmother Field, who lived in a great house in Norfolk (a hundred times bigger than that in which they and papa lived) which had been the scene — so at least it was generally believed in that part of the country — of the tragic incidents which they had lately become familiar with from the ballad of the Children in the Wood. Certain it is that the whole story of the children and their cruel uncle was to be seen fairly carved out in wood upon the chimney-piece of the great hall, the whole story down to the Robin Redbreasts, till a foolish rich Person pulled it down to set up a marble one of modern invention in its stead, with no story upon it. Here Alice put out one of her dear mother's looks, too tender to be called upbraiding. Then I went on to say, how religious and how good their great. grandmother Field was, how beloved and respected by every body, though she was not indeed the mistress of this great house, but had only the charge of it (and yet in some respects she might be said to be the mistress of it too) committed to her by the owner, who preferred living in a newer and more fashionable mansion which he had purchased somewhere in the adjoining county; but still she lived in it in a manner as if it had been her own, and kept up the dignity of the great house in a sort while she lived, which afterwards came to decay, and was nearly pulled down, and all its old ornaments stripped and carried away to the owner's other

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house, where they were set up, and looked as awkward as if some one were to carry away the old tombs they had seen lately at the Abbey, and stick them up in Lady C.'s tawdry gilt drawing-room. Here John smiled, as much as to say, "that would be foolish indeed." And then I told how,

This is hardly a story at all; it is so slight in substance and in texture; it is a revery only. Yet it has its movement and its climax; it makes only a single impression; and thus it is seen to have certain of the essential qualities of the true short-story.

when she came to die, her funeral was attended by a concourse of all the poor, and some of the gentry too, of the neighbourhood for many miles round, to show their respect for her memory, because she had been such a good and religious woman; so good indeed that she knew all the Psaltery by heart, ay, and a great part of the Testament besides. Here little Alice spread her hands. Then I told what a tall, upright, graceful person their great-grandmother Field once was; and how in her youth she was esteemed the best dancer — here Alice's little right foot played an involuntary movement, till, upon my looking grave, it desisted — the best dancer, I was saying, in the county, till a cruel disease, called a cancer, came, and bowed her down with pain; but it could never bend her good spirits, or make them stoop, but they were still upright, because she was so good and religious. Then I told how she was used to sleep by herself in a lone chamber of the great lone house; and how she believed that an apparition of two infants was to be seen at midnight gliding up and down the great staircase near where she slept, but she said "those innocents would do her no harm;" and how frightened I used to be, though in those days I had my maid to sleep with me, because I was never half so good or religious as she — and yet I never saw the infants. Here John expanded all his eye-brows and tried to look courageous. Then I told how good she was to all her grand-children, having us to the great-house in the holydays, where I in particular used to spend many hours by myself, in gazing upon the old busts of the Twelve Caesars, that had been Emperors of Rome, till the old marble heads would seem to live again, or I to be turned into marble with them; how I never could be tired with roaming about that huge mansion, with its vast empty rooms, with their worn-out hangings, fluttering tapestry, and carved oaken pannels, with the gilding almost rubbed out — sometimes in the spacious old-fashioned gardens, which I had almost to myself, unless when now and then a solitary gardening man would cross me — and how the nectarines and peaches hung upon the walls, without my ever offering to pluck them, because they were forbidden fruit, unless now and then, — and because I had more pleasure in strolling about among the old melancholy-looking yew trees, or the firs, and picking up the red berries, and the fir apples, which were good for nothing but to look at — or in lying a out upon the fresh grass, with all the fine garden smells around me — or basking in the orangery, till I could almost fancy myself ripening too along with the oranges and the limes in that grateful warmth — or in watching the dace that darted to and fro in the fish-pond, at the bottom of the garden, with here and there a great sulky pike hanging midway down the water in silent state, as if it mocked at their impertinent friskings, — I had more pleasure in these busy-idle diversions than in all the sweet flavours of peaches, nectarines, oranges, and such like common baits of children. Here John slyly deposited back upon the plate a bunch of grapes, which, not unobserved by Alice, he had meditated dividing with her, and both seemed willing to relinquish them for the present as irrelevant. Then in somewhat a more heightened tone, I told how, though their great-grandmother Field loved all her grand-children, yet in an especial manner she might be said to love their uncle, John L—, because he was so handsome and spirited a youth, and a king to the rest of us; and,

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instead of moping about in solitary corners, like some of us, he would mount the most mettlesome horse he could get, when but an imp no bigger than themselves, and make it carry him half over the county in a morning, and join the hunters when there were any out — and yet he loved the old great house and gardens too, but had too much spirit to be always pent up within their boundaries — and how their uncle grew up to man's estate as brave as he was handsome, to the admiration of every body, but of their great-grandmother Field most especially; and how he used to carry me upon his back when I was a lame- footed boy — for he was a good bit older than me — many a mile when I could not walk pain; — and how in after life he became lame-footed too, and I did not always (I fear) make allowances enough for him when he was impatient, and in pain, nor remember sufficiently how considerate he had been to me when I was lame- footed; and how when he died, though he had not been dead an hour, it seemed as if he had died a great while ago, such a distance there is betwixt life and death; and how I bore his death as I thought pretty well at first, but afterwards it haunted and haunted me; and though I did not cry or take it to heart as some do, and as I think he would have done if I had died, yet I missed him all day long, and knew not till then how much I had loved him. I missed his kindness, and I missed his crossness, and wished him to be alive again, to be quarrelling with him (for we quarreled sometimes), rather than not have him again, and was as uneasy without him, as he their poor uncle must have been when the doctor took off his limb. Here the children fell a crying, and asked if their little mourning which they had on was not for uncle John, and they looked up, and prayed me not to go on about their uncle, but to tell them, some stories about their pretty dead mother. Then I told how for seven long years, in hope sometimes, sometimes in despair, yet persisting ever, I courted the fair Alice W— n; and, as much as children could understand, I explained to them what coyness, and difficulty, and denial meant in maidens — when suddenly, turning to Alice, the soul of the first Alice looked out at her eyes with such a reality of re-presentment, that I became in doubt which of them stood there before me, or whose that bright hair was; and while I stood gazing, both the children gradually grew fainter to my view, receding, and still receding till nothing at last but two mournful features were seen in the uttermost distance, which, without speech, strangely impressed upon me the effects of speech; "We are not of Alice, nor of thee, nor are we children at all. The children of Alice called Bartrum father. We are nothing; less than nothing, and dreams. We are only what might have been, and must wait upon the tedious shores of Lethe millions of ages before we have existence, and a name" — and immediately awaking, I found myself quietly seated in my bachelor arm-chair, where I had fallen asleep, with the faithful Bridget unchanged by my side — but John L. (or James Elia) was gone for ever.

Self-Assessment

1. Choose the correct options:

(*i*) Charles spent six weeks in an psychiatric hospital during

(*a*) 1795 (*b*) 1790 (*c*) 1798 (*d*) 1790

(*ii*) Charles collected essays-under the title, Essays of Elia, were published in

(*a*) 1825 (*b*) 1824 (*c*) 1822-1823 (*d*) 1829

(*iii*) Lamb's beloved sister kept in a private mad house in Islington called

(*a*) Prison (*b*) Mad House

(*c*) Fisher House (*d*) Safe House

(*iv*) Grandmother Field was tall and upright but later she bowed down by a disease called

(*a*) Tuberculosis (*b*) Fever

(*c*) Cancer (*d*) None of these

Notes

6.4 Summary

- The children of James Elia, John and Alice, asked him to tell them about his grandmother- their great grandmother- Mrs. Field who used to live in a great mansion in Norfolk. The house belonged to a rich nobleman who lived in another new house. Grandmother Field was the keeper of the house and she looked after the house with great care as though it was her own. The tragic incident of the two children and their cruel uncle had taken place in the house. The children had come to know the story from the ballad of 'The Children in the wood'. The story was carved in wood upon the chimney piece. But a foolish rich person later pulled down the wooden chimney and put a chimney of marble. The new chimney piece had no story on it. Alice was very unhappy that the rich man had pulled down the chimney piece with the story. She looked upbraiding and her anger was like her mother's.
- When the house came to decay later, after the death of Mrs. Field the nobleman carried away the ornaments of the house and used them in his new house. The ornaments of the old house looked very awkward in the new house, just like the beautiful tombs of Westminster Abbey would look awkward if placed in someone's drawing room. Things looked beautiful only if they are in harmony with the surroundings. John enjoyed the comparison and smiled as if he also felt it would be very awkward indeed. Grandmother Field was a very good lady. She was also very religious for she was well acquainted with 'The Book of Psalms' in 'The Old Testament' and a great portion of 'The New Testament' of 'The Bible'. Alice here spread her hands as if she was not interested in the praise of a quality of the grandmother that she herself did not have. Children find it difficult to learn lessons by heart.
- Grandmother Field did not fear the spirits of the two infants which haunted the house at night. So she slept alone. But Elia used to sleep with his maid as he was not so religious. John tried to look courageous but his eyes expanded in fear. When the grandmother died many people in the neighbourhood including the gentry or the aristocrats attended her funeral. She was also a good dancer when she was young. Here, Alice moved her feet unconsciously as she too was interested in dancing. Grandmother Field was tall and upright but later she was bowed down by a disease called cancer. She was good to her grand children. Elia in childhood used to spend his holiday there. He used to gaze upon the bust of the twelve Caesars or roam about in the mansion or in the garden. In the garden, there were fruits like nectarines, peaches, oranges and others. Elia never plucked them but rather enjoyed looking at them. Here John deposited a bunch of grapes upon the plate again. He was showing that he too was not tempted by fruits.
- His farce, Mr H, was performed at Drury Lane in 1807.
- Fortuitously, Lamb's first publication was in 1796.
- His collected essays, under the title Essays of Elia, were published in 1823.
- The most famous of these is called "The Londoner" in which Lamb famously derides the contemporary fascination with nature and the countryside.

6.5 Key-Words

1. Friskings : It is a search of a person's outer clothing wherein a person runs his or hands along the outer garments to detect any concealed weapons.
2. Melancholy looking : Sad or depressed

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6.6 Review Questions

1. Discuss Charles Lamb as an essayist.
2. Why is the essay entitled as 'Dream Children'
3. Discuss the role of Grandmother Field. How does Lamb Present her before his Dream Children?
4. What type of the essay is Dream Children? Discuss.

Answers: Self-Assessment

1. (*i*) (*a*) (*ii*) (*c*) (*iii*) (*c*) (*iv*) (*a*)

6.7 Further Readings

1. Life of Charles Lamb, E.V. Lucas, G.P. Putman and Sons, London, 1905.
2. Young Charles Lamb, by Winifred Courtney, New York University Press, 1982.
3. Essays by Charles Lamb.

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Unit 7: Charles Lamb-Dream Children: Critical Analysis

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Objectives

After reading this Unit students will be able to:

- Know major works of Charles Lamb
- Analyse Lamb's Dream Children

Introduction

A well-known literary figure in nineteenth-century England, Lamb is chiefly remembered for his "Elia" essays, works celebrated for their witty and ironic treatment of everyday subjects. Through the persona of "Elia," Lamb developed a highly personal narrative technique to achieve what many critics regard as the epitome of the familiar essay style. Extremely popular in Lamb's day, the "Elia" essays first appeared in the *London Magazine* between 1820 and 1825, but were later collected into two volumes. These nostalgic works have appealed to readers throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, particularly because of their gradual revelation of Lamb's literary alter ego and his humorous idiosyncrasies. Lamb's other writings include criticism of William Shakespeare's dramas and the virtual rediscovery of a number of neglected Elizabethan and Jacobean playwrights in the early nineteenth century. A dramatist and a skilled poet, Lamb was also a noted children's author, frequently in collaboration with his sister, Mary. Lamb's essays are thought to demonstrate a characteristically Romantic imagination akin to that of the poets Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William Wordsworth, Lamb's contemporaries and friends. Overall, Lamb is highly regarded as an essayist, an original and perceptive critic, and a noteworthy correspondent with the renowned literati of early nineteenth-century England.

7.1 Charles Major Works

Although he began his literary career as a sonneteer, Lamb quickly discovered that his talent and inclination lay in prose, not verse. His first fictional work, a short novel entitled *A Tale of Rosamund Gray and Old Blind Margaret,* displays the influence of eighteenth-century sentimental writers Henry Mackenzie and Laurence Sterne. Lamb's next literary composition, *John Woodvil* (1802), set

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shortly after England's monarchical Restoration in 1660, owes a debt to Elizabethan tragedy and features a commentary on the politics of Lamb's day via historical analogy. Lamb's collaborative works with his sister, Mary, all fall into the category of juvenile literature and include *Mrs. Leicester's School* (1807), a collection of children's stories and poems, *Tales from Shakespear* (1807), simplified renderings in prose of William Shakespeare's most famous plays, and *Poetry for Children* (1809). Lamb also adapted Homer's epic poem *The Odyssey* for younger readers in *The Adventures of Ulysses* (1808). Among Lamb's critical writings, his anthology *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets, Who Lived about the Time of Shakespeare* includes selections from the plays of such Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatists as Christopher Marlowe, John Webster, George Chapman, and Thomas Middleton. Since many of these works were previously unobtainable to early nineteenth-century readers, Lamb's compilation was an important reference source and is supplemented with explanatory notes now considered among Lamb's most significant critical work. In a related essay, "On the Tragedies of Shakespeare Considered with Reference to Their Fitness for Stage Presentation," Lamb argued that the best qualities of Shakespeare's drama can be fully appreciated only through reading: according to Lamb, stage performances often diminish the play's meanings, and individual performers often misinterpret Shakespeare's intended characterizations. Lamb's most prominent works were his last: the collections *Elia: Essays Which Have Appeared under That Signature in the "London Magazine"* and *The Last Essays of Elia* were published in 1823 and 1833, respectively. Featuring sketches in the familiar essay form—a style popularized by Michel de Montaigne, Robert Burton, and Sir Thomas Browne—the "Elia" essays are characterized by Lamb's personal tone, narrative ease, and wealth of literary allusions. Never didactic, the essays treat ordinary subjects in a nostalgic, fanciful way by combining humor, pathos, and a sophisticated irony ranging from gentle to scathing. Among the essays, "Christ's Hospital Five and Thirty Years Ago" features a schoolboy reminiscence of Coleridge, while "Confessions of a Drunkard" treats with ambivalence a theme that punctuated Lamb's own life. Counted among his most significant writings, Lamb's discerning and lively correspondence is collected in *The Letters of Charles Lamb* (1935).

7.2 Critical Analysis

This essay is about a dream. In this essay all characters are real except the children Alice and John. from the title we can guess that its a dream and reverie also means a day dream. Alice and John are children of James Elia (Charles Lamb). they ask their father, James Elia, to tell them about their grandmother. Grandmother's name is field who has been acquainted to us by Lamb as perfect women with great qualities, incidents are real from life of Lamb. There is a story related to the house where grandmother field was a keeper. It was about the murder of children by their cruel uncle. Alice and John came to know this story through a carved writing on a tree which was later brought down by a rich man. After the death of grandmother, house owner took away his belongings and place them in his new house where they look awkward. When grandmother was alive she use to sleep alone but Elia was afraid of the souls of infants murdered by uncle as it was thought that house is haunted by the spirits of those children. Elia has a brother John full of enthusiasm and zeal, who was loved by everyone specially by her grandmother. on the other hand Elia's childhood was full of isolation and he remained stagnant though out his life. his mind was working fast but bodily or pysically he was totally off and lazy. He was lame and helped by John in every possible way who used to carry him in his back. Unfortunately, John also become Lame but Elia never helped him and after his death he realized or missing him. at the end of the essay, alice and John are crying after hearing all this. Elia is looking his wife, whose name also Alia, in alice face. the childern started to become faint and say to elia or lamb that we are not your real children and Alice is not your wife and our mother. Lamb wakes up finds himself in armed chair and James Elia was vanished. the whole story is based on life of Lamb, he was never able to married and childless

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died. he is also regretting and remembering moments like, about his brother, about grandmother, his childhood etc. So, whole of essay is full of melancholy and sad tone of Lamb's life. (one should better study about Lamb's short biography in order to understand his essays)

A Stylistic Analysis on Lamb's *Dream Children*

Charles Lamb was a famous English prose-writer and the best representative of the new form of English literature early in the nineteenth century. He did not adhere to the old rules and classic models but made the informal essay a pliable vehicle for expressing the writer's own personality, thus bringing into English literature the personal or familiar essay.

The style of Lamb is gentle, old-fashioned and irresistibly attractive, for which I can think of no better illustration than *Dream Children: A Reverie*. From the stylistic analysis of this essay can we find Lamb's characteristic way of expression.

Dream Children records the pathetic joys in the author's unfortunate domestic life. We can see in this essay, primarily, a supreme expression of the increasing loneliness of his life. He constructed all that preliminary tableau of paternal pleasure in order to bring home to us in the most poignant way his feeling of the solitude of his existence, his sense of all that he had missed and lost in the world. The key of the essay is one of profound sadness. But he makes his sadness beautiful; or, rather, he shows the beauty that resides in sadness. There are remarkable writing techniques to achieve such an effect.

7.3. Lexical Features

7.3.1 Old-fashioned but Elegant Diction

Lamb prefers to use archaic words in order to reach a certain distance between the author's real life and his whimsies, such as:

1. And how in her youth she was ***esteemed*** the best dancer (*esteemed* here means *admired, respected*)
2. Here Alice's little right foot played an involuntary movement, till, upon my looking grave, it ***desisted*** *desisted* here means *stopped doing*
3. And how the nectarines and peaches hung upon the walls, without my ever offering to ***pluck*** them (*pluck*, also a poetic word, here means *pick*)
4. He had ***meditated*** dividing with her, and both seemed willing to ***relinquish*** them for the present as irrelevant (*meditated* here means *thought*, and *relinquish* means *give up*)

7.3.2 Repetition of the Word *here*

When regarding for beautiful things and fine actions, Lamb does not forget to show to readers pictures of the children—real children until the moment when they fade away. He repeats the word *here* altogether eight times, to portray the children's response. For example:

1. ***Here*** Alice put out one of her dear mother's looks
2. ***Here*** John smiled, as much as to say, "that would be foolish indeed."

With this repeating word, we can see these children almost as clearly and as tenderly as Lamb saw them. If we take the essay's main purpose into account, we will find the more real they seem, the more touching is the revelation of the fact that they do not exist, and never have existed.

7.4 Sentence Features

7.4.1 Loose Structure and Post-Modification

Generally speaking, the tone of this essay is relaxed and comfortable, which can be attributed to Lamb's use of loose structure and post-modification. Let's study the sentence below:

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1. Children love to listen to stories about their elders, when they were children; to stretch their imagination to the conception of a traditionary great-uncle, or grandame, whom they never saw.

If applied to daily communication, the former part of this sentence seems somewhat prolix. However, here it gives us a sense of comfort and enjoyment, for in the essay it causes our sympathy with the author of the fondness of innocent children. Therefore, we do not feel weary.

7.4.2 Cohesion

Sentences in *Dream Children* are long, sometimes containing more than eighty words in one. The author makes them cohesive with the help of coordination, conjunctions, as well as some adverbs. For instance:

1. ***Then*** I went on to say, ***how*** religious and ***how*** good their great-grandmother Field was, ***how*** beloved and respected by everybody (Adverb *then* and the coordination *how…how…how…* here function as cohesive devices.)
2. But still she lived in it in a manner as if it had been her own, ***and*** kept up the dignity of the great house in a sort while she lived, which afterwards came to decay, ***and*** was nearly pulled down, ***and*** all its old ornaments stripped and carried away to the owner's other house, where they were set up, ***and*** looked as awkward as if some one were to carry away the old tombs they had seen lately at the Abbey, ***and*** stick them up in Lady C.'s tawdry gilt drawing-room. (Conjunction *and* here functions as a cohesive device.)

