

# **PROSE AND FICTION – I**

**MA English - I Semester - Paper-IV**

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## **FOREWORD**

*Since its establishment in 1976, Acharya Nagarjuna University has been forging ahead in the path of progress and dynamism, offering a variety of courses and research contributions. I am extremely happy that by gaining 'A' grade from the NAAC in the year 2016, Acharya Nagarjuna University is offering educational opportunities at the UG, PG levels apart from research degrees to students from over 443 affiliated colleges spread over the two districts of Guntur and Prakasam.*

*The University has also started the Centre for Distance Education in 2003-04 with the aim of taking higher education to the door step of all the sectors of the society. The centre will be a great help to those who cannot join in colleges, those who cannot afford the exorbitant fees as regular students, and even to housewives desirous of pursuing higher studies. Acharya Nagarjuna University has started offering B.A., and B.Com courses at the Degree level and M.A., M.Com., M.Sc., M.B.A., and L.L.M., courses at the PG level from the academic year 2003-2004 onwards.*

*To facilitate easier understanding by students studying through the distance mode, these self-instruction materials have been prepared by eminent and experienced teachers. The lessons have been drafted with great care and expertise in the stipulated time by these teachers. Constructive ideas and scholarly suggestions are welcome from students and teachers involved respectively. Such ideas will be incorporated for the greater efficacy of this distance mode of education. For clarification of doubts and feedback, weekly classes and contact classes will be arranged at the UG and PG levels respectively.*

*It is my aim that students getting higher education through the Centre for Distance Education should improve their qualification, have better employment opportunities and in turn be part of country's progress. It is my fond desire that in the years to come, the Centre for Distance Education will go from strength to strength in the form of new courses and by catering to larger number of people. My congratulations to all the Directors, Academic Coordinators, Editors and Lesson-writers of the Centre who have helped in these endeavours.*

*Prof. P. Raja Sekhar  
Vice-Chancellor (FAC)  
Acharya Nagarjuna University*

## PROSE AND FICTION –I SYLLABUS

### UNIT – I

Elizabethan World View, Political Satire, Neo-classicism, Rise of the English Novel, Parody, Picaresque Novel, Socio-Economic conditions of women and their rights, Novel of Manners, the Historical novel, Romanticism, the Essay

### UNIT – II

Francis Bacon : Of Truth, Of Revenge, Of Adversity, Of Youth and Age, Of Studies  
Charles Lamb : From Essays of Elia  
Dream Children: A Reverie, A Dissertation upon a Roast Pig  
The Praise of Chimney Sweepers, On the Artificial Comedy of the Last  
Century

### UNIT- III

Jonathan Swift : The Battle of the Books

### UNIT – IV

Jane Austen : Pride and Prejudice  
Charles Dickens : David Copperfield

### UNIT – V

Emile Bronte : Wuthering Heights

### SUGGESTED READINGS:

1. [Francis Bacon: His Career and His Thought](#) By Fulton H. Anderson
2. [Humanism and Early Modern Philosophy](#) By Jill Kraye; M. W.F. Stone
3. [The Lambs: A Story of Pre-Victorian England](#) By Katharine Anthony
4. Swift, Jonathan. *A Tale of a Tub and Other Works*. Marcus Walsh, editor. Cambridge:  
5. Cambridge University Press, 2010.
6. Pride and Prejudice (Oxford World's Classics) by [Fiona Stafford](#) (Editor) 2008.
7. Wuthering Heights (Penguin Classics), (Author), [Pauline Nestor](#) (Author), [Lucasta Miller](#)  
2002

## PROSE AND FICTION –I

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# LESSON-1

## FRANCIS BACON

### OBJECTIVES:

In this lesson you are going to:

- Know about the age of Francis Bacon and its salient features
- Learn about the life and important literary works of Bacon
- Be aware of the origin and development of essay

### STRUCTURE OF THE LESSON:

#### 1.1 The age of Francis Bacon

##### 1.1.1 Intro

##### 1.1.2. Salient features

#### 1.2 The life of Bacon

#### 1.3 The works of Bacon

#### 1.4 Origin and development of the English essay

#### 1.5 Sum up

#### 1.6 Comprehension check

#### 1.7 References

### 1.1. THE AGE OF FRANCIS BACON:

#### 1.1.1. INTRO:

The Age of Francis Bacon falls under the **Age of Queen Elizabeth** (1558-1603) and James I. It was a golden age and also a period of the flowering of the Renaissance in England. It witnessed the rise and growth of patriotism and nationalism among the people of England.

The **Renaissance** denotes the gradual enlightenment of human mind after the darkness of the Middle Ages. Taine said that man being so long blinded 'had suddenly opened his eyes and seen'. The Renaissance coloured the thoughts and ideas of people of the Elizabethan period. The writers made efforts to free themselves from the rigid systems of the Middle Ages, feudalism and the church and started to express themselves in accordance with a more flexible secular code.

#### 1.1.2. SALIENT FEATURES:

**1.1.2.1. New Ideas vs. Old Ideas:** New ideas sprang up and started struggling with the old. The unsatisfied spirit of the English went out seeking for the newness of the Greeks.

It was an age of adventure and knowledge. New learning opened up infinite horizons of intellectual life.

**1.1.2.2. The Reformation:** This movement began in the time of Henry and reached its full during the Elizabethan Age. Englishmen wanted to be free from the Roman authority. The Reformation awakened the spiritual nature. This movement was led by Martin Luther. He questioned the institutionalisation of the Roman Catholic Church. *Faith itself was competent to save and salvation itself was a direct transaction with God without the intermediation of the Church, priest or sacrament. Thus Protestantism took its origin.*

**1.1.2.3. The Renaissance Humanism:** With the revival of learning, the re-discovery and re-interpretation of antiquity, there emerged a new culture, that of Renaissance Humanism. Erasmus (Desiderius Erasmus 1467-1536, focussed on the practical arts of social life like rhetoric, poetry, grammar, history and moral philosophy and opposed Aristotelian philosophy of life) led this Humanism. This new philosophy made the people take interest in life and mankind. According to them life is no longer a mere penance to be endured in pursuance of heaven. People started to take interest in this life and strove to make it happier.

**1.1.2.4. Nationalism:** This is another feature of this Age. Patriotism became a virtue and Queen-worship a religion. The defeat of Spanish Armada in 1588 awakened people and made them conscious of their national pride. This sense of pride strengthened by Protestantism became a feature of literature of the day. Elizabeth restored Protestantism amid general rejoicing.

Discovery by Copernicus in the field of astronomy, of the new world America by Columbus etc., brought about a widening of horizon. New knowledge began to pour in from the East and the new worlds were opening in the West.

**1.1.2.5. Literature:** During the Elizabethan Age **poetry** and **drama** developed fast. The whole age lived in a stage of poetic fervour. Songs, lyrics and sonnets were produced in plenty. The drama of the university wits like Peele, Greene, Lodge, Thomas Kyd and Christopher Marlowe, in addition to William Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, Decker flourished on the stage. With the advent of printing machine, drama, poetry, essay of the past Greek and Latin had been translated into English.

## 1.2. LIFE OF BACON:

**Early life:** Francis Bacon was a legendary English philosopher, scientist, lawyer, author, statesman, jurist and father of the scientific methods. Francis Bacon was born in 1551 in London to the Lord Keeper of the Great Seal under Queen Elizabeth. He was precocious and grave in his youth. Young Bacon was taught mainly in Latin.

Bacon was brought under the stern discipline of his mother. He was put in Trinity College (1573) where he began to dislike Aristotle's philosophy because of its *'being a philosophy only strong for disputations and contentions but barren of the*

*production of works for the benefit of the life of man*'. He resolved to replace it with something better.

**Bacon at Cambridge:** At Cambridge Bacon met the Queen. She admired his smart intellect and called him "young Lord Keeper". Bacon left Cambridge, went to London and studied law at Gray's Inn. After his father's death he returned home and took seriously to law as a profession. While practicing law he was still brooding over his 'sacred ambition' of producing a life-work in philosophy.

Later Bacon moved to France where he came to be aware of valuable political instructions in the state of government under Henry III. He visited many places and studied many languages, state craft and civil law and accomplished diplomatic tasks. Bacon longed to accomplish three major tasks: *to uncover truth, to serve his country and to serve the Church*. He worked at Gray's Inn. In the later years he became a parliamentarian. In fact he showed sympathies for Puritan faith.

**Bacon and Essex:** Bacon was a success at the bar. He became a Bencher and also a Reader. Bacon also got acquainted with Robert Devereux, the second Earl of Essex and became the Earl's confidential adviser. Essex offended the Queen by opposing the grant of some subsidy and so the Queen rejected the claims of Essex to favour Bacon for the post of Attorney General. His candidature was also refused to take over the post of solicitor general, the Master of Rolls later for the same reason.

**Essex's execution** In course of time Essex failed to suppress Tyrone's rebellion in Ireland. The Queen was displeased at this. Essex tried foolishly to instigate a revolt of people against the Queen. He was arrested and tried for treason. Surprisingly Bacon played his part in securing Essex's conviction. Essex was executed. Thus Bacon became instrumental in biting the hand that had fed him till then.

**Peaks of career:** With the ascent of James I to the throne, Bacon again tried to win the favour of the new sovereign. He could obtain Knighthood. Under the patronage of James, Bacon attained his much cherished Solicitor General's post. Thus he reached the summit of his career.

**The ignoble Bacon:** Bacon, though a man of letters was not a man of integrity and morality. He conducted certain shameful acts of arbitrariness. He became responsible for the execution of Sir Walter Raleigh. He supported the Spanish alliance against the national sentiments. Yet he kept close to the King much to the jealousy of his contemporaries. In 1618 Bacon was made the Lord Chancellor.

**Last days and death:** The image of Bacon was tarnished among the public. He fell into debts again. He was charged of corruption. He was also imprisoned. He was declared unfit by the parliament committee to hold the office anymore. Soon Bacon indulged himself in studies and writing. In 1629 Bacon died of bronchitis.

### 1.3. WORKS OF BACON:

During the reign of Queen Elizabeth, Bacon's literary career started with a few essays and quite a few pamphlets on political and religious issues. But with the accession of James I he produced much output.

Most of Bacon's scholastic writings were in Latin. He first wrote in English and then he got them translated into Latin. He considered English to be a doubtful medium of expression. Yet Bacon is largely remembered even today because of his "Essays" and "the New Atlantis".

"**The Advancement of Learning**" was published in 1605. It reviews the state of knowledge in Bacon's own time. "**The History of Henry VII**" was published in 1622. It is a calm, dispassionate and remarkably accurate philosophical history. It studies and analyses King Henry's reign. It also shows Bacon's interest in statecraft, political and legal knowledge, his command over expository style, and a historic-psychological imagination. 'It was written to please James I, in praise of his ancestor, the first Tudor sovereign'.

"**The Essays**" were published between 1597 and 1625 in three editions. They are described as "*counsels, civil and moral*". His essays have little resemblance to those of Addison and Steele. He viewed them as '*certain brief notes set down rather significantly than curiously*'. Hence they may have no artistic form with a beginning or an ending. They are *oracular utterances comprising quotations, anecdotes, illustrations strung together on a thread of unity by the title*. These essays reflect the philosophical bent of mind, practical wisdom and common sense. Through his essays Bacon desired to guide man '*in his relation to the supreme being, to himself and to the society and the world around*'.

"**The New Atlantis**" was composed in 1624. It is his Utopia. It chooses the experimental method in science. Bacon employs the form of a fable to express his philosophy of life. He emphasizes that the future of man lies in the rapid expansion of practical scientific knowledge. He advocates experimental research.

#### 1.4. ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF ESSAY:

**Intro:**An "Essay" is a short and brief composition in prose (Alexander Pope's "Essay on Man" and "An Essay on Criticism" are in verse form). It normally deals either formally or informally with one or more subjects.

**Dr Samuel Johnson** defines the essay as a '*loose sally of the mind, an irregular, undigested piece, not a regular and orderly performance*'. 'Sally' refers to military operation implying something of a sudden campaign. A soldier on a sally has to rush out suddenly wherever his fortune leads him to. The essayist's mind too 'moves here and there in a rather aimless fashion within the limits of his subject'.

The Essay is generally addressed to a *wide range of readers*. It discusses its subject in a non-technical manner and often with a liberal use of such devices as *anecdote, illustration and humour* to appeal to the readers. It expresses a point of view and sometimes persuades us to accept a theory.

The term '**essai**' means '*attempt*'. The term was first used by French writer Montaigne when he published some informal pieces in 1580. His aim was self-revelation and he is said to be the father of the subjective or *personal essay*. Hence most of his essays were in the form of reflections on himself and mankind.

The Greeks Theophrastus and Plutarch and the Romans Cicero and Seneca too wrote essays long before Montaigne. The form began there so as to put philosophical opinions and moral ideas into prose for instruction. The first important authors were of course Cicero and Seneca. Cicero's essays like 'De Amicitia', 'De Senectute', 'De Officiis' are read even today. Seneca wrote moral and philosophical letter treatises (epistles) like 'De Providentia', 'De Brevitate Vitae' etc. Plutarch belongs to a later period than Cicero. His 'Moralia' is a collection of moral essays. Theophrastus wrote the 'Ethical Characters' about some Athenian civil types.

**The Elizabethan Age** witnessed the rise of the English Essay. The University wits like Lyly, Greene, Lodge and Nash have tried traces of novel. Sir Philip Sidney's "Apology for Poetry" too has a semblance of an essay. However the essay in its real form came into existence with Bacon only. Francis Bacon's "Essays" were '*counsels for the successful conduct of life and the management of men*'. Bacon speaks of his essays as 'dispersed meditations'.

In the early part of the 17<sup>th</sup> century there are some writers such as Joseph Hall, Sir Thomas Overbury, John Earle whose works are touched with satire and humour. Abraham Cowley may be described as a link between Bacon and Addison. Cowley was less profound and philosophical than Bacon.

During **the 18<sup>th</sup> century** John Dryden started the tradition of critical essay. Dryden's "Essay on Dramatic Poesy" prescribes critical principles. Sir William Temple and Lord Halifax were also had their contribution to the development of the essay. Joseph Addison and Richard Steele developed the essay to bring 'philosophy out of closets and libraries, schools and colleges to dwell in clubs and assemblies at tea tables, and in coffee-houses'. They made the essay '*periodical*' as most of the essays were published in their times in periodical magazines. (e.g.: 'The Tatler' & 'The Spectator').

During the **period of Queen Anne** there were Alexander Pope and Jonathan Swift. Pope possessed the qualities of a periodical essayist. On the other hand Swift was a misanthrope and did not seem to possess the vision of a good essayist. Dr Samuel Johnson had the command of a majestic language. His essays appeared in 'the Rambler' and 'the Idler'. His essays could be read more as a duty than for pleasure.