7.5 Article Features

7.5.1 Narration Enlivened by Depiction of the Children.

As is illustrated in sentence (5) and (6), the author's narration of the great-grandmother and his brother is enlivened by a certain depiction concerning the children. Incidentally, while preparing his ultimate solemn effect, Lamb has inspired us with a new, intensified vision of the wistful beauty of children—their imitativeness, their facile and generous emotions, their anxiety to be correct, their ingenuous haste to escape from grief into joy. This vision gives us an impression that they seem real, thus makes the revelation in the end touching and pathetic.

7.5.2 Unexpected Ending

Dream Children begins quite simply, in a calm, narrative manner, representing Lamb as sitting by his fireside on a winter night telling stories to his own dear children, and delighting in their society, until he suddenly comes to his old, solitary, bachelor self, and finds that they were but dream-children. In the end of the essay, we read:

That I became in doubt which of them stood there before me, or whose that bright hair was; and while I stood gazing, both the children gradually grew fainter to my view, receding, and still receding till nothing at last but two mournful features were seen in the uttermost distance, which, without speech, strangely impressed upon me the effects of speech; "We are not of Alice, nor of thee, nor are we children at all. The children of Alice called Bartrum father. We are nothing, less than nothing, and dreams. We are only what might have been, and must wait upon the tedious shores of Lethe millions of ages before we have existence, and a name."

Reflecting upon the essay, we will surely be obsessed by the beauty of old houses and gardens and aged virtuous characters, the beauty of children, the beauty of companionships, the softening beauty of dreams in an arm-chair—all these are brought together and mingled with the grief and regret which were the origin of the mood.

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Rhetorical Devices

Lamb introduces some rhetorical devices to make his essay vivid and profound, such as:

And how the nectarines and peaches hung upon the walls, without my ever offering to pluck them, because they were ***forbidden fruit***, unless now and then (metaphor)

Till I could almost fancy myself ripening too along with the oranges and the limes in that ***grateful*** warmth (empathy)

The nature of things mostly appeared to Charles Lamb in this way. Lamb does not frolic out of lightness of heart, but to escape from gloom that might otherwise crush. He laughed to save himself from weeping. In fact, Lamb's personal life was of disappointments and frustrations. But instead of complaining, he looked at the tragedies of life, its miseries and worries as a humorist. Thus his essays become an admixture of humour and pathos. Examples of his keen sense of humour and pathetic touches are scattered in all of his essays. Let's focus our discussion on Dream Children: A Reverie.

Characters

The young couple in the ancient Dutch farming village (in New England) who are the major living characters in "Dream Children" are the McNairs. The outward placidity that the pleasant and personable Mrs. McNair displays in her daily goings about among the villagers gives the impression that nothing bad or disturbing has taken place in her life. Yet the reckless manner in which she rides her stallion through the fields causes wonderment among some of the locals, such as Mrs. DePuy and her husband, who own the old Patroon farm near the McNairs' land.

Dream Children: Themes

Expressed as a directive, a major theme of this story is "Measure a person by his or her sense of loss." The young wife whose infant was stillborn is utterly transformed by the tragedy, going off on a new life course which is largely regulated by her ongoing need to penetrate by whatever means the unbreachable time-space wall of human existence and, in defiance of all logic, reason, and conventional wisdom, to be reunited with her lost baby son. Her husband, clearly not needing replacement therapy comparable with hers, reconstructs his life in the most convenient and thoughtful fashion...

Godwin's "Dream Children" examines themes of marriage, self-definition, and loss.

1. Taking into account its subject matter and Godwin's handling of the narrative structure, were you particularly affected emotionally by "Dream Children"? If so, explain.
2. Was the ending of the story, with its rhetorical question about Mrs. McNair's happiness, effective in "wrapping up" the story of her life? Comment either way, or both ways.
3. What in your opinion is the purpose of all the italicized passages throughout the story? Who is saying or thinking those things? How do...

Self-Assessment

1. Choose the correct options:

(*i*) The Adventures of Ulysses was published in

(*a*) 1808 (*b*) 1809 (*c*) 1810 (*d*) 1812

(*ii*) The last essays of Elia were published in

(*a*) 1823 and 1833 (*b*) 1820 and 1830

(*c*) 1815 and 1820 (*d*) 1813 and 1823

(*iii*) 'Elia' essays first appeared in the

(*a*) Dream Children (*b*) London Magazine

(*c*) Children Stories (*d*) None of these

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(*iv*) The style of Lamb is

(*a*) Gentle (*b*) Old-fashioned

(*c*) both (*a*) and (*b*) (*d*) None of these

7.6 Summary

- In Lamb's writing wit, humour and fun are interwoven and it is humour which is most notable for its extreme sensitiveness to the true proportion of things. Lamb often brings out the two sides of a fact and causes laughter at our own previous misconceptions. Therefore it borders on the painful realization. Thus his humour is very nearly allied to pathos. They are different facts of the same gem.
- In his essay Dream Children: A Reverie Lamb talks of personal sorrows and joys. He gives expressions to his unfulfilled longings and desires. He readily enters into the world of fantasy and pops up stories in front of his dream children. He relates his childhood days, of Mrs. Field, his grandmother and John Lamb, his brother. He describes how fun he had at the great house and orchard in Norfolk. Of his relations he gives us full and living pictures – his brother John is James Elia of My Relations, but here is John L-, so handsome and spirited youth, and a 'king'. John was brave, handsome and won admiration from everybody Charles' grandmother Mrs. Field is the other living picture. She was a good natured and religions – minded lady of respectable personality. Narrator's sweet heart Alice Winterton is the other shadowed reality. The Dream Children, Alice and John are mere bubbles of fancy. Thus Lamb's nostalgic memory transports us back to those good old days of great grandmother Field. But even in those romantic nostalgia the hard realities of life does not miss our eyes. Death, separation and suffering inject us deep-rooted pathos in our heart. Whereas Mrs. Field died of cancer, John Lamb died in early age. Ann Simmons has been a tale of unrequited love story of Charles Lamb. Notably the children are millions of ages distant of oblivion and Charles is not a married man but a bachelor having a reverie.
- In his actual life Lamb courted Ann Simmons but could not marry her, he wanted to have children but could not have any. Thus he strikes a very pathetic note towards the end of his essay when he puts the following word into the months of his imaginary children, "we are not of Alice, nor of thee, nor are we children at all … We are nothing, less than nothing, dreams. We are only what might have been". Alice is here no other that Ann Simmons the girl Lamb wanted to marry, but failed to marry her. In fact, the subtitle of the essay – 'A Reverie' which literally means a daydream or a fantasy – prepares us for the pathos of the return to reality although the essay begins on a deceptively realistic note.
- Although Dream Children begins on a merry note, the dark side of life soon forces itself upon Lamb's attention and the comic attitude gives way to melancholy at the end of the essay. Throughout the essay Lamb presents his children in such a way that we never guess that they are merely figments of his imagination – their movements, their reactions, their expressions are all realistic. It is only at the end of the essay that we realize that the entire episode with his children is a daydream. We are awakening by a painful realization of the facts.
- Lamb's humour was no surface play, but the flower plucked from the nettle of peril and awe. In fact, Lamb's humour and pathos take different shapes in different essays. Sometimes it is due to his own unfulfilled desires, sometimes it is due to the ill-fortunes of his relatives and friends and on some other occasions it is due to his frustration in love etc. If his Poor Relations begin humorously of a male and female poor relation, he later gives us a few pathetic examples of poor relations that had to suffer on account of poverty. Again in his The Praise of Chimney Sweepers Lamb sways between humour and pathos while describing the

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chimney sweepers. Similarly the essay Dream Children is a beautiful projection of Lamb's feelings and desire to have a wife and children of his own. It is humorous that in his dream he is married and has two children of his own while he had a disheartening frustration in love. Thus Lamb has painted both the lights and shades of life in full circle. His is the criticism of life in pathos and humours.

1. Charles Lamb entitled the essay "Dream Children" because he never married and naturally never became the father of any children. The children he speaks of in the essay were actually the creations of his imagination or fancy.
2. Lamb had a sister, Mary Lamb, who did not marry since she had attacks of insanity. She has been referred to here as "faithful Bridget" because she never married and was Lamb's only companion in his life. At the sudden breakdown of his reverie, he finds her seated by his side.
3. Dream Children is a personal essay. Lamb presents the characters and incidents from his own life—the sketches of his grandmother, Field, his brother—John Lamb, his sister—Mary Lamb, his tragic love-affairs with Ann Simmons. But Lamb is always playing with facts and fictions and transforms the real into the literary.

- Through the stylistic approach to *Dream Children*, we can see that Charles Lamb is a romanticist, seeking a free expression of his own personality and weaving romance into daily life. Without a trace of vanity of self-assertion, Lamb begins with himself, with some purely personal mood or experience, and from this he leads the reader to see life and literature as he saw it. It is this wonderful combination of personal and universal interests, together with Lamb's rare old style, which make the essay remarkable.
- *The Last Essays of Elia* were published in 1823 and 1833, respectively.
- Lamb's discerning and lively correspondence is collected in *The Letters of Charles Lamb* (1935).
- *Dream Children* records the pathetic joys in the author's unfortunate domestic life.

7.7 Key-Words

1. Protean : readily taking on various shapes or forms variable, exhibiting considerable variety or diversity.
2. Prismatic effect : relating to, resembling, or constituting a prism

7.8 Review Questions

1. Who was Alice in Dream Children by Charles Lamb?
2. What is the summary of Dream Children a reverie by Charles lamb?
3. What is the theme of Dream Children by Charles lamb?
4. Who was James Elia in Lamb's 'Dream Children'?

Answers: Self-Assessment

1. (*i*) (*a*) (*ii*) (*a*) (*iii*) (*b*) (*iv*) (*c*)

7.9 Further Readings

1. Life of Charles Lamb, E.V. Lucas, G.P. Putman and Sons, London, 1905.
2. Young Charles Lamb, by Winifred Courtney, New York University Press, 1982.
3. Essays by Charles Lamb.

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Unit 8: Charles Lamb-A Bachelors Complaint on the Behaviour of Married : Introduction and Detailed Study

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Objectives

After reading this Unit students will be able to:

- Understand Lamb's Humour, pathos and humanity
- Discuss A Bachelors Complaint on the Behaviour of Married

Introduction

It has well been said that the essay took a wrong turn in the hands of Bacon. For two centuries after Bacon the essay in England went on gravitating towards the original conception held by Montaigne, but it was only in the hands of the romantic essayists of the early nineteenth century that it became wholly personal, light, and lyrical in nature. From then onwards it has seen no essential change. The position of Lamb among these romantic essayists is the most eminent. In fact, he has often been called the prince of all the essayists England has so far produced. Hugh Walker calls him the essayist *par excellence* who should be taken as a model. It is from the essays of Lamb that we often derive our very definition of the essay, and it is with reference to his essays as a criterion of excellence that we evaluate the achievement and merit of a given essayist. Familiarity with Lamb as a man enhances for a reader the charm of his essays. And he is certainly the most *charming* of all English essay. We may not find in him the massive genius of Bacon, or the ethereal flights *(O altitude)* of Thomas Browne, or the brilliant lucidity of Addison, or the ponderous energy of Dr. Johnson, but none excels him in the ability to *charm* the reader or to catch him in the plexus of his own personality.

8.1 Lamb's Self-Revelation

What strikes one particularly about Lamb as an essayist is his persistent readiness to reveal his everything to the reader. The evolution of the essay from Bacon to Lamb lies primarily in its shift from

1. objectivity to subjectivity, and
2. from formality to familiarity.

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Of all the essayists it is perhaps Lamb who is the most autobiographic. His own life is for him "such stuff as essays are made on." He could easily say what Montaigne had said before him-"I myself am the subject of my book." The change from objectivity to subjectivity in the English essay was, by and large, initiated by Abraham Cowley who wrote such essays as the one entitled. "Of Myself." Lamb with other romantic essayists completed this change. Walter Pater observes in *Appreciations;* "With him, as with Montaigne, the desire of self-portraiture is below all mere superficial tendencies, the real motive in 'writing at all, desire closely connected with intimacy, that modern subjectivity which may be called the Montaignesque element in literature. In his each and every essay we feel the vein of his subjectivity." His essays are, as it were, so many bits of autobiography by piecing which together we can arrive at a pretty authentic picture of his life, both external and internal. It is really impossible to think of an essayist who is more personal than Lamb. His essays reveal him fully-in all his whims, prejudices, past associations, and experiences. "Night Fears" shows us Lamb as a timid, superstitious boy. "Christ's Hospital" reveals his unpalatable experiences as a schoolboy. We are introduced to the various members of his family in numerous essays like "My Relations' "The Old Benchers of the Inner Temple," and "Poor Relations." We read of the days of his adolescence in "Mackery End in Hertfordshire." His tenderness towards his sister Mary is revealed by "Mrs. Battle's Opinions on Whist." His professional life is recalled in "The South-Sea House" and "The, Superannuated Man." His sentimental memories full of pathos find expression in "Dream Children." His prejudices come to the fore in "Imperfect Sympathies" and "The Confessions of a Drunkard." His gourmandise finds a humours utterence in "A Dissertation upon Roast Pig," "Grace before Meat," and elsewhere. What else is left then? Very little, except an indulgence in self-pity at the stark tragedy of his life. Nowhere does he seem to be shedding tears at the fits of madness to which his siter Mary Bridget of the essays) was often subject and in one of which she knifed his mother to death. The frustration of his erotic career (Lamb remained in a state of lifelong bachelorhood imposed by himself to enable him to nurse his demented sister), however, is touched upon here and there. In "Dream Children," for instance, his unfruitful attachment with Ann Simmons is referred to. She got married and her children had to "call Bartrum father." Lamb is engaged in a reverie about "his children" who would have possibly been born had he been married to Alice W-n (Ann Simmons). When the reverie is gone this is what he finds: "...and immediately awaking, I found myself quietly seated in my bachelor arm-chair where I had fallen asleep, with the faithful Bridget [his sister Mary] unchanged by my side...but John L (his brother John Lamb) was gone for ever." How touching!

Lamb's excessive occupation with himself may lead one to assume that he is too selfish or egocentric, or that he is vulgar or inartistic. Far from that, Egotism with Lamb sheds its usual offensive accoutrements. The following specific points may be noted in this connexion:

1. His egotism is free from vulgarity. Well does Compton-Rickett observe: "There is no touch of vulgarity in these intimacies; for all their frank unreserve we feel the delicate refinement of the man's spiritual nature. Lamb omits no essential, he does not sentimentalise, and does not brutalise his memories. He poetises them, preserving them for us in art that can differentiate between genuine reality and crude realism."
2. His artistic sense of discrimination-selection and rejection-has also to be taken into account. David Daiches maintains: "The writer's own character is always there, flaunted before the reader, but it is carefully prepared and controlled before it is exhibited."
3. Though Lamb is an egotist yet he is not self-assertive. He talks about himself not because he thinks himself to be important but because he thinks himself to be the only object he knows intimately. Thus his egotism is born of a sense of humility rather than hauteur. Samuel C. Chew observes: "Like all the romantics he is self-revelatory, but there is nothing in him of the 'egotistical-sublime.' Experience had made him too clear-sighted to take any individual, least of all himself, too seriously. The admissions of his own weaknesses, follies, and prejudices are so many humorous warnings to his readers."

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The Note of Familiarity

Lamb's contribution to the English essay also lies in his changing the general tone from formality to familiarity. This change was to be accepted by all the essayists to follow. "Never", says Compton-Rickett, "was any man more intimate in print than he. He has made of chatter a fine art." Lamb disarms the reader at once with his buttonholding familiarity. He plays with him in a puckish manner, no doubt, but he is always ready to take him into confidence and to exchange heart-beats with him. In the essays of the writers before him we are aware of a well-marked distance between the writer and ourselves. Bacon and Addison perch themselves, as it were, on a pedestal, and cast pearls before the readers standing below. In Cowley, the distance between the reader and writer narrows down-but it is there still. It was left for Lamb to abolish this distance altogether. He often addresses the reader ("dear reader") as if he were addressing a bosom friend. He makes nonsense of the proverbial English insularity and "talks" to the readers as "a friend and man" (as Thackeray said he did in his novels). This note of intimacy is quite pleasing, for Lamb is the best of friends.

No Didacticism

He is a friend, and not a teacher. Lamb shed once and for all the didactic approach which characterises the work of most essayists before him. Bacon called his essays "counsels civil and moral." His didacticism is too palpable to need a comment. Cowley was somewhat less didactic, but early in the eighteenth century Steele and Addison-the founders of the periodical essay-set in their papers the moralistic, mentor-like tone for all the periodical essayists to come. Even such "a rake among scholars and a scholar among rakes" as Steele arrogated to himself the air of a teacher and reformer. This didactic tendency reached almost its culmination in Dr. Johnson who in the *Idler* and *Rambler* papers gave ponderous sermons rather than what may be called essays. Lamb is too modest to pretend to proffer moral counsels. He never argues, dictates, or coerces. We do not find any "philosophy of life" in his essays, though there are some personal views and opinions flung about here and there not for examination and adoption, but just to serve as so many ventilators to let us have a peep into his mind. "Lamb", says Cazamian, "is not a moralist nor a psychologist, his object is not research, analysis, or confession; he is, above all, an artist. He has no aim save the reader's pleasure, and his own." But though Lamb is not a downright pedagogue, he is yet full of sound wisdom which he hides under a cloak of frivolity and tolerant good nature. He sometimes looks like the Fool in *King Lear* whose weird and funny words are impregnated with a hard core of surprising sanity. As a critic avers, "though Lamb frequently donned the cap and bells, he was more than ajester; even his jokes had kernels of wisdom." In his "Character of the Late Elia" in which he himself gives a character-sketch of the supposedly dead Elia, he truly observes : "He would interrupt the gravest discussion with some light jest; and yet, perhaps not quite irrelevant in ears that could understand it."

The Rambling Nature of His Essays and His Lightness of Touch

The rambling nature of his essays and his lightness of touch are some other distinguishing features of Lamb as an essayist. He never bothers about keeping to the point. Too often do we find him flying off at a tangent and ending at a point which we could never have foreseen. Every road with him seems to lead to the world's end. We often reproach Bacon for the "dispersed" nature of his "meditations", but Lamb beats everybody in his monstrous discursiveness. To consider some examples, first take up his essay "The Old and the New School-master." In this essay which apparently is written for comparing the old and new schoolmaster, the first two pages or thereabouts contain a very humorous and exaggerated description of the author's own ignorance. Now, we may ask, what has Lamb's ignorance to do with the subject in hand? Then, the greater part of the essay "Oxford in the Vacation" is devoted to the description of his friend Dyer. Lamb's essays are seldom artistic, well-patterned wholes. They have no beginning, middle and end. Lamb himself described his essays as "a sort of unlicked incondite things." However, what these essays lose in

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artistic design they gain in the touch of spontaneity. This is what lends them what is called "the lyrical quality."