In the beginning of the **19<sup>th</sup> century** the periodical newspaper gave place to the critical journal 'the Review'. There were 'the London Magazine', 'the Edinburgh Review', and 'the Quarterly Review'. The essay was no longer personal but became political. Charles Lamb wrote in the fashion of Montaigne and Cowley. The other essayists of Lamb's day are William Hazlitt, De Quincey and Leitch Hunt.

In **the Victorian Age**, there is the rise of the Historical essay with Macaulay. His 'Biographia Britannica' is remembered even today. There were essayists like Thomas Carlyle, Matthew Arnold, Stevenson, Henry Newman, John Ruskin and Walter Pater who all have contributed a lot to the development of the essay.

The **20<sup>th</sup> century** too had its own share in the development of the essay. The innumerable daily newspapers, weeklies, monthly journals and magazines gave a wider scope and opportunity for the writers of the day. There were both personal and impersonal essays.

G. K. Chesterton, E. V. Lucas, A. G. Gardiner, Robert Lynd and Belloc all made the essay a distinct literary genre with their deft treatment of the subjects.

### 1.5. SUM-UP:

In this lesson you have acquainted yourself with the Elizabethan age to which Francis Bacon belongs, some of the features and conditions of the age, about the life and the literary output of Bacon and also learnt about the origin and various stages of the development of the essay.

### 1.6. COMPREHENSION CHECK:

Answer the following questions in a few lines of your own:

1. How did Protestantism take its origin?
2. What do you understand from the Renaissance Humanism?
3. What did Martin Luther fight against?
4. Mention the names of the university wits of the Elizabethan times?
5. What does the word Renaissance stand for?

### 1.7. REFERENCES:

2. "Glossary of Literary Terms" – M.H. Abrams
3. "Introduction to the Study of Literature" – W.H. Hudson
4. "The English Essay and Essayists" – Hugh Walker
5. "Life of Bacon" – J. Nicol
6. 'Encyclopaedia Britannica' (<http://www.britannica.com>)
7. For more details visit: <http://ardhendude.blogspot.in/2013/01/development-of-english-essay>

## LESSON-2

# STUDY OF BACON'S ESSAYS

### OBJECTIVES:

In this lesson you will:

- Get an idea on three of the most read Bacon's essays :
- Understand Bacon's ideas on friendship in his essay "Of Friendship"
- Understand Bacon's distinction between truth and untruth in "Of Truth"
- Understand what Bacon tells on the role of studies in human life in "Of Studies"

### STRUCTURE OF THE LESSON:

#### 2.1. Of Friendship

##### 2.1.1. Intro

##### 2.1.2. Benefits of friendship

##### 2.1.3. Classical references in the summary

##### 2.1.4. Summing-up

##### 2.1.5. Comprehension check

#### 2.2. Of Truth

##### 2.2.1. Intro

##### 2.2.2. Expansion

##### 2.2.3. Classical references in the summary

##### 2.2.4. Summing-up

##### 2.2.5. Comprehension check

#### 2.3. Of Studies

##### 2.3.1. Intro

##### 2.3.2. Uses and abuses of studies

##### 2.3.3. Bookish vs. Practical experience

##### 2.3.4. Methods of reading

##### 2.3.5. How studies shape us

##### 2.3.6. Kinds of books to read

##### 2.3.7. Studies as a remedy

##### 2.3.8. Summing-up

##### 2.3.9. Comprehension check

#### 2.4. References

## EXPANSION OF THE STRUCTURE:

### 2.1. OF FRIENDSHIP:

**2.1.1. Intro:** The essay “Of Friendship” is stylistically somewhat different from other essays in that it contains some passionate statements along with appropriate analogies and examples to support his arguments of friendship.

Bacon begins the essay by invoking the classical authorities on basic human nature. First, he refers to Aristotle’s view in Politics: *whosoever is delighted in solitude is either a wild beast or a god*. We find certain persons taking to solitude for spiritual reasons. Hence solitude cannot be ruled out. In fact, they reserve solitude for higher kind of life, which is possible for a few great men like Epimenides (i), Numa (ii), Empedocles (iii), Apollonius (iv), and also some Christian saints.

#### 2.1.2. Benefits of friendship:

**First of all**, friendship is necessary to maintain good mental health by controlling and regulating the passions of the mind. In other words, Bacon here speaks of the healing use of friendship. One can obtain relief from sorrows, fears, suspicions etc. by revealing them to one’s friend.

Bacon justifies the value of friendship by pointing out the practice of friendship on the highest social level. The kings and princes raised some persons from lower cadres and ranks and made friendship with them. Bacon tries to glorify friendship by translating the Roman term for friendship, *Participes curarum*, which means ‘sharers of their cares’.

Bacon gives instances of friendship from the Roman history: *Sulla (v) and Pompey the Great (vi)*, *Julius Caesar and Decimus Brutus (vii)*, *Augustus and Agrippa (viii)*, *Tiberius Caesar and Sejanus (ix)*, *Septimius Severus and Plautianus (x)*. Bacon also refers to Duke Charles the Hardy’s (xi) deterioration of mental faculty just because he did not have a friend. Bacon glorifies friendship saying: “...it redoubleth joys, and cutteth griefs in halves”. Those who have no friends will eat their own hearts away. That is to say that friendship is useful to maintain good emotional health.

The **second fruit of friendship**, according to Bacon, is that it enables the clarity **of understanding**. A faithful friend clarifies the confusions of the mind and makes it clearer than before. By speaking one’s thoughts to a friend, one becomes surer of oneself. A conversation with such a friend sharpens one’s wits.

The counsel given by a friend is better than the conclusion that one gets out of one’s own judgment. Bacon calls the counsel of a friend, citing Heraclitus, “drier and purer” than that a man gives himself out of self-love. Bacon then divides counsel of this sort into two kinds: “the one concerning manners and the other concerning business.” A friend’s constructive admonition of his friend’s behaviour helps him more than a book of morality does. It can avert some possible danger. There is no use approaching different friends for advice. Bacon says that it is better to depend on one particular

honest and trustworthy self. That 'one-self' needs to know his friend's circumstances fully well. Scattered counsels will mislead a man.

Finally, Bacon speaks of the **last fruit of friendship**, that there are so many things in life, which can be fulfilled only with the help of a friend. In fact, at a rare moment Bacon gets emotional and quotes the classical maxim that "a friend is another self". His point is that a man may have many desires, which may not be realized in his lifetime. If he dies his desires may not be fulfilled. But if he has got a true friend, his unfulfilled desires will be taken care of. The friend will accomplish on behalf of his beloved.

A trust worthy friend can do many things. A man cannot speak of his own merits with emotional emphasis, but his dear friend can do it on his behalf. A friend can beg for favour for his dear friend's sake. Bacon concludes that if a man does not have a friend, he may well leave this world. That is to say, he is not fit for the human society to live in.

### 2.1.3. Classical References in the summary:

- (i) **Epimenides**- was a poet of Crete. The legend says that he fell asleep in a cave. His sleep is considered as spiritual exercise.
- (ii) **Numa the Roman** – The king of Rome who is said to have retired to a cave to acquire some political wisdom from a nymph there.
- (iii) **Empedocles**- a philosopher from Sicily who is supposed to throw himself in to a volcanic mountain named Etna and to have spiritual intercourse with higher powers.
- (iv) **Apollonius**- an ancient philosopher who worked miracles in solitude.
- (v) **Cornelius Sulla** – a champion of the Senatorial party during the Roman revolution.
- (vi) **Pompey the great** – a Roman general. He helped Sulla in the beginning of his career.
- (vii) **Julius Caesar and Decimus Brutus** – Caesar was a Roman Conqueror. He made friendship with Decimus and helped him obtain political distinctions.
- (viii) **Augustus and Agrippa** – Augustus was Caesar's nephew and the first emperor of Rome and Agrippa was his chief general and advisor.
- (ix) **Tiberius Caesar and Sejanus** – Tiberius was the second emperor of Rome, and Sejanus was the minister and friend of Tiberius.
- (x) **Septimius Severus and Plautianus** – Septimius was another emperor of Rome and Plautianus was his friend who helped in administration.