8.2 Lamb's Humour, Pathos, and Humanity

Lamb's humour, humanity, and the sense of pathos are all his own; and it is mainly these qualities which differentiate his essays from those of his contemporaries. His essays are rich alike in wit, humour, and fun. Hallward and Hill observe in the Introduction to their edition of the *Essavs of Elia :* "The terms Wit. Humour and Fun are often confused but they are really different in meaning. The first is based on intellect, the second on insight and sympathy, the third on vigour and freshness of mind and body. Lamb's writings show all the three qualities, but what most distinguishes him is Humour, for his sympathy is ever strong and active." Humour in Lamb's essays constitutes very like an atmosphere "with linked sweetness long drawn out." Its Protean shapes range from frivolous puns, impish attempts at mystification, grotesque buffoonery, and Rabelaisian verbosity (see, for example, the description of a "poor relation") to the subtlest ironical stroke which pierces down to the very heart of life. J. B. Priestley observes in *English Humour:* "English humour at its deepest and tenderest seems in him [Lamb] incarnate. He did not merely create it, he lived in it. His humour is not an idle thing, but the white flower, plucked from a most dangerous nettle." What particularly distinguishes Lamb's humour is its close alliance with pathos. While laughing he is always aware of the tragedy of life-not only his life, but life in general. That is why he often laughs through his tears. Witness his treatment of the hard life of chimney sweepers and Christ's Hospital boys. The descriptions are touching enough, but Lamb's treatment provides us with a humorous medium of perception rich in prismatic effects, which bathes the tragedy of actual life in the iridescence of mellow comedy. The total effect is very complex, and strikes our sensibility in a bizarre way, puzzling us as to what is comic and what is tragic.

Style

A word, lastly, about Lamb's peculiar style which is all his own and yet not *his,* as he is a tremendous borrower. He was extremely influenced by some "old-world" writers like Fuller and Sir Thomas Browne. It is natural, then, that his style is archaic. His sentences are long and rambling, after the seventeenth-century fashion. He uses words many of which are obsolescent, if not obsolete. But though he "struts in borrowed plumes", these "borrowed plumes" seem to be all his own. Well does a critic say: "The blossoms are culled from other men's gardens, but their blending is all Lamb's own." Passing through Lamb's imagination they become something fresh and individual. His style is a mixture certainly of many styles, but a chemical not a mechanical mixture." His inspiration from old writers gives his style a romantic colouring which is certainly intensified by his vigorous imagination. Very like Wordsworth he throws a fanciful veil on the common objects of life and converts them into interesting and "romantic" shapes. His peculiar style is thus an asset in the process of "romanticising" everyday affairs and objects which otherwise would strike one with a strong feeling of ennui. He is certainly a romantic essayist. What is more, he is a poet.

8.3 Text-A Bachelors Complaint on The Behaviour of Married

As a single man, I have spent a good deal of my time in noting down the infirmities of Married People, to console myself for those superior pleasures, which they tell me I have lost by remaining as I am.

I cannot say that the quarrels of men and their wives ever made any great impression upon me, or had much tendency to strengthen me in those anti-social resolutions, which I took up long ago upon more substantial considerations. What oftenest offends me at the houses of married persons where I visit, is an error of quite a different description; — it is that they are too loving.

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Not too loving neither: that does not explain my meaning. Besides, why should that offend me? The very act of separating themselves from the rest of the world, to have the fuller enjoyment of each other's society, implies that they prefer one another to all the world.

But what I complain of is, that they carry this preference so undisguisedly, they perk it up in the faces of us single people so shamelessly, you cannot be in their company a moment without being made to feel, by some indirect hint or open avowal, that you are not the object of this preference. Now there are some things which give no offence, while implied or taken for granted merely; but expressed, there is much offence in them. If a man were to accost the first homely-featured or plain-dressed young woman of his acquaintance, and tell her bluntly, that she was not handsome or rich enough for him, and he could not marry her, he would deserve to be kicked for his ill manners; yet no less is implied in the fact, that having access and opportunity of putting the question to her, he has never yet thought fit to do it. The young woman understands this as clearly as if it were put into words; but no reasonable young woman would think of making this the ground of a quarrel. Just as little right have a married couple to tell me by speeches, and looks that are scarce less plain than speeches, that I am not the happy man, the lady's choice. It is enough that I know I am not: I do not want this perpetual reminding.

The display of superior knowledge or riches may be made sufficiently mortifying; but these admit of a palliative. The knowledge which is brought out to insult me, may accidentally improve me; and in the rich man's houses and pictures, — his parks and gardens, I have a temporary usufruct at least. But the display of married happiness has none of these palliatives: it is throughout pure, unrecompensed, unqualified insult.

Marriage by its best title is a monopoly, and not of the least invidious sort. It is the cunning of most possessors of any exclusive privilege to keep their advantage as much out of sight as possible, that their less favoured neighbours, seeing little of the benefit, may the less be disposed to question the right. But these married monopolists thrust the most obnoxious part of their patent into our faces.

Nothing is to me more distasteful than that entire complacency and satisfaction which beam in the countenances of a new-married couple, — in that of the lady particularly: it tells you, that her lot is disposed of in this world: that you can have no hopes of her. It is true, I have none; nor wishes either, perhaps: but this is one of those truths which ought, as I said before, to be taken for granted, not expressed.

The excessive airs which those people give themselves, founded on the ignorance of us unmarried people, would be more offensive if they were less irrational. We will allow them to understand the mysteries belonging to their own craft better than we who have not had the happiness to be made free of the company: but their arrogance is not content within these limits. If a single person presume to offer his opinion in their presence, though upon the most indifferent subject, he is immediately silenced as an incompetent person. Nay, a young married lady of my acquaintance, who, the best of the Jest was, had not changed her condition above a fortnight before, in a question on which I had the misfortune to differ from her, respecting the properest mode of breeding oysters for the London market, had the assurance to ask with a sneer, how such an old Bachelor as I could pretend to know any thing about such matters.

But what I have spoken of hitherto is nothing to the airs which these creatures give themselves when they come, as they generally do, to have children. When I consider how little of a rarity children are, — that every street and blind alley swarms with them, — that the poorest people commonly have them in most abundance, — that there are few marriages that are not blest with at least one of these bargains, — how often they turn out ill, and defeat the fond hopes of their parents, taking to vicious courses, which end in poverty, disgrace, the gallows, &c. — I cannot for my life tell what cause for pride there can possibly be in having them. If they were young phoenixes,

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indeed, that were born but one in a year, there might be a pretext. But when they are so common I do not advert to the insolent merit which they assume with their husbands on these occasions. Let them look to that. But why we, who are not their natural-born subjects, should be expected to bring our spices, myrrh, and incense, — our tribute and homage of admiration, — I do not see.

"Like as the arrows in the hand of the giant, even so are the young children:" so says the excellent office in our Prayer-book appointed for the churching of women. "Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them:" So say I; but then don't let him discharge his quiver upon us that are weaponless ; — let them be arrows, but not to gall and stick us. I have generally observed that these arrows are double-headed: they have two forks, to be sure to hit with one or the other. As for instance, when you come into a house which is full of children, if you happen to take no notice of them (you are thinking of something else, perhaps, and turn a deaf ear to their innocent caresses), you are set down as untractable, morose, a hater of children. On the other hand, if you find them more than usually engaging,if you are taken with their pretty manners, and set about in earnest to romp and play with them, some pretext or other is sure to be found for sending them out of the room: they are too noisy or boisterous, or Mr. — does not like children. With one or other of these forks the arrow is sure to hit you.

I could forgive their jealousy, and dispense with toying with their brats, if it gives them any pain; but I think it unreasonable to be called upon to love them, where I see no occasion, — to love a whole family, perhaps, eight, nine, or ten, indiscriminately, to love all the pretty dears, because children are so engaging.

I know there is a proverb, "Love me, love my dog:" that is not always so very practicable, particularly if the dog be set upon you to tease you or snap at you in sport. But a dog or a lesser thing — any inanimate substance, as a keep-sake, a watch or a ring, a tree, or the place where we last parted when my friend went away upon a long absence, I can make shift to love, because I love him, and any thing that reminds me of him; provided it be in its nature indifferent, and apt to receive whatever hue fancy can give it. But children have a real character and an essential being of themselves: they are amiable or unamiable per se; I must love or hate them as I see cause for either in their qualities. A child's nature is too serious a thing to admit of its being regarded as a mere appendage to another being, and to be loved or hated accordingly: they stand with me upon their own stock, as much as men and women do. O! but you will say, sure it is an attractive age, there is something in the tender years of infancy that of itself charms us. That is the very reason why I am more nice about them. I know that a sweet child is the sweetest thing in nature, not even excepting the delicate creatures which bear them; but the prettier the kind of a thing is, the more desirable it is that it should be pretty of its kind. One daisy differs not much from another in glory; but a violet should look and smell the daintiest. — I was always rather squeamish in my women and children.

But this is not the worst: one must be admitted into their familiarity at least, before they can complain of inattention. It implies visits, and some kind of intercourse. But if the husband be a man with whom you have lived on a friendly footing before marriage,if you did not come in on the wife's side, — if you did not sneak into the house in her train, but were an old friend in fast habits of intimacy before their courtship was so much as thought on, — look about you — your tenure is precarious — before a twelve-month shall roll over your head, you shall find your old friend gradually grow cool and altered towards you, and at last seek opportunities of breaking with you. I have scarce a married friend of my acquaintance, upon whose firm faith I can rely, whose friendship did not commence after the period of his marriage. With some limitations they can endure that: but that the good man should have dared to enter into a solemn league of friendship in which they were not consulted, though it happened before they knew him, — before they that are now are man and wife ever met, — this is intolerable to them. Every long friendship, every old authentic intimacy, must he brought into their office to be new stamped with their currency, as a sovereign Prince calls in the good old money that was coined in some reign before he was born or thought of, to be new marked and minted with the stamp of his authority, before he will let it pass current in the world. You may guess what luck generally befalls such a rusty piece of metal as I am in these new mintings.

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Innumerable are the ways which they take to insult and worm you out of their husband's confidence. Laughing at all you say with a kind of wonder, as if you were a queer kind of fellow that said good things, but an oddity, is one of the ways — they have a particular kind of stare for the purpose — till at last the husband, who used to defer to your judgment, and would pass over some excrescences of understanding and manner for the sake of a general vein of observation (not quite vulgar) which he perceived in you, begins to suspect whether you are not altogether a humorist, — a fellow well enough to have consorted with in his bachelor days, but not quite so proper to be introduced to ladies. This may be called the staring way; and is that which has oftenest been put in practice against me.

Then there is the exaggerating way, or the way of irony: that is, where they find you an object of especial regard with their husband, who is not so easily to be shaken from the lasting attachment founded on esteem which he has conceived towards you; by never-qualified exaggerations to cry up all that you say or do, till the good man, who understands well enough that it is all done in compliment to him, grows weary of the debt of gratitude which is due to so much candor, and by relaxing a little on his part, and taking down a peg or two in his enthusiasm, sinks at length to that kindly level of moderate esteem, — that "decent affection and complacent kindness" towards you, where she herself can join in sympathy with him without much stretch and violence to her sincerity.

Another way (for the ways they have to accomplish so desirable a purpose are infinite) is, with a kind of innocent simplicity, continually to mistake what it was which first made their husband fond of you. If an esteem for something excellent in your moral character was that which riveted the chain which she is to break, upon any imaginary discovery of a want of poignancy in your conversation, she will cry, "I thought, my dear, you described your friend, Mr. — as a great wit." If, on the other hand, it was for some supposed charm in your conversation that he first grew to like you, and was content for this to overlook some trifling irregularities in your moral deportment, upon the first notice of any of these she as readily exclaims, "This, my dear, is your good Mr. — —." One good lady whom I took the liberty of expostulating with for not showing me quite so much respect as I thought due to her husband's old friend, had the candour to confess to me that she had often heard Mr. — speak of me before marriage, and that she had conceived a great desire to be acquainted with me, but that the sight of me had very much disappointed her expectations; for from her husband's representations of me, she had formed a notion that she was to see a fine, tall, officer-like looking man (I use her very words); the very reverse of which proved to be the truth. This was candid; and I had the civility not to ask her in return, how she came to pitch upon a standard of personal accomplishments for her husband's friends which differed so much from his own; for my friend's dimensions as near as possible approximate to mine; he standing five feet five in his shoes, in which I have the advantage of him by about half an inch; and he no more than myself exhibiting any indications of a martial character in his air or countenance.

These are some of the mortifications which I have encountered in the absurd attempt to visit at their houses. To enumerate them all would be a vain endeavour: I shall therefore just glance at the very common impropriety of which married ladies are guilty, of treating us as if we were their husbands, and vice versa —I mean, when they use us with familiarity, and their husbands with ceremony. Testacea, for instance, kept me the other night two or three hours beyond my usual time of supping, while she was fretting because Mr. — did not come home, till the oysters were all spoiled, rather than she would he guilty of the impoliteness of touching one in his absence. This was reversing the point of good manners: for ceremony is an invention to take off the uneasy feeling which we derive from knowing ourselves to be less the object of love and esteem with a fellow-creature than some other person is. It endeavors to make up by superior attentions in little points, for that invidious preference which it is forced to deny in the greater. Had Testacea kept the oysters back for me, and withstood her husband's importunities to go to supper, she would have acted according to the strict rules of propriety. I know no ceremony that ladies are bound to observe to their husbands, beyond the point of a modest behaviour and decorum: therefore I must

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protest against the vicarious gluttony of Cerasia, who at her own table sent away a dish of Morellas, which I was applying to with great good will, to her husband at the other end of the table, and recommended a plate of less extraordinary goose berries to my unwedded palate in their stead. Neither can I excuse the wanton affront of .

But I am weary of stringing up all my married acquaintance by Roman denominations. Let them amend and change their manners, or I promise to record the full-length English of their names, to the terror of all such desperate offenders in future.

Self Assessment

1. Choose the correct options:

(*i*) Christ's Hospital reveals his unpalatable experiences as a

(*a*) College boy (*b*) School boy

(*c*) A student (*d*) None of these

(*ii*) Essays called "Counsels civil and moral by

(*a*) Bacon (*b*) Lamb

(*c*) Hazlit (*d*) None of these

(*iii*) Lamb is not a moralist nor a psychologist, according to

(*a*) Bacon (*b*) Hallward

(*c*) Cazamian (*d*) None of these

(*iv*) In this essay 'the vicarious gluttony of .....

(*a*) Morellas (*b*) Cerasia

(*c*) Testacea (*d*) None of these

8.4 Summary

- Charles Lamb's essay "A Bachelor's Complaint of the Behavior of Married People" is just what the title suggests: it is indeed "a bachelor's complaint of the behavior of Married People."
- Lamb emphasizes his single status in the start of the essay"As a single man"and in doing so, separates himself from the "Married People." He talks about Married People as if they are despicable and offensive and gives both hypothetical and personal examples to back up his points. He believes that Married People "prefer one another to all the world" and openly flaunt it, thus offending singles such as Lamb by implying that they "are not the object of this preference."
- Furthermore, Lamb believes that overall, singles are looked down on Married People are undoubtedly more favored and knowledgeable. The main complaint that Lamb is making throughout the whole essay is the Married People's attitudes and how they demonstrate their status.
- He goes as far as to "the airs which these creatures give themselves when they come to have children and, by using the negative aspects of children, he furthers his disapproval of Married People and their actions.
- "Christ's Hospital" reveals his unpalatable experiences as a school boy.
- Lamb disarms the reader at once with his buttonholding familiarity.
- Bacon called his essays "counsels civil and moral.
- Lamb is too modest to pretend to proffer moral counsels.

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8.5 Key-Words

1. Nettle : Irritate or annoy.
2. Protean : Tending or able to change frequently or easily, inconstant.

8.6 Review Questions

1. Explain Charles Lamb's self revelation.
2. Discuss Lamb's humour, pathos.
3. Briefly describe Lamb's A Bachelor Complaint on the Behaviour of Married.
4. What is the theme of essay" a Bachelor's Complaint of the Behaviour of the Married People" by Charles Lamb?

Answers: Self-Assessment

1. (*i*) (*b*) (*ii*) (*a*) (*iii*) (*c*) (*iv*) (*b*)

8.7 Further Readings

1. Life of Charles Lamb, E.V. Lucas, G.P. Putman and Sons, London, 1905.
2. Young Charles Lamb, by Winifred Courtney, New York University Press, 1982.
3. Essays by Charles Lamb.

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Unit 9: Charles Lamb-A Bachelors Complaint on the Behaviour of Married : Critical Appreciation

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Objectives

After reading this Unit students will be able to:

- Know about Charles Lamb
- Examine Lamb's essay 'A Bachelors Complaint on the Behaviour of Married'

Introduction

Lamb was the son of Elizabeth Field and John Lamb. Lamb was the youngest child, with an 11 year older sister Mary, an even older brother John, and four other siblings who did.

Charles Lamb was an English essayist, best known for his Essays of Elia and for the children's book Tales from Shakespeare, which he produced with his sister, Mary Lamb. Lamb has been referred to by E.V. Lucas, his principal biographer, as the most lovable figure in English literature. Lamb was honoured by The Latymer School, a grammar school in Edmonton, a suburb of London where he lived for a time; it has six houses, one of which, "Lamb", is named after Charles.

Lamb offers personal anecdotes as well as hypothetical situations that illustrate and support his points.

9.1 Critical Appreciation

Charles Lamb's essay "A Bachelor's Complaint of the Behavior of Married People" is just what the title suggests: it is indeed "a bachelor's complaint of the behavior of Married People." Lamb emphasizes his single status in the start of the essay"As a single man"and in doing so, separates himself from the "Married People." He talks about Married People as if they are despicable and offensive and gives both hypothetical and personal examples to back up his points. He believes that Married People "prefer one another to all the world" and openly flaunt it, thus offending singles such as Lamb by implying that they "are not the object of this preference." Furthermore, Lamb believes that overall, singles are looked down onMarried People are undoubtedly more favored and knowledgeable. The main complaint that Lamb is making throughout the whole

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essay is the Married People's attitudes and how they demonstrate their status. He goes as far as to "the airs which these creatures give themselves when they cometo have children"and, by using the negative aspects of children, he furthers his disapproval of Married People and their actions.

Lamb's purpose in writing "A Bachelor's Complaint of the Behavior of Married People" is to bring attention to the attitudes of Married People. He wishes for his audience to realize how Married People subconsciously flaunt themselves in their love, offending those who are single. Ultimately, he hopes that Married People will bring themselves to correct their mistakes and be more considerate towards others. He structures his argument by stating his main reason for decrying Married People is because he believes them to be overly involved with each other and their love that they disregard and "perk it up in the faces of [singles] so shamelessly." From this claim, Lamb offers personal anecdotes as well as hypothetical situations that illustrate and support his points. He concludes his essay stating that although he despises their attitudes, he is still willing to "forgive their jealousy and dispense with toying with their brats"but thinks it "unreasonable to be called upon to love them." Through Lamb's willingness to forgive these people whom he disapproves of, he is seen to be credible with good values and his readers are more inclined to believe his words and work to correct the attitudes of Married People.

The structure of Lamb's argument logically appeals to his readers, for it flows and clarifies his points through examples. However, Lamb fails to address any possible counter arguments. His argument addresses only the negative aspects of Married People, but surely there are positive sides as well. By failing to address and disprove these possibilities, Lamb leaves room for doubt. Despite this, his argument stands strong. The examples he gives are cogent and, through his personal anecdotes, he is able to establish a connection with the audience. He also appeals emotionally especially to the singles, for he is a bachelor himself. The injustice that he sometimes feels can appeal to others who have felt the same way. Overall, Lamb appeals effectively to his readers through his use of pathos, ethos, and logos. Although there are some flaws in his arguments, they are overlooked and undermined by his credibility and emotional appeal.


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Lamb appeals effectively to his readers through his use of pathos, ethos, and logos.

Lamb's style of writing in this essay is fairly colloquial. He is very assertive in his argument, and states his points with conviction and support. These assertions are highlighted by his occasional use of italics throughout the essay. At the beginning of the essay, Lamb firmly establishes a line between him and Married Peoplesimply by capitalizing "Married People." In doing so, he sets them apart in their own group of Married People, symbolizing that this is truly how it is in reality too: Married People set themselves apart in their own groups through their attitudes. They really do seem to be off in their own little world of love, and this is what Lamb dislikes. Towards the end of the essay, Lamb brings up the subject of children and how they also contribute to the Married People's attitudes. He brings out all the negative aspects of children and emphasizes them by listing them continuously with dashes as separation. He also brings in a simile from "the excellent office in [the] Prayer-book""Like as arrows in the hand of the giant, even so are the young children"and uses it in his favor. He takes this idea of arrows and extends it into a metaphor to support his argument. Like "double-headed" arrows with "two forks, to be sure to hit with one or the other", how one acts with children will always be wrong; "with one or other of these forks the arrow is sure to hit you." Whether you act stoic to a child's attention or shower them with affection, "some pretext or other is sure to be found for sending them out of the room." Through this comparison of double-headed arrows and children, Lamb effectively conveys his opinions of Married People and their attitudes that are shown in everything, including the way they handle their children.

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Did u know? Lamb firmly establishes a line between him and Married People simply by capitalizing "Married People."

Personally, I do not agree with Lamb for the most part. Although I can see why he views married people in this way, I don't think that they should be decried in this manner. Sure, it may seem like those who are married are flaunting their love to others, but I don't think that they do it to offend others. Lamb makes it sound like married people intentionally target singles and taunt them for not having a significant other like themselves. But think of it in the married people's perspective how can they possibly suppress the love that they are feeling? Love is a very strong feeling, and it is impossible to suppress. I'm sure that if Lamb got married and was finally allowed to show his love unconditionally, he would act like the "Married People" he discussed in his essay. He merely looks at the negative aspects of marriage from the perspective of an outsiderbut what about the positives aspects from the perspective of a married person? Furthermore, his discussion of the children, to me, was not very convincing. His views of children would most likely change after having some children of his own. To conclude, I don't agree with Lamb's views and arguments because he is a biased source. I think that he should get married and have children first, before making these kinds of assertions.

Overall, "A Bachelor's Complaint of the Behavior of Married People" is effectively portrayed through Lamb's arguments and claims. His complaints are easy to understand, thanks to the examples that he gives. He makes many good points about Married People, and most likely is able to persuade many readers of his views. Although I personally am more skeptical of his views, it is because I am also biased. I think of love as one of the most important and potent feelings, but not everybody thinks of love as strongly as I do. Despite my views, I still think that Lamb's points are overall strong and assertive. I feel that the connection he makes with his readers is also very effective, and I believe his argument will continue to affect people of today, as marriage is a large part of society.

Self Assessment

1. Choose the correct options:

(*i*) Lamb's purpose in writing "A Bachelor's Complaint of the Behaviour of Married People" is to bring the attention to the

(*a*) Life of married people
(*b*) Profession of married people
(*c*) Attitude of married people
(*d*) None of these

(*ii*) Lamb uses in his essays

(*a*) Pathos
(*b*) Ethos
(*c*) Dogos
(*d*) All of these

9.2 Summary

- Charles Lamb was an English essayist, best known for his Essays of Elia and for the children's book Tales from Shakespeare, which he produced with his sister, Mary Lamb. Lamb has been referred to by E.V. Lucas, his principal biographer, as the most lovable figure in English literature. Lamb was honoured by The Latymer School, a grammar school in Edmonton, a suburb of London where he lived for a time; it has six houses, one of which, "Lamb", is named after Charles.
- Charles Lamb's essay "A Bachelor's Complaint of the Behavior of Married People" is just what the title suggests: it is indeed "a bachelor's complaint of the behavior of Married People." Lamb emphasizes his single status in the start of the essay"As a single man"and in

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doing so, separates himself from the "Married People." He talks about Married People as if they are despicable and offensive and gives both hypothetical and personal examples to back up his points. He believes that Married People "prefer one another to all the world" and openly flaunt it, thus offending singles such as Lamb by implying that they "are not the object of this preference." Furthermore, Lamb believes that overall, singles are looked down onMarried People are undoubtedly more favored and knowledgeable.

- The structure of Lamb's argument logically appeals to his readers, for it flows and clarifies his points through examples. However, Lamb fails to address any possible counter arguments. His argument addresses only the negative aspects of Married People, but surely there are positive sides as well. By failing to address and disprove these possibilities, Lamb leaves room for doubt. Despite this, his argument stands strong. The examples he gives are cogent and, through his personal anecdotes, he is able to establish a connection with the audience. He also appeals emotionally especially to the singles, for he is a bachelor himself. The injustice that he sometimes feels can appeal to others who have felt the same way. Overall, Lamb appeals effectively to his readers through his use of pathos, ethos, and logos. Although there are some flaws in his arguments, they are overlooked and undermined by his credibility and emotional appeal.
- Overall, "A Bachelor's Complaint of the Behavior of Married People" is effectively portrayed through Lamb's arguments and claims. His complaints are easy to understand, thanks to the examples that he gives. He makes many good points about Married People, and most likely is able to persuade many readers of his views. Although I personally am more skeptical of his views, it is because I am also biased. I think of love as one of the most important and potent feelings, but not everybody thinks of love as strongly as I do. Despite my views, I still think that Lamb's points are overall strong and assertive. I feel that the connection he makes with his readers is also very effective, and I believe his argument will continue to affect people of today, as marriage is a large part of society.

9.3 Key-Words

1. Flaunt : display ostentatiously especially in order to provoke envy or admiration or to show defiance
2. Despicable : Worthy of being despised; contemptible; mean

9.4 Review Questions

1. Explore Lamb's specific complaints about married couples here. How can you tell the extent to which he is serious or is exaggerating for comic effect?
2. Would unmarried friends today offer similar complaints about their married friends and their children? Are there any additional complaints that are pertinent to contemporary life?
3. Write an essay in which you describe some chronic complaints of your own relating to the behavior of a certain group of people that you number among your friends.

Answers: Self-Assessment

1. (*i*) (*c*) (*ii*) (*d*)

9.5 Further Readings

1. Life of Charles Lamb, E.V. Lucas, G.P. Putman and Sons, London, 1905.
2. Young Charles Lamb, by winifred courtney, New York University Press, 1982.
3. Essays by Charles Lamb.

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Unit 10: Addison -Pleasures of Imagination: Introduction

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Objectives

After reading this Unit students will be able to:

- Know about Addison
- Discuss Pleasures of Imagination

Introduction

Joseph Addison was an English essayist, poet, playwright and politician. He was a man of letters, eldest son of Lancelot Addison. His name is usually remembered alongside that of his long-standing friend, Richard Steele, with whom he founded *The Spectator* magazine.

10.1 Addison's Life and Works

Background

Addison was born in Milston, Wiltshire, but soon after his birth his father, Lancelot Addison, was appointed Dean of Lichfield and the Addison family moved into the cathedral close. He was educated at Charterhouse School, where he first met Richard Steele, and at The Queen's College, Oxford. He excelled in classics, being specially noted for his Latin verse, and became a Fellow of Magdalen College. In 1693, he addressed a poem to John Dryden, and his first major work, a book of the lives of English poets, was published in 1694. His translation of Virgil's *Georgics* was published the same year. Dryden, Lord Somers and Charles Montagu, 1st Earl of Halifax took an interest in Addison's work and obtained for him a pension of £300 to enable him travel to Europe with a view to diplomatic employment, all the time writing and studying politics. While in Switzerland in 1702, he heard of the death of William III, an event which lost him his pension, as his influential contacts, Halifax and Somers, had lost their employment with the Crown.

Political career

He returned to England at the end of 1703. For more than a year he remained without employment, but the Battle of Blenheim in 1704 gave him a fresh opportunity of distinguishing himself. The government, more specifically Lord Treasurer Godolphin, commissioned Addison to write a commemorative poem, and he produced *The Campaign*, which gave such satisfaction that he was forthwith appointed a Commissioner of Appeals in Halifax's government. His next literary venture was an account of his travels in Italy, which was followed by an opera libretto titled *Rosamund*. In

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1705, with the Whigs in political power, Addison was made Under-Secretary of State and accompanied Halifax on a mission to Hanover. Addison's biographer states that "In the field of his foreign responsibilities Addison's views were those of a good Whig. He had always believed that England's power depended upon her wealth, her wealth upon her commerce, and her commerce upon the freedom of the seas and the checking of the power of France and Spain".

From 1708 to 1709 he was MP for the rotten borough of Lostwithiel. Addison was shortly afterwards appointed secretary to the new Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Lord Wharton, and Keeper of the Records of that country. Under the influence of Wharton, he was Member of Parliament in the Irish House of Commons for Cavan Borough from 1709 until 1713. From 1710, he represented Malmesbury, in his home county of Wiltshire, holding the seat until his death.

Magazine founder

Joseph Addison: engraving after the Kneller portrait He encountered Jonathan Swift in Ireland and remained there for a year. Subsequently, he helped found the Kitcat Club and renewed his association with Richard Steele. In 1709 Steele began to bring out *Tatler*, to which Addison became almost immediately a contributor: thereafter he (with Steele) started *The Spectator*, the first number of which appeared on 1 March 1711. This paper, which at first appeared daily, was kept up (with a break of about a year and a half when *the Guardian* took its place) until 20 December 1714.

Plays

He wrote the libretto for Thomas Clayton's opera *Rosamond*, which had a disastrous premiere in London in 1707. In 1713 Addison's tragedy *Cato* was produced, and was received with acclamation by both Whigs and Tories. He followed this effort with a comedic play, *The Drummer* (his last undertaking was *The Freeholder*, a party paper, 1715–16.)

Marriage and death

The later events in the life of Addison did not contribute to his happiness. In 1716, he married the Dowager Countess of Warwick to whose son he had been tutor, and his political career continued to flourish, as he served Secretary of State for the Southern Department from 1717 to 1718. However, his crazy government newspaper, *The Freeholder*, was much criticised, and Alexander Pope was among those who made him an object of derision, christening him "Atticus". His wife appears to have been arrogant and imperious; his stepson the seventh Earl was a rake and unfriendly to him; while in his public capacity his invincible shyness made him of little use in Parliament. He eventually fell out with Steele over the Peerage Bill of 1719. In 1718, Addison was forced to resign as secretary of state because of his poor health, but remained an MP until his death at Holland House, London on 17 June 1719, in his 48th year, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. Besides the works above mentioned, he wrote a *Dialogue on Medals*, and left incomplete a work on the *Evidences of Christianity*.

Cato

The actor John Kemble in the role of Cato in Addison's play, which he revived at Covent Garden in 1816, drawn by George Cruikshank. In 1712, Addison wrote his most famous work of fiction, *Cato, a Tragedy*. Based on the last days of Marcus Porcius Cato Uticensis, it deals with, inter alia, such themes as individual liberty versus government tyranny, Republicanism versus Monarchism, logic versus emotion and Cato's personal struggle to cleave to his beliefs in the face of death. It has a prologue written by Alexander Pope and an epilogue by Dr. Garth. The play was a success throughout Britain and its possessions in the New World, as well as Ireland. It continued to grow in popularity, especially in the American colonies, for several generations. Indeed, it was almost certainly a literary inspiration for the American Revolution, being well known to many of the Founding Fathers. In fact, George Washington had it performed for the Continental Army while they were encamped at Valley Forge. Among the founders, according to John J. Miller, "no single work of literature may have been more important than *Cato*". Some scholars have identified the

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inspiration for several famous quotations from the American Revolution in *Cato*. These include:

- Patrick Henry's famous ultimatum: "Give me Liberty or give me death!" (Supposed reference to Act II, Scene 4: *"It is not now time to talk of aught/But chains or conquest, liberty or death."*).
- Nathan Hale's valediction: "I regret that I have but one life to lose for my country." (Supposed reference to Act IV, Scene 4: *"What a pity it is/That we can die but once to serve our country."*).
- Washington's praise for Benedict Arnold in a letter to him: "It is not in the power of any man to command success; but you have done more — you have deserved it."

(Clear reference to Act I, Scene 2: *"'Tis not in mortals to command success; but we'll do more, Sempronius, we'll deserve it."*). Not long after the American Revolution, Edmund Burke quotes the play as well in his Letter to Charles-Jean-François Depont (1789) in *Further Reflections on the Revolution in France*: "The French may be yet to go through more transmigrations. They may pass, as one of our poets says, 'through many varieties of untried being,' before their state obtains its final form." The poet in reference is of course Addison and the passage Burke quoted is from *Cato* (V.i. II): "Through what variety of untried being,/Through what new scenes and changes must we pass!" Though the play has fallen from popularity and is now rarely performed, it was widely popular and often cited in the eighteenth century, with Cato as an exemplar of republican virtue and liberty. For example, John Trenchard and Thomas Gordon were inspired by the play to write a series of letters, *Cato's Letters* on individual rights, using the name "Cato". The action of the play involves the forces of Cato at Utica, awaiting the arrival of Caesar just after Caesar's victory at Thapsus (46 BC). The noble sons of Cato, Portius and Marcus, are both in love with Lucia, the daughter of Lucius, a senatorial ally of Cato. Juba, prince of Numidia, another fighting on Cato's side, loves Cato's daughter Marcia. Meanwhile, Sempronius, another senator, and Syphax, general of the Numidians, are conspiring secretly against Cato, hoping to draw off the Numidian army from supporting him. In the final act, Cato commits suicide, leaving his supporters to make their peace with the approaching Caesar—an easier task after Cato's death, since he has been Caesar's most implacable foe. Joseph Addison by Kraemer

Contribution

It is mostly as an essayist that Addison is remembered today. Addison began writing essays quite casually. In April 1709, his childhood friend, Richard Steele, started *The Tatler*. Addison inspired him to write this essay. Addison contributed 42 essays while Steele wrote 188. Of Addison's help, Steele remarked, "When I had once called him in I could not subsist without dependence on him". On 2 January 1711, *The Tatler* was discontinued. On 1 March 1711, *The Spectator* was published, and it continued until 6 December 1712. *The Spectator* which was issued daily and achieved great popularity. It exercised a great deal of influence over the reading public of the time. In *The Spectator*, Addison soon became the leading partner. He contributed 274 essays out a total of 555; Steele wrote 236 for this periodical. Addison also assisted Steele with the *Guardian* which Steele began in 1713.

The breezy, conversational style of the essays later elicited Bishop Hurd's reproving attribution of an "Addisonian Termination", for preposition stranding, the casual grammatical construction that ends a sentence with a preposition.

Albin Schram Letters

In 2005 an Austrian banker and collector named Albin Schram died and, in his laundry room, a collection of around 1000 letters from great historical figures was found. One was written by Joseph Addison, reporting on the debate in the House of Commons over the grant to John Churchill, 1st Duke of Marlborough and his heirs, following the Battle of Ramillies. The letter was written on the day of the debate, probably to George Stepney. Addison explains that the motion was opposed by Mr Annesley, Ward, Caesar and Sir William Vevian, 'One said that this was showing no

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honour to His Grace but to a posterity that he was not concerned in. Casar ... hoped ye Duke though he had been Victorious over the Enemy would not think of being so over a House of Commons: which was said in pursuance to a Motion made by some of the Craftier sort that would not oppose the proposition directly but turn it off by a Side-Wind pretending that it being a money affaire it should be refer'd to a Committee of the whole House wch in all probability would have defeated the whole affaire...'. Following the Duke of Marlborough's highly successful campaigns of 1706, he and George Stepney became the first English regents of the Anglo-Dutch condominium for governing the southern Netherlands. It was Stepney who formally took possession of the principality of Mindelheim in Marlborough's name on 26 May, following the Battle of Ramillies. On Marlborough's return to London in November, Parliament granted his request that his grant of £ 5,000 'out of ye Post-Office' be made in perpetuity for his heirs.

A second letter to his friend Sir Richard Steele was also found, concerning the Tatler and other matters. 'I very much liked your last paper upon the Courtship that is usually paid to the fair sex. I wish you had reserved the Letter in this days paper concerning Indecencies at Church for an entire piece. It would have made as good a one as any you have published. Your Reflections upon Almanza are very good.' The letter concludes with references to impeachment proceedings against Addison's friend, Henry Sacheverell ('I am much obliged to you for yor Letters relating to Sackeverell'), and the Light House petition: 'I am something troubled that you have not sent away ye Letters received from Ireland to my Lord Lieutenant, particularly that from Mr Forster [the Attorney General] with the Enclosed petition about the Light House, which I hope will be delivered to the House before my Return'.

10.2 Analysis

Addison's character has been described as kind and magnanimous, albeit somewhat cool and unimpassioned. His appealing manners and conversation made him one of the most popular men of his day; and while he laid his friends under obligations for substantial favours, he showed great forbearance towards his few enemies. His essays are noted for their clarity and elegant style, as well as their cheerful and respectful humour. One flaw in Addison character was a tendency to convivial excess, which nonetheless should be judged in view of the somewhat lax manners of his time.

"As a man, he may not have deserved the adoration which he received from those who, bewitched by his fascinating society, and indebted for all the comforts of life to his generous and delicate friendship, worshipped him nightly, in his favourite temple at Button's. But, after full inquiry and impartial reflection, we have long been convinced that he deserved as much love and esteem as can be justly claimed by any of our infirm and erring race. Some blemishes may undoubtedly be detected in his character; but the more carefully it is examined, the more it will appear, to use the phrase of the old anatomists, sound in the noble parts, free from all taint of perfidy, of cowardice, of cruelty, of ingratitude, of envy. Men may easily be named, in whom some particular good disposition has been more conspicuous than in Addison. But the just harmony of qualities, the exact temper between the stern and the humane virtues, the habitual observance of every law, not only of moral rectitude, but of moral grace and dignity, distinguish him from all men who have been tried by equally strong temptations, and about whose conduct we possess equally full information." – Lord Macaulay

Our Sight is the most perfect and most delightful of all our senses. It fills the mind with the largest variety of ideas, converses with its objects at the greatest distance, and continues the longest in action without being tired or satiated with its proper enjoyments. The sense of feeling can indeed give us a notion of extension, shape, and all other ideas that enter at the eye, except colours; but at the same time it is very much straitened and confined in its operations, to the number, bulk, and distance of its particular objects. Our sight seems designed to supply all these defects, and may be

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considered as a more delicate and diffusive kind of touch, that spreads itself over an infinite multitude of bodies, comprehends the largest figures, and brings into our reach some of the most remote parts of the universe.

It is this sense which furnishes the imagination with its ideas ; so that by the pleasures of the imagination, or fancy, (which I shall use promiscuously,) I here mean such as arise from visible objects , either when we have them actually in our view, or when we call up their ideas into our minds by paintings, statues, descriptions, or any the like occasion. We cannot, indeed, have a single image in the fancy that did not make its first entrance through the sight ; but we have the power of retaining, altering, and compounding those images, which we have once received, into all the varieties of picture and vision that are most agreeable to the imagination ; for by this faculty a man in a dungeon is capable of entertaining himself with scenes and landscapes more beautiful than any that can be found in the whole compass of nature.