- (xi) **Duke Charles the Hardy**- Charles the Bold was the cousin of Edward IV of England who engaged in military operations against Louis XI of France.

**2.1.4. SUMMING-UP:**In this essay Bacon discussed friendship as the essential human relationship. Just as the quote goes, “a friend in need is a friend in deed”, this brief essay throws light on friendship. By quoting various cases of friendship from ancient Greek and Latin, Bacon successfully drives home the point that ‘a friend is another self’. We can see our image in our friends.

### **2.1.5. COMPREHENSION CHECK:**

**Answer the following questions briefly in your own words:**

1. Who wish to live a life of solitude and why?
2. How can a constructive criticism of a friend be helpful?
3. Why does Bacon say that ‘a friend is another self’?
4. Why does one require a friend at all?

## **2.2. OF TRUTH:**

**2.2.1. Intro:** This is one of the most popular essays of Bacon. He draws analogies from the Bible and Latin and Greek in support of his ideas on truth. It also shows how he succeeds in providing neutral judgements on the matter.

**2.2.2. Expansion:**The essay starts with a rhetorical question, “what is truth?” **Pilate** (i), the Roman Governor of Judaea is said to have not waited for the answer to that question. He was perhaps in a sceptical disposition. People normally change their opinions. Such people feel that it is ‘bondage to fix a belief’. It is an intellectual slavery for them to adopt a decided opinion on any subject. Standards of truth change from time to time in religious and moral matters.

Bacon explains why people evade truth keeping in mind that Greek philosophical school of **sceptics**, set up by Pyrrho. Those sceptic philosophers believed that truth is unattainable and that there is no criterion of truth. Bacon says that now our people are like those philosophers and therefore evade truth.

Bacon says that the **discovery of truth** requires a lot of time and energy to be spent on. Lies have become important in the life of people. Poets like lies because they provide pleasure. Businessmen tell lies in view of amassing profits. It is not known exactly why people should love lies. The Greek philosopher Lucian discovered that people have a natural tendency towards lies. People dislike acknowledging truth in life. It is a human tendency.

Bacon quotes several **Church writers**, who have condemned poetry as the ‘**wine of the devils**’ (*vinum daemonum*). Bacon says that the highest art of man i.e. poetry, is composed of lies. Poetic untruth is not harmful because we read for pleasure. However

the lies that are integral to the human mind are harmful because they regulate and control the thoughts and actions of man.

Bacon compares truth and falsehood. A pearl (truth) shines best in the day-light. A carbuncle or a diamond (falsehood) shines in the dim light of candles. Truth like the bright light shows human life exactly. But lies are like the dim lights wherein everything is more attractive. Bacon says, 'a mixture of a lie doth ever add pleasure'. If lies were taken out of men's minds, vain opinions, flattering hopes, false valuations, imaginations etc., life would be very dull. So, he says that truth gives greater pleasure when a lie is added to it.

Bacon takes an analogy from **the Bible**. According to him, God created the light first and reason or the rational faculty as the last thing. First God breathed light upon chaos and then into the face of man. He breathes light into those faces of people whom He favours.

Bacon refers to the **Epicurean doctrine** which emphasizes that pleasure is the end of human life. But realization of truth is the highest pleasure in human life. Truth is better understood by those who have experienced it. The highest achievements that human beings can pursue are the pursuit, the knowledge and the faith in truth.

**Qualities of a heavenly life:** Truth cannot be easily realized. Once realized, one can survey the errors and follies of men as they go through their trials. Such a survey should fill the observer of truth with pity and not with pride. The constant love of charity, an unshakable trust in God, and steady allegiance to truth are the qualities of heavenly life.

**Finally**, Bacon tells that truth is important in all spheres of life. Even those who don't practise truth believe that honest dealings in life will add dignity to one's life and that falsehood degrades and lowers a man in the estimation of others.

However Bacon tells us that **civil life goes on with both truth and falsehood**. He feels that the mixture of falsehood with truth may sometimes appear to be profitable. Bacon says in this context, "*that mixture of false is like alloy in coin of gold and silver, which may make the metal work the better, but it embaseth it*". An alloy (which is a mixture of a higher grade metal and lower grade metal) is stronger in function but inferior in purity. Bacon tells that this way of life is like that of a serpent (which crawls on its belly but not on feet). Serpent is a symbol of Satan, the wicked.

At the end Bacon quotes Montaigne who said that a man, who tells lies "*is brave (boastful) towards God and cowards towards men, for a lie faces God, and shrinks from man*". He is a hypocrite in both ways. Bacon finally tells that falsehood is the height of wickedness. It will invite the wrath of God on Doomsday.

### 2.2.3. Classical References in the summary:

1. **Pilate-** Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governor of Judaea in Palestine. The Jews accused Jesus of perverting the nation and saying that he himself is Christ, a king (Luke, XXII) which was a false charge. On listening to the reply of Jesus that 'I should bear witness

to truth', Pilate asked, "What is truth?" and went on to the Jews without waiting for a reply and declared "I find on him no fault at all". Pilate is such a worldly man who is indifferent to truth. However it was Pilate who was forced to sentence Jesus to death by the furious Jews though he knew that Jesus was harmless.

2. **School of sceptics-** the Grecian Sceptics are the followers of Pyrrho who taught in Athens.
3. **Epicurean doctrine:** a philosophy founded by Epicurus which professes that pleasure is the end of life.

**2.2.4. SUMMING-UP:** Bacon tries to drive home the importance of truth in life. However he also suggests that a mixture of truth and falsehood (untruth) are considered profitable and permissible by people of some selected occupations. On the whole one needs to live a truthful life. He also warns us that though truth of the ultimate kind can't be reached, one should strive for it.

### 2.2.5. COMPREHENSION CHECK:

Answer the following questions briefly in your own words:

1. What are the qualities of a heavenly life?
2. Why does Bacon use the metaphors of 'diamond' and 'carbuncle'?
3. Why is poetic untruth not harmful?

### 2.3. OF STUDIES:

**2.3.1. Intro:** This is a very philosophical and thought provoking essay of Bacon. He begins the essay with a remark "*Studies serve for delight, for ornament and ability*".

**2.3.2.** The **uses of studies** according to Bacon are three: 1. Personal enjoyment (delight) in seclusion or privacy. 2. Ornament in society i.e. the cultivation of charm in discourse i.e. speech and writing. 3. Ability to do business. Men become learned by way of studies. They acquire the ability of judgment successfully to handle business matters.

There are **abuses and disadvantages** of studies. If we spend too much of time and energy in studies and waste our time over theoretical aspects instead of applying our knowledge to specific situations in life, we develop the habit of laziness or sloth. We get aversion to work in the process.

Excessive study will tempt us to make an unnecessary exhibition of our knowledge. This Bacon calls 'affectation'. If we start judging things basing on the theoretical knowledge but not by practical experience, we tend to grow 'humors' in us. Bookish learning makes man biased.

**2.3.3. Bookish knowledge vs. practical experience:** Studies enhance a man's natural ability to perfection. But practical experience of what he/she studies is also necessary. The bookish knowledge of a learned man may be vague or abstract. Hence experience is essential to make the knowledge useful in course of life. Cunning men do not approve of studies. The simple minded will feel an admiration for studies. Bacon advises us not

to read books to contradict what others say, and also not to believe or take things for granted. Similarly books are to be read for finding substance for talking and discoursing.