There are few words in the English language which are employed in a more loose and uncircumscribed sense than those of the fancy and the imagination. I therefore thought it necessary to fix and determine the notion of these two words, as I intend to make use of them in the thread of my following speculations, that the reader may conceive rightly what is the subject which I proceed upon. I must therefore desire him to remember, that by the pleasures of the imagination, I mean only such pleasures as arise originally from sight, and that I divide these pleasures into two kinds my design being first of all to discourse of those primary pleasures of the imagination, which entirely proceed from such objects as are before our eyes; and in the next place to speak of those secondary pleasures of the imagination which flow from the ideas of visible objects, when the objects are not actually before the eye, but are called up into our memories, or formed into agreeable visions of things that are either absent or fictitious.

The pleasures of the imagination, taken in their full extent, are not so gross as those of sense, nor so refined as those of the understanding. The last are, indeed, *more preferable*, because they are founded on some new knowledge or improvement in the mind of man; yet it must be confest, that those of the imagination are as great and as transporting as the other. A beautiful prospect delights the soul, as much as a demonstration; and a description in Homer has charmed more readers than a chapter in Aristotle. Besides, the pleasures of the imagination have this advantage above those of the understanding, that they are more obvious, and more easy to be acquired. It is but opening the eye, and the scene enters. The colours paint themselves on the fancy, with very little attention of thought or application of mind in the beholder. We are struck, we know not how, with the symmetry of anything we see, and immediately assent to the beauty of an object, without inquiring into the particular causes and occasions of it.

A man of polite imagination is let into a great many pleasures, that the vulgar are not capable of receiving. He can converse with a picture, and find an agreeable companion in a statue. He meets with a secret refreshment in a description, and often feels a greater satisfaction in the prospect of fields and meadows, than another does in the possession. It gives him, indeed, a kind of property in everything he sees, and makes the most rude, uncultivated parts of nature administer to his pleasures: so that he looks upon the world, as it were in another light, and discovers in it a multitude of charms, that conceal themselves from the generality of mankind.

There are, indeed, but very few who know how to be idle and innocent, or have a relish of any pleasures that are not criminal: every diversion they take is at the expense of some one virtue or another, and their very first step out of business is into vice or folly. A man should endeavour, therefore, to make the sphere of his innocent pleasures as wide as possible, that he may retire into them with safety, and find in them such a satisfaction as a wise man would not blush to take. Of this nature are those of the imagination, which do not require such a bent of thought as is necessary to our more serious employments, nor, at the same time, suffer the mind to sink into that negligence and remissness, which are apt to accompany our more sensual delights, but, like a gentle exercise

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to the faculties, awaken them from sloth and idleness, without putting them upon any labour or difficulty.

We might here add, that the pleasures of the fancy are more conducive to health, than those of the understanding, which are worked out by dint of thinking, and attended with too violent a labour of the brain. Delightful scenes, whether in nature, painting, or poetry, have a kindly influence on the body, as well as the mind, and not only serve to clear and brighten the imagination, but are able to disperse grief and melancholy, and to set the animal spirits in pleasing and agreeable motions. For this reason Sir Francis Bacon, in his Essay upon Health, has not thought it improper to prescribe to his reader a poem or a prospect, where he particularly dissuades him from knotty and subtle disquisitions, and advises him to pursue studies that fill the mind with splendid and illustrious objects, as histories, fables, and contemplations of nature.

We, by way of introduction, settled the notion of those pleasures of the imagination which are the subject of my present undertaking, and endeavoured, by several considerations, to recommend to my reader the pursuit of those pleasures.

Self Assessment

1. Choose the correct options:

(*i*) Addison addressed a poem to John Dryden in

(*a*) 1693 (*b*) 1692 (*c*) 1685 (*d*) 1691

(*ii*) The first major work , 'A book of the Lives of English Poets' was published in

(*a*) 1693 (*b*) 1694 (*c*) 1692 (*d*) 1991

(*iii*) Addison's tragedy 'Cato' was produced in

(*a*) 1713 (*b*) 1715 (*c*) 1725 (*d*) 1718

(*iv*) ' The Spectator' was published in

(*a*) 1711 (*b*) 1712 (*c*) 1713 (*d*) 1714

10.3 Summary

- **Joseph Addison** was an English essayist, poet, playwright and politician. He was a man of letters, eldest son of Lancelot Addison.
- Magdalen College. In 1693, he addressed a poem to John Dryden, and his first major work, a book of the lives of English poets, was published in 1694. His translation of Virgil's *Georgics* was published the same year. Dryden, Lord Somers and Charles Montagu, 1st Earl of Halifax took an interest in Addison's work and obtained for him a pension of £300 to enable him travel to Europe with a view to diplomatic employment, all the time writing and studying politics. While in Switzerland in 1702, he heard of the death of William III, an event which lost him his pension, as his influential contacts, Halifax and Somers, had lost their employment with the Crown.
- Addison's biographer states that "In the field of his foreign responsibilities Addison's views were those of a good Whig. He had always believed that England's power depended upon her wealth, her wealth upon her commerce, and her commerce upon the freedom of the seas and the checking of the power of France and Spain".
- From 1708 to 1709 he was MP for the rotten borough of Lostwithiel.
- In 1712, Addison wrote his most famous work of fiction, *Cato, a Tragedy*.
- It is mostly as an essayist that Addison is remembered today. Addison began writing essays quite casually. In April 1709, his childhood friend, Richard Steele, started *The Tatler*. Addison inspired him to write this essay. Addison contributed 42 essays while Steele wrote 188. Of

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Addison's help, Steele remarked, "When I had once called him in I could not subsist without dependence on him". On 2 January 1711, *The Tatler* was discontinued.

- On 1 March 1711, *The Spectator* was published, and it continued until 6 December 1712.
- Addison's character has been described as kind and magnanimous, albeit somewhat cool and unimpassioned. His appealing manners and conversation made him one of the most popular men of his day; and while he laid his friends under obligations for substantial favours, he showed great forbearance towards his few enemies. His essays are noted for their clarity and elegant style, as well as their cheerful and respectful humour.
- Our Sight is the most perfect and most delightful of all our senses.

10.4 Key-Words

1. Commemorative : Honoring or preserving the memory of mother.
2. Republican virtue : Republic is a form of government while republicanism is a political ideology that can appear in republics or monarchies.

10.5 Review Questions

1. Discuss Addison as an Essayist
2. Briefly describe 'Pleasures of Imagination' by Addison
3. How does Addison distinguish among the Pleasures of the Imagination the Pleasures of the Senses, and the Pleasures of the Understanding?

Answers: Self-Assessment

1. (*i*) (*a*) (*ii*) (*b*) (*iii*) (*a*) (*iv*) (*a*)

10.6 Further Readings

1. Hugh Blair; Essays on the Pleasures of the Imagination, Joseph Addison, Duvera ER and C. Antwerp.
2. Addison-Pleasures of Imagination.

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Unit 11: Addison-Pleasures of Imagination : Detailed Study and Critical Appreciation

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Objectives

After reading this Unit students will be able to:

- Understand Addison's Pleaures of Imagination
- Discuss various aspects of Addison essays
- Critically examine Pleasures of Imagination

Introduction

Joseph Addison (1672-1719), studied classics at Queen's College, Oxford and subsequently became a Fellow of Magdalen College. During his life, he held several governmental posts but is perhaps best known for his founding of the daily The Spectator with Richard Steele. Addison's Cato, a play tracing the Roman statesman and stoic Cato's opposition to Cæsar, was immensely popular; in fact, George Washington had the play performed for his troops at Valley Forge. Addison's optimistic writing style constructed with gracious mannerisms is a major reason for his abiding influence in English literature. Samuel Johnson praised his work, "Whoever wishes to attain an English style, familiar but not coarse, and elegant but not ostentatious, must give his days and nights to the study of Addison."

In his and Richard Steele's *The Spectator*, 2 Addison developed an essay style which greatly influenced the writings in eighteenth-century periodicals. In the short well-known passages in our readings on the pleasures of the imagination, Addison clearly notes some first suggestions towards a theory of æsthetics. His contribution represents a shift in emphasis from the creations of the artist to the leasures of the connoisseur; for this reason, Addison's essays had great appeal to the rising middle class seeking to improve their refinement and taste. Addison notes that of the pleasures of sense, the understanding and the imagination, only the latter pleasures originate from sight. Whether or not imaginative pleasures derive from the appearance or the ideas of visible objects, the pleasure, he thinks, is due to their expansiveness, novelty, or beauty. He argues that the purpose of such pleasure is attributable to the Supreme Being providing light and color to behold His works. Accordingly, Addison believes beauty in nature surpasses that of art, even though different aspects of beauty in each form enhance the beauty of the other.

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Man in a Dungeon is capable of entertaining himself with Scenes and Landskips more beautiful than any that can be found in the whole Compass of Nature.

11.1 Text-Pleasures of The Imagination

The Pleasures of the Imagination is a long didactic poem by Mark Akenside, first published in 1744. The first book defines the powers of imagination and discusses the various kinds of pleasure to be derived from the perception of beauty; the second distinguishes works of imagination from philosophy; the third describes the pleasure to be found in the study of man, the sources of ridicule, the operations of the mind, in producing works of imagination, and the influence of imagination on morals. The ideas were largely borrowed from Joseph Addison's essays on the imagination in the *Spectator* and from Lord Shaftesbury. Edward Dowden complains that "his tone is too high-pitched; his ideas are too much in the air; they do not nourish themselves in the common heart, the common life of man." Samuel Johnson praised the blank verse of the poems, but found fault with the long and complicated periods. Akenside got the idea for the poem during a visit to Morpeth in 1738. *The Pleasures of the Imagination* may also refer to *The Spectator* papers numbered 411 through 418. These specific papers differed from the rest in that they were non-narrative and philosophical, and contained less obvious social commentary.

Our Sight is the most perfect and most delightful of all our Senses. It fills the Mind with the largest Variety of Ideas, converses with its Objects at the greatest Distance, and continues the longest in Action without being tired or satiated with its proper Enjoyments. The Sense of Feeling can indeed give us a Notion of Extension, Shape, and all other Ideas that enter at the Eye, except Colours; but at the same time it is very much straightened and confined in its Operations, to the number, bulk, and distance of its particular Objects. Our Sight seems designed to supply all these Defects, and may be considered as a more delicate and diffusive kind of Touch, that spreads itself over an infinite Multitude of Bodies, comprehends the largest Figures, and brings into our reach some of the most remote Parts of the Universe.

It is this Sense which furnishes the Imagination with its Ideas; so that by the Pleasures of the Imagination or Fancy (which I shall use promiscuously) I here mean such as arise from visible Objects, either when we have them actually in our View, or when we call up their Ideas in our Minds by Paintings, Statues, Descriptions, or any the like Occasion. We cannot indeed have a single Image in the Fancy that did not make its first Entrance through the Sight; but we have the Power of retaining, altering and compounding those Images, which we have once received, into all the varieties of Picture and Vision that are most agreeable to the Imagination; for by this Faculty a Man in a Dungeon is capable of entertaining himself with Scenes and Landskips more beautiful than any that can be found in the whole Compass of Nature.

"There are, indeed, but very few who know how to be idle and innocent, or have a Relish of any Pleasures that are not Criminal; every Diversion they take is at the Expence of some one Virtue or another, and their very first Step out of Business is into Vice or Folly".

By the Pleasures of the Imagination, I mean only such Pleasures as arise originally from Sight, and that I divide these Pleasures into two Kinds: My Design being first of all to Discourse of those Primary Pleasures of the Imagination, which entirely proceed from such Objects as are before our Eye; and in the next place to speak of those Secondary Pleasures of the Imagination which flow from the Ideas of visible Objects, when the Objects are not actually before the Eye, but are called up into our Memories, or formed into agreeable Visions of Things that are either Absent or Fictitious.

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The Pleasures of the Imagination, taken in the full Extent, are not so gross as those of Sense, nor so refined as those of the Understanding. The last are, indeed, more preferable, because they are founded on some new Knowledge or Improvement in the Mind of Man; yet it must be confest, that those of the "Pleasures of the Imagination" by Joseph Addison Imagination are as great and as transporting as the other. A beautiful Prospect delights the Soul, as much as a Demonstration; and a Description in Homer has charmed more Readers than a Chapter in Aristotle. Besides, the Pleasures of the Imagination have this Advantage, above those of the Understanding, that they are more obvious, and more easie to be acquired. It is but opening the Eye, and the Scene enters. The Colours paint themselves on the Fancy, with very little Attention of Thought or Application of Mind in the Beholder. We are struck, we know not how, with the Symmetry of any thing we see, and immediately assent to the Beauty of an Object, without enquiring into the particular Causes and Occasions of it.

The Pleasures of the Imagination is a long didactic poem by Mark Akenside, first published in 1744.

There are, indeed, but very few who know how to be idle and innocent, or have a Relish of any Pleasures that are not Criminal; every Diversion they take is at the Expence of some one Virtue or another, and their very first Step out of Business is into Vice or Folly. A Man should endeavour, therefore, to make the Sphere of his innocent Pleasures as wide as possible, that he may retire into them with Safety, and find in them such a Satisfaction as a wise Man would not blush to take. Of this Nature are those of the Imagination, which do not require such a Bent of Thought as is necessary to our more serious Employments, nor, at the same time, suffer the Mind to sink into that Negligence and Remissness, which are apt to accompany our more sensual Delights, but, like a gentle Exercise to the Faculties, awaken them from Sloth and Idleness, without putting them upon any Labour or Difficulty.

We might here add, that the Pleasures of the Fancy are more conducive to Health, than those of the Understanding, which are worked out by Dint of Thinking, and attended with too violent a Labour of the Brain. Delightful Scenes, whether in Nature, Painting, or Poetry, have a kindly Influence on the Body, as well as the Mind, and not only serve to clear and brighten the Imagination, but are able to disperse Grief and Melancholy, and to set the Animal Spirits in pleasing and agreeable Motions. For this Reason Sir Francis Bacon, in his Essay upon Health, has not thought it improper to prescribe to his Reader a Poem or a Prospect, where he particularly dissuades him from knotty and subtile Disquisitions, and advises him to pursue Studies that fill the Mind with splendid and illustrious Objects, as Histories, Fables, and Contemplations of Nature.

11.2 Sources of Pleasures

I shall first consider those Pleasures of the Imagination, which arise from the actual View and Survey of outward Objects: And these, I think, all proceed from the Sight of what is Great, Uncommon, or Beautiful. There may, indeed, be something so terrible or offensive, that the Horror or Loathsomeness of an Object may over-bear the Pleasure which results from its Greatness, Novelty, or Beauty; but still there will be such a Mixture of Delight in the very Disgust it gives us, as any of these three Qualifications are most conspicuous and prevailing.

"Delightful Scenes, whether in Nature, Painting, or Poetry, have a kindly Influence . . . and not only serve to clear and brighten the Imagination, but are able to disperse Grief and Melancholy" By Greatness, I do not only mean the Bulk of any single Object, but the Largeness of a whole View,

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considered as one entire Piece.. . . Our Imagination loves to be filled with an Object, or to grasp at any thing that is too big for its Capacity. We are flung into a pleasing Astonishment at such unbounded Views, and feel a delightful Stillness and Amazement in the Soul at the Apprehension of them. The Mind of Man naturally hates everything that looks like a Restraint upon it, and is apt to fancy it self under a sort of Confinement, when the Sight is pent up in a narrow Compass, and shortned on every side by the Neighbourhood of Walls or Mountains.. . . [W]ide and undetermined Prospects are as pleasing to the Fancy, as the Speculations of Eternity or Infinitude are to the Understanding. But if there be a Beauty or Uncommonness joined with this Grandeur, as in a troubled Ocean, a Heaven adorned with Stars and Meteors, or a spacious Landskip cut out into Rivers, Woods, Rocks, and Meadows, the Pleasure still grows upon us, as it rises from more than a single Principle.

[Novelty] bestows Charms on a Monster, and makes even the Imperfections of Nature please us." Every thing that is new or uncommon raises a Pleasure in the Imagination, because it fills the Soul with an agreeable Surprize, gratifies its Curiosity, and gives it an Idea of which it was not before possest. We are indeed so often conversant with one Set of Objects, and tired out with so many repeated Shows of the same Things, that whatever is new or uncommon contributes a little to vary human Life, and to divert our Minds, for a while, with the Strangeness of its Appearance: It serves us for a kind of Refreshment, and takes off from that Satiety we are apt to complain of in our usual and ordinary Entertainments. It is this that bestows Charms on a Monster, and makes even the Imperfections of Nature please us. It is this that recommends Variety, where the Mind is every Instant called off to something new, and the Attention not suffered to dwell too long, and waste it self on any particular Object. It is this, likewise, that improves what is great or beautiful, and make it afford the Mind a double Entertainment.

Did u know? One of the dominant practices in contemporary eighteenth-century literary studies is reading art and aesthetics as ideology.

But there is nothing that makes its Way more directly to the Soul than Beauty, which immediately diffuses a secret Satisfaction and Complacency through the Imagination, and gives a Finishing to any thing that is Great or Uncommon. The very first Discovery of it strikes the Mind with an inward Joy, and spreads a Chearfulness and Delight through all its Faculties. There is not perhaps any real Beauty or Deformity more in one Piece of Matter than another, because we might have been so made, that whatsoever now appears loathsome to us, might have shewn it self agreeable; but we find by Experience, that there are several Modifications of Matter which the Mind, without any previous Consideration, pronounces at first sight Beautiful or Deformed. Thus we see that every different Species of sensible Creatures has its different Notions of Beauty, and that each of them is most affected with the Beauties of its own Kind. This is no where more remarkable than in Birds of the same Shape and Proportion, where we often see the Male determined in his Courtship by the single Grain or Tincture of a Feather, and never discovering any Charms but in the Colour of its Species.

"Every different Species of sensible Creatures has its different Notions of Beauty, and that each of them is most affected with the Beauties of its own Kind." There is a second Kind of Beauty that we find in the several Products of Art and Nature, which does not work in the Imagination with that Warmth and Violence as the Beauty that appears in our proper Species, but is apt however to raise in us a secret Delight, and a kind of Fondness for the Places or Objects in which we discover it. This consists either in the Gaiety or Variety of Colours, in the Symmetry and Proportion of Parts, in the Arrangement and Disposition of Bodies, or in a just Mixture and Concurrence of all together.

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Among these several Kinds of Beauty the Eye takes most Delight in Colours. We no where meet with a more glorious or pleasing Show in Nature than what appears in the Heavens at the rising and setting of the Sun, which is wholly made up of those different Stains of Light that shew themselves in Clouds Reading For Philosophical Inquiry of a different Situation. For this Reason we find the Poets, who are always addressing themselves to the Imagination, borrowing more of their Epithets from Colours than from any other Topic. As the Fancy delights in every thing that is Great, Strange, or Beautiful, and is still more pleased the more it finds of these Perfections in the same Object, so is it capable of receiving a new Satisfaction by the Assistance of another Sense. Thus any continued Sound, as the Musick of Birds, or a Fall of Water, awakens every moment the Mind of the Beholder, and makes him more attentive to the several Beauties of the Place that lye before him. Thus if there arises a Fragrancy of Smells or Perfumes, they heighten the Pleasures of the Imagination, and make even the Colours and Verdure of the Landskip appear more agreeable; for the Ideas of both Senses recommend each other, and are pleasanter together than when they enter the Mind separately: As the different Colours of a Picture, when they are well disposed, set off one another, and receive an additional Beauty from the Advantage of their Situation.

11.3 Final Causes of Beauty

Though . . . we considered how every thing that is Great, New, or Beautiful, is apt to affect the Imagination with Pleasure, we must own that it is impossible for us to assign the necessary Cause of this Pleasure, because we know neither the Nature of an Idea, nor the Substance of a Human Soul, which might help us to discover the Conformity or Disagreeableness of the one to the other; and therefore, for want of such a Light, all that we can do in Speculations of this kind is to reflect on those Operations of the Soul that are most agreeable, and to range under their proper Heads, what is pleasing or displeasing to the Mind, without being able to trace out the several necessary and efficient Causes from whence the Pleasure or Displeasure arises. Final Causes lye more bare and open to our Observation, as there are often a great Variety that belong to the same Effect; and these, tho' they are not altogether so satisfactory, are generally more useful than the other, as they give us greater Occasion of admiring the Goodness and Wisdom of the first Contriver.

One of the Final Causes of our Delight, in any thing that is great, may be this. The Supreme Author of our Being has so formed the Soul of Man, that nothing but himself can be its last, adequate, and proper Happiness. Because, therefore, a great Part of our Happiness must arise from the Contemplation of his Being, that he might give our Souls a just Relish of such a Contemplation, he has made them naturally delight in the Apprehension of what is Great or Unlimited. Our Admiration, which is a very pleasing Motion of the Mind, immediately rises at the Consideration of any Object that takes up a great deal of Room in the Fancy, and by Consequence, will improve into the highest Pitch of Astonishment and Devotion when we contemplate his Nature, that is neither circumscribed by Time nor Place, nor to be comprehended by the largest Capacity of a Created Being.

He has annexed a secret Pleasure to the Idea of any thing that is new or uncommon, that he might encourage us in the Pursuit after Knowledge, and engage us to search into the Wonders of his Creation; for every new Idea brings such a Pleasure along with it, as rewards any Pains we have taken in its Acquisition, and consequently serves as a Motive to put us upon fresh Discoveries.

He has made every thing that is beautiful in our own Species pleasant, that all Creatures might be tempted to multiply their Kind, and fill the World with Inhabitants; for 'tis very remarkable that where-ever Nature is crost in the Production of a Monster (the Result of any unnatural Mixture) the Breed is incapable of propagating its Likeness, and of founding a new Order of Creatures; so that unless all Animals were allured by the Beauty of their own Species, Generation would be at an End, and the Earth unpeopled.

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"The Supreme Author of our Being has so formed the Soul of Man, that nothing but himself can be its last, adequate, and proper Happiness." In the last Place, he has made every thing that is beautiful in all other Objects pleasant, or rather has made so many Objects appear beautiful, that he might render the whole Creation more gay and delightful. He has given almost every thing about us the Power of raising an agreeable Idea in the Imagination: So that it is impossible for us to behold his Works with Coldness or Indifference, and to survey so many Beauties without a secret Satisfaction and Complacency. Things would make but a poor Appearance to the Eye, if we saw them only in their proper Figures and Motions: And what Reason can we assign for their exciting in us many of those Ideas which are different from any thing that exists in the Objects themselves, (for such are Light and Colours) were it not to add Supernumerary Ornaments to the Universe, and make it more agreeable to the Imagination? We are every where entertained with pleasing Shows and Apparitions, we discover Imaginary Glories in the Heavens, and in the Earth, and see some of this Visionary Beauty poured out upon the whole Creation; but what a rough unsightly Sketch of Nature should we be entertained with, did all her Colouring disappear, and the several Distinctions of Light and Shade vanish? In short, our Souls are at present delightfully lost and bewildered in a pleasing Delusion, and we walk about like the enchanted Hero of a Romance, who sees beautiful Castles, Woods and Meadows; and at the same time hears the warbling of Birds, and the purling of Streams; but upon the finishing of some secret Spell, the fantastick Scene breaks up, and the disconsolate Knight finds himself on a barren Heath, or in a solitary Desart. It is not improbable that something like this may be the State of the Soul after its first Separation, in respect of the Images it will receive from Matter; tho indeed the Ideas of Colours are so pleasing and beautiful in the Imagination, that it is possible the Soul will not be deprived of them, but perhaps find them excited by some other Occasional Cause, as they are at present by the different Impressions of the subtle Matter on the Organ of Sight.. . .

11.4 The Art of Nature

If we consider the Works of Nature and Art, as they are qualified to entertain the Imagination, we shall find the last very defective, in Comparison of the former; for though they may sometimes appear as Beautiful or Strange, they can have nothing in them of that Vastness and Immensity, which afford so great an Entertainment to the Mind of the Beholder. The one may be as Polite and Delicate as the other, but can never shew her self so August and Magnificent in the Design. There is something more bold and masterly in the rough careless Strokes of Nature, than in the nice Touches and Embellishments of Art. The Beauties of the most stately Garden or Palace lie in a narrow Compass, the Imagination immediately runs them over, and requires something else to gratifie her; but, in the wide Fields of Nature, the Sight wanders up and down without Confinement, and is fed with an infinite variety of Images, without any certain Stint or Number. For this Reason we always find the Poet in Love with a Country-Life, where Nature appears in the greatest Perfection, and furnishes out all those Scenes that are most apt to delight the Imagination.

But tho' there are several of these wild Scenes, that are more delightful than any artificial Shows; yet we find the Works of Nature still more pleasant, the more they resemble those of Art: For in this case our Pleasure rises from a double Principle; from the Agreeableness of the Objects to the Eye, and from their Similitude to other Objects: We are pleased as well with comparing their Beauties, as with surveying them, and can represent them to our Minds, either as Copies or Originals. Hence it is that we take Delight in a Prospect which is well laid out, and diversified with Fields and Meadows,Woods and Rivers; in those accidental Landskips of Trees, Clouds and Cities, that are sometimes found in the Veins of Marble; in the curious Fret-work of Rocks and Grottos; and, in a Word, in any thing that hath such a Variety or Regularity as may seem the Effect of Design, in what we call the Works of Chance.

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"There is something more bold and masterly in the rough careless Strokes of Nature, than in the nice Touches and Embellishments of Art."

If the Products of Nature rise in Value, according as they more or less resemble those of Art, we may be sure that artificial Works receive a greater Advantage from their Resemblance of such as are natural; because here the Similitude is not only pleasant, but the Pattern more perfect.

We have before observed, that there is generally in Nature something more Grand and August, than what we meet with in the Curiosities of Art. When therefore, we see this imitated in any measure, it gives us a nobler and more exalted kind of Pleasure than what we receive from the nicer and more accurate Productions of Art. On this Account our English Gardens are not so entertaining to the Fancy as those in France and Italy, where we see a large Extent of Ground covered over with an agreeable mixture of Garden and Forest, which represent every where an artificial Rudeness, much more charming than that Neatness and Elegancy which we meet with in those of our own Country.

"[W]ide and undetermined Prospects are as pleasing to the Fancy, as the Speculations of Eternity or Infinitude are to the Understanding."

If the Writers who have given us an Account of China, tell us the Inhabitants of that Country laugh at the Plantations of our Europeans, which are laid out by the Rule and Line; because, they say, any one may place Trees in equal Rows and uniform Figures. They chuse rather to shew a Genius in Works of this Nature, and therefore always conceal the Art by which they direct themselves. They have a Word, it seems, in their Language, by which they express the particular Beauty of a Plantation that thus strikes the Imagination at first Sight, without discovering what it is that has so agreeable an Effect. Our British Gardeners, on the contrary, instead of humouring Nature, love to deviate from it as much as possible. Our Trees rise in Cones, Globes, and Pyramids. We see the Marks of the Scissars upon every Plant and Bush. I do not know whether I am singular in my Opinion, but, for my own part, I would rather look upon a Tree in all its Luxuriancy and Diffusion of Boughs and Branches, than when it is thus cut and trimmed into a Mathematical Figure; and cannot but fancy that an Orchard in Flower looks infinitely more delightful, than all the little Labyrinths of the finished Parterre.

11.5 Important Points of Addison's Essays

1. The essays in this reading are sometimes cited as having an influence on David Hume's *of the Standard of Taste*. Specifically, which of Addison's points do you think most influenced Hume?
2. Addison's series of articles on the pleasures of the imagination is sometimes cited as the dawn of modern æsthetic theory. Prior to the publication of these essays in The Spectator in 1712, little sustained thought on æsthetics had been forthcoming in Western literature. Do you think the rise of the middle class and the resulting increase in leisure activities can be historically and economically associated with the development of modern æsthetics?
3. Explain what Addison means when he writes loathsome and offensive objects might still bring a kind of delight if the qualities of greatness, novelty, and beauty are present:

   whatever is new or uncommon . . . serves us for a kind of Refreshment, and . . . bestows Charms on a Monster, and makes even the Imperfections of Nature please us.

   How can this analysis of the beauty of a "Monster" be rendered consistent with Addison's argument for the beauty resulting from the fixity of biological species.

   The Supreme Being has made every thing that is beautiful in our own Species pleasant, that all Creatures might be tempted to multiply their Kind, and fill the World with Inhabitants; for 'tis very remarkable that where-ever Nature is crost in the Production of a Monster (the Result of any unnatural Mixture) the Breed is incapable of propagating its Likeness, and of founding a new Order of Creatures .
4. Addison assumes the teleological source of the pleasures of imagination is the Supreme Creator. Do you think it would be possible to construct a basis for final causes of these pleasures in terms of biological or natural origin instead of basing them on God?

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5. Even though Addison asserts that "unless all Animals were allured by the Beauty of their own Species, Generation would be at an End, and the Earth unpeopled,"

   Darwin points out:

   Slow though the process of selection may be, if feeble man can do much by artificial selection, I can see no limit to the amount of change, to the beauty and complexity of the coadaptations between all organic beings . . . which may have been effected in the long course of time .

   Certainly, as Darwin points out, "the gradual process of improvement" by crossing different varieties of flowers "may plainly be recognized in the increased size and beauty which we not see in the varieties" of "rose, pelargonium, dahlia, and other plants, when compared with the older varieties . . . " Yet, recent experiments have shown, in the words of researcher Piotr Winkielman:

   What you like is a function of what your mind has been trained on. A stimulus becomes attractive if it falls into the average of what you've seen and is therefore simple for your brain to process. In our experiments, we show that we can make an arbitrary pattern likeable just by preparing the mind to recognize it quickly.

   This phenomenon is termed the "beauty-in-averageness effect" Does prototypicality then reflect health and fitness value of potential mates as

   Addison suggests? Or do these conflicting results suggest beauty is independent of biological explanation? Addison writes, "[We] immediately assent to the Beauty of an Object, without enquiring into the particular Causes and Occasions of it."

6. Explain clearly why Addison believes the necessary conditions for the experience of the pleasures of the imagination, including the experience of beauty, cannot be discovered? Why does he think we cannot know the nature of ideas or the mind? To what extent do you think he is following John Locke's analysis that by "putting together the ideas of thinking and willing, or the power of moving or quieting corporeal motion, joined to substance, of which we have no distinct idea, we have the idea of an immaterial spirit.
7. Do you think that Addison makes a mistake in attributing the pleasures of the imagination as proceeding from sight alone? Why do you suppose he does not include pleasures of sense and pleasures of understanding as imaginative also? Indeed, Addison emphasizes that beauty is enhanced by the ideas of other senses such as music or fragrance. Could not he argue that different pleasures of the imagination derive from different "intelligence" types such as those proposed by Howard Gardner? That is, beauty in words and language stem from linguistic ability; beauty in numbers and logic is accounted for by logico-mathematical skill; beauty in music and rhythm originate from musical talent; beauty in structure and form of sculpture are attributable to tactile-kinesthetic experience and so forth, just as beauty in spatial perception derives from spatialvisual ability.
8. How do you think Addison's account of the delight afforded by horrible or monstrous effects of pleasures of the imagination relate to Edmund Burke's analysis of the sublime where Burke states, "Another source of the sublime is infinity; . . . [i]nfinity has a tendency to fill the mind with that sort of delightful horror, which is the most genuine effect and truest test of the sublime."?
9. William Temple, in his essay "Upon the Gardens of Epicurus" contrasted the natural expression of Chinese gardens to disadvantage of the symmetry and order of English gardens, and for a time altered the practice of design landscape of English gardens. Pope also criticized the English formal landscape garden:

   His Gardens next your admiration call;

   On ev'ry side you look, behold the Wall!

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No pleasing Intricacies intervene;

No artful wildness to perplex the scene;

Grove nods at grove, each Alley has a brother,

And half the platform just reflects the other.

Although the Chinese influence is reflected in Addison's account of the influence of natural beauty in artistic construction, can it be effectively argued against Addison that the Chinese influence would not endure since historically those pleasures depended upon the factor of novelty more so than those of greatness or æsthetic beauty?

10. Addison writes, "We are pleased as well with comparing their Beauties [of works of nature], as with surveying them, and can represent them to our Minds, either as Copies or Originals. Examine closely whether or not Addison views beauty as resulting from nature or from the recognition of the originality of nature. Does the delight stem from the imposition of pattern and order from the mind upon nature or from the effects of the natural form and arrangement of natural objects upon the attentive mind?

11.6 Critical Appreciation

One of the dominant practices in contemporary eighteenth-century literary studies is reading art and aesthetics as ideology. This practice commonly issues in the specific claim that eighteenth-century literary writing and aesthetics serve the interests and values of the middle class or bourgeoisie, which is understood to be the rising or emerging group within a society whose economic structure can reasonably be referred to as "capitalism." Indeed, as Lisa von Sneidern puts it in a recent article in *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, a journal that has encouraged and welcomed this approach, "it has become nearly commonplace to disclose how complicit the belles lettres were with the emergence of bourgeois capitalism and colonialism."

Since Addison's essays on the pleasures of the imagination are, if not the origin of eighteenth-century English aesthetics as some have argued, then at least of central importance to English speculation about art during the period, it is not surprising to find that both they and the periodical in which they appeared are exhibits in the case for eighteenth-century aesthetics as bourgeois ideology. In what, for those engaged in this project, was an extremely influential book published in 1962 but not translated into English until 1989, Jurgen Habermas identifies *The Spectator* as a major institution of "the bourgeois public sphere," which he sees emerging in eighteenth-century western Europe. Following Habermas, Robert Holub discussed Addison's aesthetics and "its place in this atmosphere of bourgeois justification and preparation," while Terry Eagleton discussed his literary criticism as part of "a project of a bourgeois cultural politics." Carole Fabricant, unhappy with the way in which literary critics were ignoring social and political history, then tried to give some textual support to the argument by citing and commenting on Addison's essays on the pleasures in her essay, "The Aesthetics and Politics of Landscape in the Eighteenth Century." Though Eagleton passes over Addison's aesthetics in his later major treatment of the subject, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*, Erin Mackie has recently reaffirmed, with some adjustments, Habermas' view of Addison's periodical as "an exemplary organ of the bourgeois public sphere" and proceeded to discuss Addison's aesthetics as a contribution to the "cultural aesthetic of bourgeois ideology."

That this case is untenable becomes clear, I propose, as soon as we begin to take into account some of the work that has been done by historians of eighteenth-century society and historians of post-Renaissance political thought since Habermas presented his vision of eighteenth-century English society and ideology thirty-eight years ago. By doing so, we can see not just that the understanding of Addison's aesthetics as bourgeois ideology is misguided, but also that the commitment to interdisciplinary studies that is supposedly a hallmark of the criticism supporting this understanding is weak. That the case is untenable is further evident once we consider those passages from

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Addison's essays that are cited as evidence, as well as some other passages from these essays. In response to the charge that denying the existence of bourgeois ideology in the essays is to empty them of all ideological content (on grounds that if Addison's ideology is not bourgeois it cannot be anything), I will further suggest that insofar as they serve, promote, or justify the interests of any social groups, Addison's essays serve the interests of the diverse groups that were represented by what these groups, their opponents, and historians call "Whigs." This becomes clear if, again, we take into account some of the work of historians of Augustan society and political thought ignored and misread by literary critics bent on making Addison (and other eighteenth-century figures) a bourgeois ideologue. This is not, however, to say that Whig ideology is the essence of these essays, or that these essays are reducible to what might be taken as a Whig political or social statement.

Self Assessment

1. Choose the correct options:

(*i*) Akenside got the idea for the poem during a visit of Morpeth in

(*a*) 1738 (*b*) 1735 (*c*) 1730 (*d*) 1740

(*ii*) 'Of the Standard of Taste' was written by

(*a*) Charles Lamb (*b*) Addison

(*c*) David Hume (*d*) None of these

(*iii*) Unless all animals were allured by the beauty of their own species, Generation would be at an End, and the Earth unpeopled - According to

(*a*) Addison (*b*) Darwin

(*c*) Charles Lamb (*d*) None of these

11.7 Summary

- 'The Pleasures of the Imagination' examines the birth and development of English 'high culture' in the eighteenth century. It charts the growth of a literary and artistic world fostered by publishers, theatrical and musical impresarios, picture dealers and auctioneers, and presented to the public in coffee-houses, concert halls, libraries, theatres and pleasure gardens. In 1660, there were few professional authors, musicians and painters, no public concert series, galleries, newspaper critics or reviews. By the dawn of the nineteenth century they were all part of the cultural life of the nation.
- John Brewer's enthralling book explains how this happened and recreates the world in which the great works of English eighteenth century art were made. Its purpose is to show how literature, painting, music and the theatre were communicated to a public increasingly avid for them. It explores the alleys and garrets of Grub Street, rummages the shelves of bookshops and libraries, peers through printsellers' shop windows and into artists' studios, and slips behind the scenes at Drury Lane and Covent Garden. It takes us out of Gay and Boswell's London to visit the debating clubs, poetry circles, ballrooms, concert halls, music festivals, theatres and assemblies that made the culture of English provincial towns, and shows us how the national landscape became one of Britain's greatest cultural treasures. It reveals to us a picture of English artistic and literary life in the eighteenth century less familiar, but more surprising, more various and more convincing than any we have seen before.
- 'The Pleasures of the Imagination' is a splendid cornucopia of a book. It describes the contortions of the eighteenth century as it developed as a culture…It is full of pure delight…The marvel of this book is that in writing in exuberant detail about the past, Brewer succeeds in illuminating the present…This book wears its massive scholarship lightly. I hope some of our new political masters have time to read it, for it is a history that teaches us many lessons." PETER HALL, 'Observer'

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- "Brewer ranges over almost every corner of the English mind with sharp, darting observation…Brewer is perceptive, amusing and thorough wherever he strays. This is by far the most complete and up-to-date account of the evolving Georgian arts…We are shown round a society aiming at Rome but often hitting Babylon, with the combined attitudes of 'fin-de-siècle' Paris and of Las Vegas. This is a book to treasure as it treasures a past we thought we had lost." PAT ROGERS, 'Sunday Telegraph'
- "A model of the new cultural history…In 'Britons', Linda Colley highlighted the new political, patriotic and religious tides which flowed in the Georgian age, creating a fresh confidence and sense of national identity…'The Pleasures of the Imagination' confirms this view of the making of the public mind. It shows how the English came to feel not just strong but civilized too, polite as well as powerful. God's chosen people, of the age of Cromwell, were reinventing themselves as Shakespeare's heirs."
- Akenside got the idea for the poem during a visit to Morpeth in 1738.
- Addison assumes the teleological source of the pleasures of imagination is the Supreme Creator.