- 2.3.4. Methods of reading:** Bacon says, “*Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested*”. Some books are to be read in parts only. Some books may be read quickly and not curiously. Some books are worth a close and thorough reading. Man may engage somebody else (a deputy) to read for him. This method can be employed to read such mean type of books. A gist or a synopsis of a book is not just enough. It cannot make up the whole and does not always satisfy the reader.
- 2.3.5. How studies shape us:** Bacon advises, “*Reading maketh a full man, conference a ready man; and writing an exact man....*” Reading develops a man into a complete personality. If one reads a little, one is supposed to acquire the necessary skill to create a good impression on others. Conversation or discourse makes one quick and alert. A person who takes notes and extracts from books will be exact and precise in his talk. If one is not interested in taking notes and extracts from books he needs to have a sound memory to contain facts and figures in detail.
- 2.3.6. Kinds of books to read:** Bacon then proceeds to say that different kinds of books will have different effects on man. *Abeunt studia in mores* – i.e. studies pass into character. Just as various physical exercises remedy physical ailments, appropriate studies can remedy the mental disorders and defects. The person who reads history becomes wise. Poetry makes man imaginative. Mathematics develops a subtle character. Natural philosophy (natural sciences) enhances a probing and exploratory mind. Logic and rhetoric sharpen the debating powers of man. The study of morality makes man solemn and upright in character.
- 2.3.7. Studies as a remedy:** Bacon suggests studies as a remedy. If a man's mind is wandering i.e. he is unable to concentrate his attention on anything, let him study mathematics. If he is unable to make distinctions between things, let him study the philosophy of the Middle Ages (this school of men are known for their hair splitting distinctions). Similarly if a man is not able to examine a subject carefully, let him study lawyer's cases. Bacon thus concludes saying, ‘so every defect of the mind may have a special receipt’.
- 2.3.8. SUMMING-UP:** Bacon is seen at his best as a counsellor in this essay. He tells us about both the advantages and disadvantages of studies. He shows studies as the remedy for different types of people. He recommends the types of books for reading and shaping oneself.

### 2.3.9. COMPREHENSION CHECK:

**Answer the following questions briefly in your own words:**

1. How can writing make an exact man?
2. Why does one require practical experience of one's knowledge?
3. What are the uses of studies according to Bacon?

## 2.4. REFERENCES:

### For further references visit:

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2. For printed full text: “Bacon’s Essays” – Wyatt & Collins
3. For full e-text visit:  
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<http://www.enotes.com/homework-help/topic/francis-bacon>  
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## LESSON-3

# STUDY OF BACON'S ESSAYS

### OBJECTIVES:

In this lesson you will:

- Learn two of the essays of Bacon and his philosophical appeal in them
- Understand diverse opinions of the author on the concept of 'revenge'
- Understand his views on prosperity and adversity and their influence on one's life.

### STRUCTURE OF THE LESSON:

#### 3.1. Of Revenge

##### 3.1.1. Intro

##### 3.1.2. Expansion

##### 3.1.3. Conclusion

##### 3.1.4. Classical references in the summary

##### 3.1.5. Summing-up

##### 3.1.6. Comprehension check

#### 3.2. Of Adversity

##### 3.2.1. Intro

##### 3.2.2. Expansion

##### 3.2.3. Conclusion

##### 3.2.4. Summing-up

##### 3.2.5. Comprehension check

#### 3.3. References

### 3.1. OF REVENGE:

**3.1.1. Intro:** "Of Revenge" is one of the widely read essays of Bacon. It was first published in 1625. It is a typical Baconian argument against private revenge and for public revenge. Bacon also tells us that "public revenges are for the most part fortunate." But he discourages revenge in general because it 'is a kind of wild justice'. Revenge is ignoble. It is a perversion of the law. The act of revenge is outside the law. It is like a dangerous weed cultivated in the heart of humans. It is to be removed.

**3.1.2. Expansion: An avenger is a rebel:** Bacon opines that by ignoring a wrong done by somebody, man becomes superior to the person who committed it. None is supposed

to take law into his or her hands. It is against the functioning of law. An avenger is a rebel against law.

**How do wise men reckon the idea of revenge?** Wise men have enough to do with the present and the future. The wrong which took place in the past cannot be set right only by revenge. The wise know that the past is irrevocable. For them the present and the future are important. It is only the unwise that think of the past and thus waste their time.

**An Avenger is a thorn:** A man may do wrong for a financial gain, or for the sake of pleasure or to win the favour of some higher person. A man, who has done a wrong out of malice, may be ignored. They are like a thorn whose purpose is only to prick. It has no other useful purpose.

**Revenge and remedy:** The revenge that has no lawful remedy might be tolerable. The person seeking revenge should make sure that there is no law to punish him. At the same time he must reveal to his victim his identity and also the reasons for his taking revenge. This shall make his victim repent his misdeed.

**Diverse opinions about revenge:** Bacon quotes **Cosmos, a Duke of Florence** of 16th century. Cosimo declared that the wrong done by a friend shall never be excused. The reason is that there is nobility in forgiving an enemy but not in forgiving a faithless friend. **Job** says that we must be equally prepared to receive favours as well as injuries (wrongs) from our friends.

**3.1.3. Conclusion:** Bacon finally says that public revenge for leaders is "for the most part fortunate". Octavius and Antony who avenged the assassination of **Julius Caesar** became prosperous. **Septimius Severus** flourished for avenging the murder of **Pertinax**, the Roman emperor. Bacon also reminds us that private revenge is "unfortunate."

#### **3.1.4. Classical References in the summary:**

1. **Cosmos:** the Duke of Tuscany, popular as Cosmo de Medici was the head of Republic of Florence. He opines that the wrong done by a friend should never be pardoned.
2. **Job:** a Biblical character known for his patience, who says that a wrong done by a friend can be forgiven.
3. **Julius Caesar:** Caesar was assassinated by Cassius and Brutus who were killed later
4. **Pertinax:** A Roman Emperor assassinated by a band of guards who were in turn put to death by his successor Septimius Severus
5. **Henry, the Third of France:** was murdered by a monk Clement who was in turn executed.

**3.1.5. SUM-UP:** Bacon opines that revenge is a wild kind of justice. Revenge is much against law. Man becomes nobler and God-like when he forgives the wrong doer. "The rarer action is in virtue than in vengeance" wrote Shakespeare in his play "The Tempest". One can support a public revenge but not a revenge on private grounds. Hence Bacon too says that public revenge is fortunate where as the private revenge is unfortunate.

### 3.1.6. COMPREHENSION CHECK:

**Answer the following questions briefly in your own words:**

1. Why does Bacon say that revenge is a wild justice?
2. Describe why Bacon says that public revenge is fortunate?
3. When does a man become a rebel?

## 3.2. OF ADVERSITY

**3.2.1. Intro:** This essay also is a thought provoking piece of work. Bacon speaks about the value of prosperity and adversity. People love prosperity and do hard work to become prosperous. Bacon says that adversity has its own virtues. Shakespeare also wrote "Sweet are the uses of adversity/ which like the toad, ugly and venomous/ wears yet a precious jewel in his head" ("As You Like It")

**3.2.2. Expansion:** Bacon quotes from **Seneca**, "good things which belong to prosperity are to be wished, but the good things that belong to adversity are to be admired". He means that the human virtues that come out from adversity are to be praised. Adversity can work miracles in the life of man. Seneca also said that it is great to have in one man both the human weakness and also absolute faith in God.