11.8 Key-Words

1. Concept : General idea.
2. Symmetry : The quality of being made up of exactly similar parts facing each other or around an axis.

11.9 Review Questions

1. Clarify Addison's distinction among pleasures of the imagination, of sense, and of the understanding. Which of these is the most refined and which the least refined?
2. Describe the salutary effects mentioned by Addison of the imaginative pleasures ultimately arising from the perception of light and color.
3. What qualities of objects in the world does Addison discus which occasion the pleasures of the imagination?
4. What two main kinds of beauty does Addison escribe and what is their origins?
5. What does he think is a final cause of æsthetic leasure? Why does he think the Supreme Being created mankind with the capacity for experiencing pleasures of the imagination?
6. How does Addison relate the beauty of art to the beauty of nature? Why does he think the artistic beauty inferior to that of nature even though natural beauty embodies æsthetic principles?

Answers: Self-Assessment

1. (*i*) (*a*) (*ii*) (*c*) (*iii*) (*a*)

11.10 Further Readings

1. Hugh Blair; Essays on the Pleasures of the Imagination, Joseph Addison, Duvera EK and C. Antwerp.
2. Addison-pleasures of Imagination.

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Unit 12: Steele- On The Death of Friend: Introduction

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Objectives

After reading this Unit students will be able to:

- Explain the life and works of Steele.
- Introduce 'On the Death of Friend'

Introduction

The chief glory of the "Spectator" is, of course, the club, and it was in the essay which follows that Steele first sketched the characters composing it. The Spectator himself was Addison's creation, and Addison also elaborated Sir Roger, though Steele originated him. Whatever may be the respective claims of Addison and Steele to the credit for the success of the "Spectator," it is to Steele that the honor belongs of having founded its predecessor, the "Tatler," and so of originating the periodical essay.

Steele was a warm-hearted, impulsive man, full of sentiment, improvident, and somewhat weak of will. These qualities are reflected in his writings, which are inferior to Addison's in grace and finish, but are marked by greater spontaneity and invention. Probably no piece of writing of equal length has added so many portraits to the gallery of our literature as the first sketch of the Spectator Club which is here printed.

12.1 Biography

English man of letters in the reign of Queen Anne, is inseparably associated in the history of literature with his personal friend Joseph Addison. He cannot be said to have lost in reputation by the partnership, because he was inferior to Addison in purely literary gift, and it is Addison's literary genius that has floated their joint work above merely journalistic celebrity; but the advantage was not all on Steele's side, inasmuch as his more brilliant coadjutor has usurped not a little of the merit rightly due to him. Steele's often-quoted generous acknowledgment of Addison's services in the *Tatler* has proved true in a somewhat different sense from that intended by the writer: "I fared like a distressed prince who calls in a powerful neighbor to his aid; I was undone by my auxiliary; when I had once called him in I could not subsist without dependence on him." The truth is that in this happy alliance the one was the complement of the other; and the balance of mutual advantage was much more nearly even than Steele claimed or posterity has generally allowed.

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The famous literary pair were born in the same year. Steele, the senior by less than two months, was baptized on the 12th of March 1672 in Dublin. His father, also Richard Steele, was an attorney. He died before his son had reached his sixth year, but the boy found a protector in his maternal uncle, Henry Gascoigne, secretary and confidential agent to two successive dukes of Ormond. Through his influence he was nominated to the Charterhouse in 1684, and there first met with Addison. Five years afterwards he proceeded to Christ Church, Oxford, and was a postmaster at Merton when Addison was a demy at Magdalen. Their schoolboy friendship was continued at the university, and probably helped to give a more serious turn to Steele's mind than his natural temperament would have taken under different companionship. Addison's father also took an interest in the warm-hearted young Irishman; but their combined influence did not steady him sufficiently to keep his impulses within the lines of a regular career; without waiting for a degree he volunteered into the army, and served for some time as a cadet "under the command of the unfortunate duke of Ormond" (the first duke's grandson, who was attained in 1715). This escapade was made without his uncle's consent, and cost him, according to his own account, "the succession to a very good estate in the county of Wexford in Ireland." Still, he did not lack advancement in the profession he had chosen. A poem on the funeral of Queen Mary I (1695), dedicated to Lord Cutts, colonel of the Coldstream Guards, brought him under the notice of that nobleman, who took the gentleman trooper into his household as a secretary, made him an officer in his own regiment, and ultimately procured for him a captaincy in Lord Lucas's regiment of foot. His name was noted for promotion by King William, but the king's death took place before anything had been done for Captain Steele. A duel which he fought with Captain Kelly in Hyde Park in 1700, and in which he wounded his antagonist dangerously, inspired him with the dislike of the practice that he showed to the end of his life.

Steele probably owed the king's favor to a timely reference to his majesty in *The Christian Hero*, his first prose treatise, published in April 1701. The "reformation of manners" was a cherished purpose with King William and his consort, which they tried to effect by proclamation and act of parliament; and a sensible well-written treatise, deploring the irregularity of the military character, and seeking to prove by examples — the king himself among the number — "that no principles but those of religion are sufficient to make a great man", was sure of attention. Steele complained that the reception of *The Christian Hero* by his comrades was not so respectful; they persisted in trying him by his own standard, and would not pass "the least levity in his words and actions" without protest. His uneasiness under the ridicule of his irreverent comrades had a curious result: it moved him to write a comedy. "It was now incumbent upon him", he says, "to enliven his character, for which reason he writ the comedy called *The Funeral*." Although, however, it was Steele's express purpose to free his character from the reproach of solemn dullness, and prove that he could write as smartly as another, he showed greater respect for decency than had for some time been the fashion on the stage. The purpose, afterwards more fully effected in his famous periodicals, of reconciling wit, good humor and good breeding with virtuous conduct was already deliberately in Steele's mind when he wrote his first comedy. The Funeral was produced and published in 1701, and received on the stage with favor. In his next comedy, *The Lying Lover; or, the Ladies' Friendship*, based on Pierre Corneille's *Menteur*, produced two years afterwards, in December 1703, Steele's moral purpose was directly avowed, and the play, according to his own statement, was "damned for its piety." *The Tender Husband*, an imitation of Molière's *Sicilien*, produced eighteen months later (in April 1705), though not less pure in tone, was more successful; in this play he gave unmistakable evidence of his happy genius for conceiving and embodying humorous types of character, putting on the stage the parents or grandparents of Squire Western, Tony Lumpkin and Lydia Languish. It was seventeen years before Steele again tried his fortune on the stage with *The Conscious Lovers*, the best and most successful of his comedies, produced in December 1722.

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Meanwhile the gallant captain had turned aside to another kind of literary work, in which, with the assistance of his friend Addison, he obtained a more enduring reputation. There never was a time when literary talent was so much sought after and rewarded by statesmen. Addison had already been waited on in his humble lodgings in the Haymarket, and advanced to office, when his friend the successful dramatist was appointed to the office of gazetteer. This was in April or May 1707. It was Steele's first connection with journalism. The periodical was at that time taking the place of the pamphlet as an instrument for working on public opinion. The *Gazette* gave little opening for the play of Steele's lively pen, his main duty, as he says, having been to "keep the paper very innocent and very insipid"; but the position made him familiar with the new field of enterprise in which his inventive mind soon discerned materials for a project of his own. The *Tatler* made its first appearance on the 12th of April 1709. It was partly a newspaper, a journal of politics and society, published three tunes a week. Steele's position as gazetteer furnished him with special advantages for political news, and as a popular frequenter of coffeehouses he was at no loss for social gossip. But Steele not only retailed and commented on social news, a function in which he had been anticipated by Daniel Defoe and others; he also gradually introduced into the *Tatler* as a special feature essays on general questions of manners and morality. It is not strictly true that Steele was the inventor of the English "essay" — there were essayists before the 18th century, notably Cowley and Temple; but he was the first to use the essay for periodical purposes, and he and Addison together developed a distinct species, to which they gave a permanent character, and in which they had many imitators. As a humbler motive for this fortunate venture Steele had the pinch of impecuniosity, due rather to excess of expenditure than to smallness of income. He had £300 a year from his gazetteership (paying a tax of £45), £100 as gentleman waiter to Prince George, £850 from the Barbadoes estates of his first wife, a widow named Margaret Stretch, and some fortune by his second wife — Mrs Mary Scurlock, the "dear Prue" of his charming letters. But Steele lived in considerable state after his second marriage, and before he started the *Tatler* was reduced to the necessity of borrowing. The assumed name of the editor was Isaac Bickerstaff, but Addison discovered the real author in the sixth number, and began to contribute in the eighteenth. It is only fair to Steele to state that the success of the *Tatler* was established before Addison joined him, and that Addison contributed to only forty-two of the two hundred and seventy-one numbers that had appeared when the paper was stopped, obscurely, in January 1711. Some papers satirizing Harley appeared in the *Tatler*, and Steele lost or resigned the post of gazetteer. It is possible that this political recklessness may have had something to do with the sudden end of the venture.

Only two months elapsed between the stoppage of the *Tatler* and the appearance of the *Spectator*, which was the organ of the two friends from the 1st of March 1711 until the 6th of December 1712. Addison was the chief contributor to the new venture, and the history of it belongs more to his life. Nevertheless, it is to be remarked as characteristic of the two writers that in this as in the *Tatler* Addison generally follows Steele's lead in the choice of subjects. The first suggestion of Sir Roger de Coverley was Steele's although it was Addison that filled in the outline of a good-natured country gentleman with the numerous little whimsicalities that convert Sir Roger into an amiable and exquisitely ridiculous provincial oddity. Steele had neither the fineness of touch nor the humorous malice that gives life and distinction to Addison's picture; the Sir Roger of his original hasty sketch has good sense as well as good nature, and the treatment is comparatively commonplace from a literary point of view, though unfortunately not commonplace in its charity. Steele's suggestive vivacity gave many another hint for the elaborating skill of his friend.

The *Spectator* was followed by the *Guardian*, the first number of which appeared on the 12th of March 1713. It bad a much shorter career, extending to only a hundred and seventy-six numbers, of which Steele wrote eighty-two. This was the last of his numerous periodicals in which he had the material assistance of Addison. But he continued for several years to project journals, under

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various titles, some of them political, some social in their objects, most of them very short-lived. Steele was a warm partisan of the principles of the Revolution, as earnest in his political as in his other convictions. The *Englishman* was started in October 1733, immediately after the stoppage of the *Guardian*, to assail the policy of the Tory ministry. The *Lover*, started in February 1714, was more general in its aims; but it gave place in a month or two to the *Reader*, a direct counterblast to the *Tory Examiner*. The *Englishman* was resuscitated for another volume in 1715; and he subsequently projected in rapid succession three unsuccessful ventures — *Town Talk*, the *Tea Table* and *Chit Chat*. Three years later he started his most famous political paper the *Plebeian*, rendered memorable by the fact that it embroiled him with his old ally Addison. The subject of controversy between the two lifelong friends was Sunderland's Peerage Bill. Steele's last venture in journalism was the *Theatre*, 1720, the immediate occasion of which was the revocation of his patent for Drury Lane. Besides these journals he wrote also several pamphlets on passing questions — on the disgrace of Marlborough in 1711, on the fortifications of Dunkirk in 1713, on the crisis in 1714, *An Apology for Himself and His Writings* (important biographically) in the same year, and on the South Sea mania in 1720.

The fortunes of Steele as a zealous Whig varied with the fortunes of his party. Over the Dunkirk question he waxed so hot that he threw up a pension and a commissionership of stamps, and went into parliament as member for Stockbridge to attack the ministry with voice and vote as well as with pen. But he had not sat many weeks when he was expelled from the house for the language of his pamphlet on the *Crisis*, which was stigmatized as seditious. The *Apology* already mentioned was his vindication of himself on this occasion. With the accession of the House of Hanover his fortunes changed. Honors and substantial rewards were showered upon him. He was made a justice of the peace, deputy-lieutenant of Middlesex, surveyor of the royal stables, governor of the royal company of comedians — the lasta lucrative post — and was also knighted (1715). After the suppression of the Jacobite rebellion he was appointed one of the commissioners of forfeited estates, and spent some two years in Scotland in that capacity. In 1718 he obtained a patent for a plan for bringing salmon alive from Ireland. Differing from his friends in power on the question of the Peerage Bill he was deprived of some of his offices, but when Robert Walpole became chancellor of the exchequer in 1721 he was reinstated. With all his emoluments however the imprudent, impulsive, ostentatious and generous Steele could never get clear of financial difficulties, and he was obliged to retire from London in 1724 and live in the country. He spent his last years on his wife's estate of Llangunnor in Wales, and, his health broken down by a paralytic seizure, died at Carmarthen on the 1st of September 1729.

12.2 Steele as a Writer

As mentioned above, in 1701, Steele published his first booklet entitled "The Christian Hero," which was written while Steele was serving in the army, and was his idea of a pamphlet of moral instruction. "The Christian Hero" was ultimately ridiculed for what some thought was hypocrisy because he did not necessarily follow his own preaching. He was criticized for publishing a booklet about morals when he, himself, enjoyed drinking, occasional dueling, and debauchery around town. In fact, Steele even had an illegitimate child Elizabeth Ousley, whom he later adopted. Steele wrote a comedy that same year titled *The Funeral*. This play was met with wide success and was performed at Drury Lane, bringing him to the attention of the King and the Whig party. Next, Steele wrote The Lying Lover, which was one of the first sentimental comedies, but was a failure on stage. In 1705, Steele wrote *The Tender Husband* with Addison's contributions, and later that year wrote the prologue to The Mistake, by John Vanbrugh, also an important member of the Whig Kit-Kat Club with Addison and Steele.

The Tatler, Steele's first journal, first came out on 12 April 1709, and ran three times a week: Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. Steele wrote this periodical under a pseudonym of Isaac

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Bickerstaff and gave him an entire, fully developed personality. Steele described his motive in writing *The Tatler* as "to expose the false arts of life, to pull off the disguises of cunning, vanity, and affectation, and to recommend a general simplicity in our dress, our discourse, and our behavior". Steele founded the magazine, and although he and Addison collaborated, Steele wrote the majority of the essays; Steele wrote roughly 188 of the 271 total, Addison 42, and 36 were the pair's collaborative works. While Addison contributed to *The Tatler*, it is widely regarded as Steele's work.

Following the demise of *The Tatler*, the two men founded *The Spectator* and also the *Guardian*.

In popular culture

Steele plays a minor role in the novel *The History of Henry Esmond* by William Makepeace Thackeray. It is during his time with the Life Guards, where he is mostly referred to as Dick the Scholar and makes mention of his friend "Joe Addison." He befriends the title character when Esmond is a boy.

12.3 Text-On the Death of Friends

Dies, ni fallor, adest, quem semper acerbum, Semper honoralum, sic dii voluistis, habebo. ["That day I shall always recollect with grief; with reverence also, for the gods so willed it"] Virgil. And now the rising day renews the year, A day for ever sad, for ever dear. *Dryden*

From my own Apartment, June 5. There are those among mankind, who can enjoy no relish of their being, except the world is made acquainted with all that relates to them, and think every thing lost that passes unobserved; but others find a solid delight in stealing by the crowd, and modelling their life after such a manner, as is as much above the approbation as the practice of the vulgar. Life being too short to give instances great enough of true friendship or good will, some sages have thought it pious to preserve a certain reverence for the names of their deceased friends; and have withdrawn themselves from the rest of the world at certain seasons, to commemorate in their own thoughts such of their acquaintance who have gone before them out of this life. And indeed, when we are advanced in years, there is not a more pleasing entertainment, than to recollect in a gloomy moment the many we have parted with that have been dear and agreeable to us, and to cast a melancholy thought or two after those with whom, perhaps, we have indulged ourselves in whole nights of mirth and jollity. With such inclinations in my heart I went to my closet yesterday in the evening, and resolved to be sorrowful; upon which occasion I could not but look with disdain upon myself, that though all the reasons which I had to lament the loss of many of my friends are now as forcible as at the moment of their departure, yet did not my heart swell with the same sorrow which I felt at the time; but I could, without tears, reflect upon many pleasing adventures I have had with some, who have long been blended with common earth. Though it is by the benefit of nature, that length of time thus blots out the violence of afflictions; yet, with tempers too much given to pleasure, it is almost necessary to revive the old places of grief in our memory; and ponder step by step on past life, to lead the mind into that sobriety of thought which poises the heart, and makes it beat with due time, without being quickened with desire, or retarded with despair, from its proper and equal motion. When we wind up a clock that is out of order, to make it go well for the future, we do not immediately set the hand to the present instant, but we make it strike the round of all its hours, before it can recover the regularity of its time. Such, thought I, shall be my method this evening; and since it is that day of the year which I dedicate to the memory of such in another life as I much delighted in when living, an hour or two shall be sacred to sorrow and their memory, while I run over all the melancholy circumstances of this kind which have occurred to me in my whole life.

The first sense of sorrow I ever knew was upon the death of my father, at which time I was not quite five years of age; but was rather amazed at what all the house meant, than possessed with

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a real understanding why nobody was willing to play with me. I remember I went into the room where his body lay, and my mother sat weeping alone by it. I had my battledore in my hand, and fell a-beating the coffin, and calling Papa; for, I know not how, I had some slight idea that he was locked up there. My mother caught me in her arms, and, transported beyond all patience of the silent grief she was before in, she almost smothered me in her embraces; and told me in a flood of tears, Papa could not hear me, and would play with me no more, for they were going to put him under ground, whence he could never come to us again. She was a very beautiful woman, of a noble spirit, and there was a dignity in her grief amidst all the wildness of her transport, which, methought, struck me with an instinct of sorrow, that, before I was sensible of what it was to grieve, seized my very soul, and has made pity the weakness of my heart ever since. The mind in infancy is, methinks, like the body in embryo; and receives impressions so forcible, that they are as hard to be removed by reason, as any mark with which a child is born is to be taken away by any future application. Hence it is, that good-nature in me is no merit; but having been so frequently overwhelmed with her tears before I knew the cause of any affliction, or could draw defences from my own judgement, I imbibed commiseration, remorse, and an unmanly gentleness of mind, which has since ensnared me into ten thousand calamities; from whence I can reap no advantage, except it be, that, in such a humour as I am now in, I can the better indulge myself in the softnesses of humanity, and enjoy that sweet anxiety which arises from the memory of past afflictions.

We that are very old are better able to remember things which befell us in our distant youth, than the passages of later days. For this reason it is that the companions of my strong and vigorous years present themselves more immediately to me in this office of sorrow. Untimely and unhappy deaths are what we are most apt to lament; so little are we able to make it indifferent when a thing happens, though we know it must happen. Thus we groan under life, and bewail those who are relieved from it. Every object that returns to our imagination raises different passions, according to the circumstance of their departure. Who can have lived in an army, and in a serious hour reflect upon the many gay and agreeable men that might long have flourished in the arts of peace, and not join with the imprecations of the fatherless and widows on the tyrant to whose ambition they fell sacrifices? But gallant men, who are cut off by the sword, move rather our veneration than our pity; and we gather relief enough from their own contempt of death, to make that no evil, which was approached with so much cheerfulness, and attended with so much honour. But when we turn our thoughts from the great parts of life on such occasions, and, instead of lamenting those who stood ready to give death to those from whom they had the fortune to receive it; I say, when we let our thoughts wander from such noble objects, and consider the havoc which is made among the tender and the innocent, pity enters with an unmixed softness, and possesses all our souls at once.