However, those who admire adversity appear only in poetic fancy. Poets by nature imagine such stories and exaggerate them in their works. The myth of **Hercules**, who ventured by sailing across the ocean to release **Prometheus** (who in fact was being chained by god Zeus) is in no way real.

Christianity teaches us to face the hardships of life boldly and overcome adversity with a smile. In prosperity man will have moderation as his chief virtue, where as in adversity courage will be the virtue. Courage undoubtedly will be a higher and nobler virtue than moderation. **The Old Testament** promises prosperity and **the New Testament** promises adversity. Prosperity is the reward assured by the Old Testament. The New Testament being the story of the life and suffering of Jesus, tells about adversity. However the Old Testament doesn't reject adversity. The songs of **David** are both elegiac and joyful. The sorrows of **Job** and the prosperity enjoyed by **King Solomon** are also in the Old Testament.

**3.2.3. Conclusion:** Prosperity has its own fears just as adversity has its own hopes. The real virtue of a man comes out only when he is put to adverse conditions of life. The vices of man find a favourable climate to flourish. In adversity the virtues of man find a favourable soil to grow and flourish. The light coloured embroidery on a dark piece of cloth pleases more our eye than a dark coloured embroidery work on a light coloured

piece of cloth. The spices when crushed harder give more scent. Similarly when the incense is burnt the smell will be more.

### 3.2.4. Classical references in the summary:

1. **Seneca:** famous Roman philosopher and tragedian
2. **Prometheus and Hercules:** Prometheus is a Titan who stole fire from heaven and gave it for the welfare of mankind. God Zeus was annoyed at this. He bound Prometheus in chains to a rock on the Mount Caucasus and set two vultures to eat him. The myth tells that Prometheus suffered the torture until Hercules; the strongest Greek hero came to set him free. Here Hercules symbolises fortitude and Prometheus human nature. (This story appears in Aeschylus tragedy “Prometheus Bound” and also Shelley’s “Prometheus Unbound”.)
3. **The Old Testament and the New Testament:** they are the two main divisions of the Holy Bible. The Old Testament largely deals with the Jewish religion. It contains the account of God’s creation of this universe, and also of Adam and Eve. It brings out the reward of happiness promised to the faithful people by God. The New Testament deals with the story of the life, teachings and crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Christ promised the kingdom of heaven to the poor and afflicted.
4. **David:** David’s songs constitute an important part in the Old Testament.
5. **Job:** Job is a character in the Bible. He is put to many sorrows and sufferings by God so as to test his faith and patience. Finally he comes out successful.
6. **King Solomon:** he is also a character in the Bible. He is a fortunate man who enjoys all blessings of God. Job stands as a contrast to Solomon.

**3.4.5. SUMMING UP:**In this essay Bacon makes a comparison between adversity and prosperity. He brings out examples from the Bible and justifies that even adversity has its own advantages. He exemplifies how adversity can make a man strong. We need not be worried much in the times of adversity for, it can bring hope and solace.

### 3.4.6. COMPREHENSION CHECK:

1. What does Bacon want to convey through the Biblical examples?
2. How can adversity shape the character of man?
3. What do you understand from the story of Hercules?

### 3.3. REFERENCES:

For further references visit:

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## LESSON- 4

# STUDY OF BACON'S ESSAYS

### OBJECTIVES

In this lesson you will:

- Study three of Bacon's essays
- Understand Bacon's views on youth and old age
- Observe Bacon's opinion on the relationship between parents and children
- Understand Bacon's ideas of 'single life' and the life of a married man

### STRUCTURE OF THE LESSON

#### 4.1. Of Youth and Age

##### 4.1.1. Intro

##### 4.1.2. Contrast of the young and the old

##### 4.1.3. Categories of young men

##### 4.1.4. Classical references in the summary

##### 4.1.5. Summing-up

##### 4.1.6. Comprehension check

#### 4.2. Of Parents and Children

##### 4.2.1. Intro

##### 4.2.2. Parental care

##### 4.2.3. Summing-up

##### 4.2.4. Comprehension check

#### 4.3. Of Marriage and Single Life

##### 4.3.1. Intro

##### 4.3.2. Married life and single life

##### 4.3.3. Who are not to marry

##### 4.3.4. Role of life

##### 4.3.5. Classical references in the summary

##### 4.3.6. Summing-up

##### 4.3.7. Comprehension check

#### 4.4. References

#### 4.1. OF YOUTH AND AGE:

**4.1.1. Intro:** It is natural to contrast the youth and the old. Both the youth and the old have their own merits and limitations. None can admire nor condemn either the youth or the old totally. At the outset Bacon opines that a young man may have the maturity of an aged old man. But it is a very rare phenomenon.

##### 4.1.2. Contrast of the young and the old:

The young men possess qualities such as boldness, daring, energy etc. Men like **Julius Caesar** and **Septimius Severus** who were wild and ambitious in youth became ripe with age and flourished then. However, in general, young men don't seem to have maturity of mind. They lack in abilities of judgment because they don't have practical experience of life and wisdom.

On the other hand, the old acquire experience by facing life with all its trials and tribulations. They are ripe for action. To be calm and composed in youth is a desired quality for the youth. **Augustus Caesar**, **Cosmos the Duke of Florence** and **Gaston de Foix** were of such a rare quality and flourished because of it.

Young men can invent better than they can judge. They can continue an enterprise better than they can start a new one.. The errors they commit while doing a business or a venture shall ruin it totally. At the same time they won't realize their mistakes at all.

However the old men can start a new enterprise and make it a success because of their vast experience and wisdom. It is true that the old have their own limitations. They are critical and pose many objections and so they go for prolonged consultations. They delay the work and can never take risks. They repent too frequently. They are hesitant as well. It is always better to have both the young and the old in a business venture. It is profitable to employ the men of both kinds, as the rightness of one will rectify the defects of the other.

##### 4.1.3. Categories of young men:

There were some young people who flourished in their youth and became weak in their mental capacities later. **Hermogenes** wrote books profusely in his youth and lost his powers of mind in his old age. There is another category of young people who have better natural temperament in youth than in the old age. In case of **Hortensius**, the Roman orator, his style suited him better as a young man than when he was old. There is also a type of young men who flourish in their youth and cannot continue the same tempo till old age. The Roman general, **Scipio Aricanus** could not continue his flourishing career till the end.

##### 4.1.4. CLASSICAL REFERENCES IN THE SUMMARY:

1. **Julius Caesar:** was a distinguished man of antiquity. He led a wild life when he was young. His great achievements belong to his old age but not to his youth.

2. **Septimius Severus:** became the Emperor of Rome at the age of 47 and became more successful.
3. **Augustus Caesar:** the first Roman Emperor who was only 18 on the Ides (15<sup>th</sup>) of March 44 BC. The name Augustus was a title given to him after his uncle's death.
4. **Cosmos, the Duke of Florence:** became the Duke at the age of 17. He was one of the greatest among the family of Medici.
5. **Gaston de Foix:** was commander of the French forces in Italy, bestowed with knighthood at a tender age.

**4.1.5. SUMMING-UP:** Bacon establishes how the young men and the old men lead their respective lives. By nature the young are daring, enthusiastic and dynamic. They do things in a rush of blood. They are adventurous. On the other hand the old are known for their wide experience and practical wisdom. Yet their experience can't make them decide things. They go for long consultations and thus delay action.

#### **4.1.6. COMPREHENSION CHECK:**

**Answer the following questions briefly in your own words:**

1. How does Bacon distinguish between the young and the old in their nature?
2. Why does Bacon say that the old men go for consultations for every enterprise?
3. What are the three categories of young men mentioned by Bacon?