Here (were there words to express such sentiments with proper tenderness) I should record the beauty, innocence, and untimely death, of the first object my eyes ever beheld with love. The beauteous virgin! how ignorantly did she charm, how carelessly excel! Oh death! thou hast right to the bold, to the ambitious, to the high, and to the haughty; but why this cruelty to the humble, to the meek, to the undiscerning, to the thoughtless? Nor age, nor business, nor distress, can erase the dear image from my imagination. In the same week I saw her dressed for a ball, and in a shroud. How ill did the habit of death become the pretty trifler! I still behold the smiling earth—-A large train of disasters were coming on to my memory, when my servant knocked at my closet-door, and interrupted me with a letter, attended with a hamper of wine, of the same sort with that which is to be put to sale on Thursday next, at Garraway's coffee-house. Upon the receipt of it, I sent for three of my friends. We are so intimate, that we can be company in whatever state of mind we meet, and can entertain each other without expecting always to rejoice. The wine we found to be generous and warming, but with such a heat as moved us rather to be cheerful than frolicsome. It revived the spirits, without firing the blood. We commended it until two of the clock this

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morning; and having to-day met a little before dinner, we found, that though we drank two bottles a man, we had much more reason to recollect than forget what had passed the night before.

Self Assessment

1. Choose the correct options:

(*i*) Steele was born in

(*a*) 1672 (*b*) 1680 (*c*) 1691 (*d*) None of these

(*ii*) Steele began to write in

(*a*) 1702 (*b*) 1704 (*c*) 1705 (*d*) 1701

(*iii*) Steele was baptised on the 12th March 1672 in

(*a*) Paris (*b*) Dublin (*c*) London (*d*) None of these

(*iv*) The Funeral was published in

(*a*) 1701 (*b*) 1705 (*c*) 1703 (*d*) 1704

12.4 Summary

- English man of letters in the reign of Queen Anne, is inseparably associated in the history of literature with his personal friend Joseph Addison. He cannot be said to have lost in reputation by the partnership, because he was inferior to Addison in purely literary gift, and it is Addison's literary genius that has floated their joint work above merely journalistic celebrity; but the advantage was not all on Steele's side, inasmuch as his more brilliant coadjutor has usurped not a little of the merit rightly due to him. Steele's often-quoted generous acknowledgment of Addison's services in the Tatler has proved true in a somewhat different sense from that intended by the writer: "I fared like a distressed prince who calls in a powerful neighbor to his aid; I was undone by my auxiliary; when I had once called him in I could not subsist without dependence on him.
- Steele, the senior by less than two months, was baptized on the 12th of March 1672 in Dublin. His father, also Richard Steele, was an attorney. He died before his son had reached his sixth year, but the boy found a protector in his maternal uncle, Henry Gascoigne, secretary and confidential agent to two successive dukes of Ormond. Through his influence he was nominated to the Charterhouse in 1684, and there first met with Addison. Five years afterwards he proceeded to Christ Church, Oxford, and was a postmaster at Merton when Addison was a demy at Magdalen. Their schoolboy friendship was continued at the university, and probably helped to give a more serious turn to Steele's mind than his natural temperament would have taken under different companionship. A duel which he fought with Captain Kelly in Hyde Park in 1700.
- Steele probably owed the king's favor to a timely reference to his majesty in The Christian Hero, his first prose treatise, published in April 1701. The "reformation of manners" was a cherished purpose with King William and his consort, which they tried to effect by proclamation and act of parliament; and a sensible well-written treatise, deploring the irregularity of the military character, and seeking to prove by examples — the king himself among the number — "that no principles but those of religion are sufficient to make a great man", was sure of attention. The Funeral was produced and published in 1701. Tatler made its first appearance on the 12th of April 1709. The Englishman was started in October 1733. In 1718 he obtained a patent for a plan for bringing salmon alive from Ireland
- In 1701, Steele published his first booklet entitled "The Christian Hero," which was written while Steele was serving in the army, and was his idea of a pamphlet of moral instruction. "The Christian Hero" was ultimately ridiculed for what some thought was hypocrisy because

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he did not necessarily follow his own preaching. He was criticized for publishing a booklet about morals when he, himself, enjoyed drinking, occasional dueling, and debauchery around town.

- The Tatler, Steele's first journal, first came out on 12 April 1709. The Tatler as "to expose the false arts of life, to pull off the disguises of cunning, vanity, and affectation, and to recommend a general simplicity in our dress, our discourse, and our behavior". Steele founded the magazine, and although he and Addison collaborated, Steele wrote the majority of the essays; Steele wrote roughly 188 of the 271 total, Addison 42, and 36 were the pair's collaborative works. While Addison contributed to The Tatler, it is widely regarded as Steele's work

12.5 Key-Words

1. Sense of Sorrow : Sadness, depression
2. Sort of delight : Great pleasure

12.6 Review Questions

1. Discuss Steele as a writer
2. Briefly describe Steele's on the death of Friend
3. Are **Richard Steele** and Micheal **Steele** brothers?
4. What is **Richard Steele**'s birthday?
5. When was **Richard Steele** born?

Answers: Self-Assessment

1. (*i*) (*a*) (*ii*) (*a*) (*iii*) (*b*) (*iv*) (*a*)

12.7 Further Readings

1. Steele, Richard, On the Death of Friends. 1710, Ouotidiana. Ed. Patrick Madden. 26 Set., 2007.

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Unit 13: Steele- On the Death of Friend-Detailed Study and Critical Appreciation

CONTENTS

Objectives

After reading this Unit students will be able to:

- Discuss Steele as an Essayist
- Critically examine Steele's On the Death of Friend

Introduction

Steele, Richard (1672–1729), English essayist and dramatist. Steele's name is associated with that of Joseph Addison, with whom he collaborated. Born in poor circumstances in Dublin, Steele was brought up by his aunt and uncle, Lady Katherine Mildmay and Henry Gascoigne. His extended family were influential Protestant gentry, but little is known of his parents. At fourteen, Steele went to the Charterhouse School, where he met Addison.

In 1689 Steele went to Oxford University, where he did not take a degree but joined the second troop of Life Guards in 1692. His first publication was a poem on the death of Queen Mary II in 1694; it was dedicated to Lord Cutts, colonel of the Coldstream Guards, who rewarded him with the rank of captain and made him his secretary. Steele had a daughter with Elizabeth Tonson. He did not acknowledge the fact at first, but later brought the child up in his home. While stationed in Suffolk as commander of a garrison, he composed *The Christian Hero* (1701). In this reforming tract and moral manual, Steele contrasted the passion and universal heroism of Christianity with his perception of the false reasoning of Stoicism of the Roman emperors. Steele wrote his first play, *The Funeral, or Grief à la Mode,* the same year. A didactic satire on hypocritical undertakers and dishonest lawyers, it was praised by William III. Unfortunately, the king died before conferring any favors on Steele. Finding promotion in the army increasingly difficult to achieve without powerful connections, Steele left in 1705 to pursue success as a writer. In his second play, *The Lying Lover* (1702), he continued his didactic dramatic vision, portraying virtuous characters as models for audiences to emulate, as opposed to the predominantly "immoral" characters on the Restoration stage.

In 1705, Steele married Margaret Ford Stretch. Because of his theatrical success, he was well acquainted with London society and became involved in Whig politics. He was appointed gentleman waiter to Prince George of Denmark, Queen Anne's husband, in 1706. Engaging in the pamphlet war with satirical essayist Jonathan Swift, his public opponent, Steele wrote *The Crisis,* attacking the Tory ministry for its unenthusiastic support for a Protestant successor to the throne. In 1707,

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after his first wife's death, Steele married Mary Scurlock. At this time he was editor of the *London Gazette,* the official government periodical.

Steele's fame rests on his founding of *The Tatler* (1709–1711) and *The Spectator* (1711–1712), forerunners of modern journalism, which he wrote anonymously with Joseph Addison with the object of targeting the intellectual and political melting pots of London's coffeehouses and bookshops. *The Tatler,* a series of thrice-weekly papers in which Steele planned to educate "Politick Persons," was addressed predominantly to fashionable society, whereas *The Spectator* appealed to a wider audience. Using the idea of a club of different personalities, politics, culture, and foreign and domestic topics were explored in *The Tatler.* Steele used the figure of Isaac Bickerstaff, created by Jonathan Swift, to satirize the annual almanacs. Steele's fundamental purpose was moral didacticism: he wished to inculcate a practical morality in an accessible style. Swift, however, attacked Steele's loose use of syntax and the use of juxtaposition in his writing.

Published daily, *The Spectator* developed from *The Tatler* and included essays on relationships between the sexes, manners, London life, taste, and politics. *The Spectator* assembled a club of narrators whose personalities, eccentricities, and political viewpoints were revealed in concrete detail. Led by Mr. Spectator, the narrators included the Tory country squire Sir Roger de Coverly, and Sir Andrew Freeport, a Whig mercantilist. Steele's contribution to *The Spectator* is distinguished for his use of the letter form and the dialogue between either fictional personae or a writer and a reader (real or imagined). His essays on women such as "The Education of Girls" (no. 66, 16 May 1711) reveal both his sentimentalism and his open, sympathetic stance towards women's social and sexual status.

Steele's desire to be more politically outspoken against the Tory ministry produced two anti-Tory periodicals, *The Guardian* (with Addison's help) in 1713, and *The Englishman* (1713–1714), as well as several pamphlets and short-lived periodicals. Elected as M.P. for Stockbridge in 1713, his position in the House of Commons was disputed, and a Tory majority expelled him. Steele was granted a governorship of Drury Lane Theatre in 1714 to, as he expressed it in his pamphlet *Town Talk,* "Chastise the Vices of the Stage, and promote the Interests of Virtue and Innocence." In 1715, he was knighted by George I, and made a surveyor of the royal stables. Steele argued publicly with Addison in 1718 over the peerage bill, an incident that led to the revocation of the Drury Lane patent. He then began a biweekly paper called *The Theater* and later issued pamphlets about the South Sea Bubble. His last play, *The Conscious Lovers* (1722), was based on Terence's *Andria;* in it Steele portrayed ideals of male and female manners and began the tradition of the sentimental comedy. The play's success enabled him to settle his debts. Steele retired in ill health to his estate in Wales and died in Carmarthenshire in 1729.

13.1 Critical Appreciation

There is a sort of Delight, which is alternately mixed with Terror and Sorrow, in the Contemplation of Death. The Soul has its Curiosity more than ordinarily awakened, when it turns its Thoughts upon the Conduct of such who have behaved themselves with an Equal, a Resigned, a Chearful, a Generous or Heroick Temper in that Extremity. We are affected with these respective Manners of Behaviour, as we secretly believe the Part of the Dying Person imitable by our selves, or such as we imagine our selves more particularly capable of. Men of exalted Minds march before us like Princes, and are, to the Ordinary Race of Mankind, rather Subjects for their Admiration than Example. However, there are no Ideas strike more forcibly upon our Imaginations; than those which are raised from Reflections upon the Exits of great and excellent Men. Innocent Men who have suffered as Criminals, tho' they were Benefactors to Human Society, seem to be Persons of the highest Distinction, among the vastly greater Number of Human Race, the Dead. When the Iniquity of the Times brought Socrates to his Execution, how great and wonderful is it to behold him, unsupported by any thing but the Testimony of his own Conscience and Conjectures of

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Hereafter, receive the Poison with an Air of Mirth and good Humour, and as if going on an agreeable Journey bespeak some Deity to make it fortunate.

When Phocion's good Actions had met with the like Reward from his Country, and he was led to Death with many others of his Friends, they bewailing their Fate, he walking composedly towards the Place of Execution, how gracefully does he support his Illustrious Character to the very last Instant. One of the Rabble spitting at him as he passed, with his usual Authority he called to know if no one was ready to teach this Fellow how to behave himself. When a Poor-spirited Creature that died at the same time for his Crimes bemoaned himself unmanfully, he rebuked him with this Question, Is it no Consolation to such a Man as thou art to die with Phocion? At the Instant when he was to die, they asked him what commands he had for his Son, he answered, To forget this Injury of the Athenians. Niocles, his Friend, under the same Sentence, desired he might drink the Potion before him: Phocion said, because he never had denied him any thing he would not even this, the most difficult Request he had ever made.

These Instances were very noble and great, and the Reflections of those Sublime Spirits had made Death to them what it is really intended to be by the Author of Nature, a Relief from a various Being ever subject to Sorrows and Difficulties.

Epaminondas the The ban General, having received in Fight a mortal Stab with a Sword, which was left in his Body, lay in that Posture 'till he had Intelligence that his Troops [had] obtained the Victory, and then permitted it to be drawn [out], at which Instant he expressed himself in this manner,

This is not the end of my Life, my Fellow-Soldiers; it is now your Epaminondas is born, who dies in so much Glory. It were an endless Labour to collect the Accounts with which all Ages have filled the World of Noble and Heroick Minds that have resigned this Being, as if the Termination of Life were but an ordinary Occurrence of it.

This common-place way of Thinking I fell into from an awkward Endeavour to throw off a real and fresh Affliction, by turning over Books in a melancholy Mood; but it is not easy to remove Griefs which touch the Heart, by applying Remedies which only entertain the Imagination. As therefore this Paper is to consist of any thing which concerns Human Life, I cannot help letting the present Subject regard what has been the last Object of my Eyes, tho' an Entertainment of Sorrow.

I went this Evening to visit a Friend, with a design to rally him, upon a Story I had heard of his intending to steal a Marriage without the Privity of us his intimate Friends and Acquaintance. I came into his Apartment with that Intimacy which I have done for very many Years, and walked directly into his Bed-chamber, where I found my Friend in the Agonies of Death. What could I do? The innocent Mirth in my Thoughts struck upon me like the most flagitious Wickedness: I in vain called upon him; he was senseless, and too far spent to have the least Knowledge of my Sorrow, or any Pain in himself. Give me leave then to transcribe my Soliloquy, as I stood by his Mother, dumb with the weight of Grief for a Son who was her Honour and her Comfort, and never till that Hour since his Birth had been an Occasion of a Moment's Sorrow to her. 'How surprising is this Change! from the Possession of vigorous Life and Strength, to be reduced in a few Hours to this fatal Extremity! Those Lips which look so pale and livid, within these few Days gave Delight to all who heard their Utterance: It was the Business, the Purpose of his Being, next to Obeying him to whom he is going, to please and instruct, and that for no other end but to please and instruct. Kindness was the Motive of his Actions, and with all the Capacity requisite for making a Figure in a contentious World, Moderation, Good-Nature, Affability, Temperance and Chastity, were the Arts of his Excellent Life. There as he lies in helpless Agony, no Wise Man who knew him so well as I, but would resign all the World can bestow to be so near the end of such a Life. Why does my Heart so little obey my Reason as to lament thee, thou excellent Man. ... Heaven receive him, or restore him ... Thy beloved Mother, thy obliged Friends, thy helpless Servants, stand around thee without Distinction. How much wouldst thou, hadst thou thy Senses, say to each of us.

Notes

But now that good Heart bursts, and he is at rest—with that Breath expired a Soul who never indulged a Passion unfit for the Place he is gone to: Where are now thy Plans of Justice, of Truth, of Honour? Of what use the Volumes thou hast collated, the Arguments thou hast invented, the Examples thou hast followed. Poor were the Expectations of the Studious, the Modest and the Good, if the Reward of their Labours were only to be expected from Man. No, my Friend, thy intended Pleadings, thy intended good Offices to thy Friends, thy intended Services to thy Country, are already performed (as to thy Concern in them) in his Sight before whom the Past, Present, and Future appear at one View. While others with thy Talents were tormented with Ambition, with Vain-glory, with Envy, with Emulation, how well didst thou turn thy Mind to its own Improvement in things out of the Power of Fortune, in Probity, in Integrity, in the Practice and Study of Justice; how silent thy Passage, how private thy Journey, how glorious thy End! Many have I known more Famous, some more Knowing, not one so Innocent.

Self Assessment

1. Choose the correct options:

(*i*) Steele's name is associated with

(*a*) Hazlit (*b*) Joseph Addison

(*c*) Lady Katherine (*d*) None of these

(*ii*) Steele wrote his first play

(*a*) The lying lovers (*b*) The Funeral

(*c*) The Tatter (*d*) None of these

(*iii*) In 1715 Steele was knighted by

(*a*) James I (*b*) George I

(*c*) Charles II (*d*) None of these

(*iv*) Steele died in

(*a*) 1729 (*b*) 1720 (*c*) 1722 (*d*) 1730

13.2 Summary

- Born in poor circumstances in Dublin, Steele was brought up by his aunt and uncle, Lady Katherine Mildmay and Henry Gascoigne. His extended family were influential Protestant gentry, but little is known of his parents. At fourteen, Steele went to the Charterhouse School, where he met Addison.
- In 1689 Steele went to Oxford University, where he did not take a degree but joined the second troop of Life Guards in 1692. His first publication was a poem on the death of Queen Mary II in 1694; it was dedicated to Lord Cutts, colonel of the Coldstream Guards, who rewarded him with the rank of captain and made him his secretary. Steele had a daughter with Elizabeth Tonson. He did not acknowledge the fact at first, but later brought the child up in his home. While stationed in Suffolk as commander of a garrison, he composed *The Christian Hero* (1701). In this reforming tract and moral manual, Steele contrasted the passion and universal heroism of Christianity with his perception of the false reasoning of Stoicism of the Roman emperors. Steele wrote his first play, *The Funeral, or Grief à la Mode,* the same year. A didactic satire on hypocritical undertakers and dishonest lawyers, it was praised by William III. Unfortunately, the king died before conferring any favors on Steele. Finding promotion in the army increasingly difficult to achieve without powerful connections, Steele left in 1705 to pursue success as a writer. In his second play, *The Lying Lover* (1702), he continued his didactic dramatic vision, portraying virtuous characters as models for audiences to emulate, as opposed to the predominantly "immoral" characters on the Restoration stage.

Notes

- Steele's fame rests on his founding of *The Tatler* (1709–1711) and *The Spectator* (1711–1712), forerunners of modern journalism, which he wrote anonymously with Joseph Addison with the object of targeting the intellectual and political melting pots of London's coffeehouses and bookshops. *The Tatler,* a series of thrice-weekly papers in which Steele planned to educate "Politick Persons," was addressed predominantly to fashionable society, whereas *The Spectator* appealed to a wider audience.
- In 1715, he was knighted by George I, and made a surveyor of the royal stables. Steele argued publicly with Addison in 1718 over the peerage bill, an incident that led to the revocation of the Drury Lane patent. He then began a biweekly paper called *The Theater* and later issued pamphlets about the South Sea Bubble. His last play, *The Conscious Lovers* (1722), was based on Terence's *Andria;* in it Steele portrayed ideals of male and female manners and began the tradition of the sentimental comedy. The play's success enabled him to settle his debts. Steele retired in ill health to his estate in Wales and died in Carmarthenshire in 1729.

13.3 Key-Words

1. Influential : Having great influence on someone or something, powerful.
2. Didactic : Intended to teach particularly in having moral instrustion as an ulterior motive.

13.4 Review Questions

1. Write an Introduction to Steele's life and works.
2. Critically examine Steele's On the Death of Friend.

13.5 Further Readings

1. Steele, Richard, On the Death of Friends. 1710, Ouotidiana. Ed. Patrick Madden. 26 Set., 2007.