#### **4.2. OF PARENTS AND CHILDREN:**

**4.2.1. Intro:** This essay in particular describes the dispersed meditations of Bacon on parents and children. The subject taken up in this essay has a universal appeal. It gives a wide range of suggestions to the parents with regard to parental care to children.

The joys, fears and griefs of parents are secret. They are not expressed. Parents strive hard to give happiness to their children. If their misfortunes affect the happiness of their children they feel miserable. Parents wish to live in their children after death even though the latter have caused anxiety to them. Procreation is common for all animals and through it they perpetuate their species. Of all the animals *Memory, merit and noble activities* are perpetuated only by human beings. The childless men wish to live eternally through their good activities and their noble works of art. The people who raise their families to a higher position are most indulgent to their children.

#### **4.2.2. Parental care:**

**Favouring children:** In most cases either the father or the mother often shows preference towards one of their children. Bacon warns such parents that it is not

wise. Motherly discrimination is not advisable. Solomon said that an intelligent son provides happiness to his father, where as a disobedient son brings shame on his mother.

Bacon says that one or two of the eldest children of a large family are favoured and one or two of the youngest get spoilt because of excessive indulgence. The children who are in between the eldest and the youngest are mostly uncared for. But very often such neglected lot prove themselves by their merit.

**Sanction of allowances:** Bacon advises the parents not to be miserly while sanctioning some pocket allowances to their children. Those children who have got small amounts of allowances get spoilt in bad companions. If such spoilt children amass wealth they commit all kinds of excesses. Hence Bacon advises the parents to be liberal in sanctioning allowances to children and also to exercise authority on them by proper cautioning and guidance.

**Avoidance of rivalry:** Parents should discourage rivalry between their children. Rivalry naturally leads to hatred and contempt among the children. Compatibility of a healthy nature is to be promoted in the children. The Italians never distinguish between their own children and their nephews. In some cases a nephew bears a closer physical resemblance with his uncle than the son.

**Choosing a profession:** The parents are supposed to choose professions for their children. This is to be done when the child is in his tender years and his mind is flexible enough to be moulded. Parents should not be carried away by the supposed views and career ambitions of their children. However if a child shows a strong interest in one particular profession, the parents can allow him to go ahead with.

**4.2.3. SUMMING-UP:** Bacon feels that the role of parents in bringing up their children is immense. He says that children increase sorrows and sweeten labours of parents. Favouritism or partiality towards selected children in a family is undesirable. Parents need to be liberal towards children. Parents are supposed to avoid rivalry between their children. Parents should also choose the occupations for their children.

#### **4.2.4. COMPREHENSION CHECK:**

**Answer the following questions briefly in your own words:**

1. What do human beings perpetuate through their children?
2. When should parents decide on their children's career?
3. What happens when parents favour one or two of their children?

#### **4.3. OF MARRIAGE AND SINGLE LIFE:**

**4.3.1. Intro:** Of Marriage and Single Life is one of Bacon's most read essays. It is related to the most common experiences of human life. It analyzes and compares marriage with single life in different aspects.

**4.3.2. Married life and single life:** Bacon says at the outset '*He that hath wife and children hath given hostages to fortune, for they are impediments to great enterprises*'. A married man fears to take risks and undertake great adventures or challenges. Bacon's basic opinion is that marriage is good to both the individual and the society. He also says that a wife and children are "a kind of discipline of humanity". Marriage makes a man be responsible, gentle and warm-hearted. A 'Faithful' wife is proud of her husband. A wife can never be faithful to an ill-willed, jealous husband. A solemn man is a steady person like **Ulysses**.

**Single life:** A single man finds wife and children as obstacles of life. Those miserly men think children will reduce their riches. Such men are foolish and mostly money-minded, cruel and hard-hearted. There are single men who allocate more money for charity than a married man. Bacon says, "Unmarried men are best friends, best masters, and best servants." But they are not best citizens. *To be single is to be free, while wife and children would curtail one's freedom. A single man values his freedom above everything else.*

**4.3.3. Who are not to marry:** There are certain people who are not supposed to marry at all. Bacon says that a clergyman shall never marry. He has a noble and religious duty to perform and he has to serve the society. Judges and magistrates too shall not marry. Judges do not need a wife at all as they undergo greater hardships by the agents who help in bribery. Soldiers need to marry. They can fight better if they are reminded by their commander that their wives are waiting at home. Bacon says that the Turkish soldiers never think of marriage.

**4.3.4. Role of a wife:** Bacon points that "wives are young men's mistresses, companions for middle age, and old men's nurses". This saying underlines the importance of marriage and also that a wife plays an integral part in the life of a man. **Thales**, a Greek philosopher opined that a man should marry neither when too young nor when too old.

A woman who marries a bad man will have to strive hard to justify her decision of choosing a bad husband. She has to be more tolerant, docile and faithful. She has to be ready to enjoy the occasional kindness of her husband. Such a marriage shall offer a chance for her husband to correct himself.

#### **4.3.5. CLASSICAL REFERENCES:**

1. **Ulysses:** a Greek legendary warrior who refused the offer of an enchantress called Calypso when she promised to make him immortal if he stayed with her. He wanted to go back to his kingdom, Ithaca, and meet his wife Penelope after a long time of war with Trojans and wanderings.
2. **Thales:** the first philosopher and is considered one of the seven wise men of Greece.

**4.3.6. SUMMING-UP:** Bacon speaks certainly in favour of marriage. Yet he is not against the single life of a bachelor. Bacon feels that marriage is a discipline of humanity.

However marriage is avoided by many as it involves expenses and it interferes with their selfish way of life. There are some unmarried people who prove themselves to be better in many social relationships. Good wives may have bad husbands. Finally Bacon tells us that a wife is needed in every stage of a man's life.

#### 4.3.7. COMPREHENSION CHECK:

**Answer the following questions briefly in your own words:**

1. When does a wife act as a nurse in a man's life?
2. What are unmarried men suitable for?
3. What changes can be expected in a married man?

#### 4.4. REFERENCES:

For further reference visit:

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"Bacon's Essays" – F. G. Selby
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3. For analysis and summaries visit:[//www.sparknotes.com/](http://www.sparknotes.com/)

## LESSON-5

# BACON'S STYLE

### OBJECTIVES:

In this lesson you are going to

- Learn about the prose style of Bacon
- Have an estimate of Bacon as an essayist

### STRUCTURE OF THE LESSON:

- 5.1. Bacon's Prose Style
  - 5.1.1. Intro
  - 5.1.2. Nature of aphorism
  - 5.1.3. Examples
  - 5.1.4. Conclusion
  - 5.1.5. Summing-up
- 5.2. Bacon the essayist
  - 5.2.1. Intro
  - 5.2.2. Expansion
  - 5.2.3. Summing-up
- 5.3. Comprehension check
- 5.4. References

### 5.1. BACON'S PROSESTYLE

**5.1.1. Intro:** Style in literature is an important element. It is the expression of the author. It tells about his selection of words, his structuring of sentences above all the conveyance of his intended meaning. Style is not simply '*the dress of thought*' says Alexander Pope. It is the expression of the author's personality.

**5.1.2. Nature of an aphorism:** An aphorism is a statement made to assert a general truth. An aphoristic expression makes a keen observation. Saying about aphoristic style, the Random House Dictionary gives us an example, "*Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.*"

Bacon intended his essays to be 'Essays, Civil and Moral'. He has a wide range of subjects before him, in fact the entire world at his disposal. Hence he has a lot to say taking from his own experiences or from his own *observations which suit the civil and moral life of his readers*. *Saintsbury* says, "*that he dazzles, amuses, half-*

*delusively suggests, stimulates, provokes, lures on, much more than he proves, edifies, instructs, satisfies* ' his reader.

Francis Bacon chose aphoristic prose style to amuse, suggest, stimulate, provoke in addition to satisfy and instruct the reader. His prose is characterized by brief, crisp sentence units. His language has terseness of expression and epigrammatic shortness. He followed the style of Seneca mostly.

His utterances have proverbial connotations. We find many aphorisms within Francis Bacon's essays. In most cases Bacon uses a series of apparently disconnected sayings to reach the reader's mind by a series of aphoristic attacks. Joseph Hall described Bacon as 'English Seneca'. Bacon's aphorisms are the most quotable among the English writers. A large number of his observations have become proverbial and popular household commonplaces.

**5.1.3. Examples:** There are many aphoristic sentences in his essays. Let's study some of them from some of the prescribed essays:

#### **Of Studies**

- "Studies serve for delight, for ornament and for ability"
- "Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; writing an exact man"
- "Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed and some few to be chewed and digested".

#### **Of Friendship**

- "Whosoever is delighted in solitude is either a wild beast or a god".
- "A friend is another self"
- "Those that want (without) friends to open themselves unto are cannibals of their hearts"
- "For a crowd is not company and faces are but a gallery of pictures"

#### **Of Truth**

- "A mixture of a lie doth ever add pleasure".
- "For a lie faces God, and shrinks from man".
- "that mixture of falsehood is like alloy in coin of gold and silver, which may make the metal work the better, but it embaseth it".
- "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".

#### **Of Marriage and Single Life**

- "He that hath wife and children hath given hostages to fortune; for they are impediments to great enterprises, either of virtue or mischief."
- "Certainly wife and children are a kind of discipline of humanity"
- "Wives are young men's mistresses; companions for middle age and old men's nurses".
- "Unmarried men are best friends, best masters, best servants but not always best subjects"

**Of Parents and Children:**

- "Children sweeten labours; but they make misfortunes much bitter."
- "The illiberality of parents in allowance towards their children is an harmful error".

**5.1.4. Conclusion:**As said above, these expressions certainly reveal their master's genius and wisdom as each of them is pregnant with deep meaning. Each of these aphorisms is novel, charming, delightful, valuable and suggestive of some utilitarian idea. What appeals to us most is that Bacon has not made a conscious effort to produce his essays. The style is almost spontaneous.

**5.1.5. SUMMING-UP:**In the above essay you have learnt what an aphorism is and how efficiently Bacon has made use of it. Read a few more essays of Bacon and try to identify some more aphoristic statements. They can be really counsels moral and social.

**5.2. BACON-THE ESSAYIST**

**5.2.1. Intro:**Bacon is called the father of English essay. His contribution to English prose is immeasurable. His essays are brief and sharp and their message is universal in application.

**5.2.2. Expansion:**There were many editions of Bacon's essays. Three different editions of his essays were published during Bacon's times. The 1597 edition contained ten essays. The 1612 edition had twenty nine essays and the 1625 edition got nineteen essays. Altogether they are 58. Besides these, there are three more essays which were published after Bacon's death.

His 58 essays covering a variety of topics show-case his sound knowledge and perception on variegated aspects of human life. In fact Bacon was a versatile man of genius - a philosopher scientist, literary scholar, statesman, lawyer, and above all a practical man of the world.

Bacon desired that his essays be '*certain brief notes set down significantly than curiously*'. He did not wish his essays to have any literary care. They have no artistic form. They are devoid of a proper beginning or ending. His essays are like dispersed reflections stung together on a thread of unity provided by its title. Bacon's essays fall into four groups in accordance with the themes they deal with: 1. Man in his home, 2. Man in public life, 3. Politics, 4. Abstract subjects. These essays are their best when they are dealing with practical rules to be observed in public and private life. They reveal common sense, elaborate content, worldly wisdom, and knowledge of human nature in the typical crisp and aphoristic style of the author.

In Bacon's essays, the reader can find so many classical quotations culled from the Bible, from Greek and Latin. They are full of illustrations, aphorisms, concise and brief sentences. W. H. Hudson says, "*Beyond any other book of the same size in any literature,*" Bacon's essays are, "*loaded with ripest wisdom of experience*". Bacon has

an extra-ordinary insight regarding the problems of man. It is true that his wisdom is merely practical but not moral. Alexander called Bacon, “*the wisest, brightest and meanest of mankind*”.

Bacon himself admits, “*I have taken all knowledge for my province*”. He declares that he is advocating the mankind in all its problems and sufferings. He is a real genius beyond doubt. Compton-Rickett says, “*He had a great brain, not a great soul*”. He is the product of the Renaissance with qualities such as wisdom, meanness and brightness. Bacon began his philosophical reflections on life in the style of Plutarch’s “Morals” and Montaigne’s “Essays”. He tries to discover principles of conduct and also the actions of men.

As a product of the Renaissance, Bacon **shows his learning** in all his essays. He brings into context of his essays *allusions to ancient history and classical mythology of Greece and Rome*. Bacon is an expert in **antithetical** ideas. His essays are replete with the positive and the negative sides of the same issue. He never resolves the issue but makes it more complicated with his argument. Annoyed at these dichotomous values; William Blake regards Bacon’s essays as good advice for Satan’s kingdom.

Bacon is a preacher of utilitarian morals. His essays reflect his profound wisdom of mind and his bright and vast knowledge. If one goes through Bacon’s biography one will certainly hesitate to believe in what Bacon preaches. He appears mean because he preached a higher grade code of morality which he could never practice in his own life.

**5.2.3. SUMMING-UP:** In the above essay you have learnt about the various elements that made Bacon an essayist. You will also find Bacon’s wide reading of ancient literature coupled with his worldly knowledge which ranks him high in the list of essayists of English.

### **5.3. COMPREHENSION CHECK:**

Answer the following questions briefly in your own words:

1. What is an aphorism?
2. Why do you think that the aphoristic style suits Bacon’s essays?
3. Pick a few more aphoristic statements from Bacon’s essays and make a list of them.

### **5.4. REFERENCES:**

For more information visit:

1. <http://ardhendude.blogspot.in/2011/03/francis-bacon-as-pragmatic-essayist-and.html#sthash.7ycFgJxu.dpuf>
2. <http://ardhendude.blogspot.in/2011/01/aphoristic-style-of-francis-bacon.html#sthash.qdLHraix.dpuf>
3. <http://www.scribd.com/>

## LESSON-6

# ANNOTATIONS FROM BACON'S ESSAYS

### OBJECTIVES:

After going through this lesson, you will understand

- the guidelines to be followed while annotating a textual passage
- how to annotate a textual passage.
  - Learn some of the important quotes from Bacon's essays with explanation and critical comments
  - Understand the context and reference of those quotes

An annotation is a short explanation or a comment added to a text. It helps the reader understand a text closely and comprehensively. In this lesson some of the popular sayings are taken from the eight prescribed essays of Bacon and are annotated.

### STRUCTURE OF THE LESSON:

- 6.1. Guidelines for writing an annotation**
- 6.2. Of Studies**
- 6.3. Of Friendship**
- 6.4. Of Truth**
- 6.5. Of Marriage and Single Life**
- 6.6. Of Parents and Children**
- 6.7. Of Youth and Age**
- 6.8. Of Revenge**
- 6.9. Of Adversity**
- 6.10. Summing-up**
- 6.11. Comprehension check**

#### **6.1. Guidelines for writing an annotation**

. While annotating a passage, the following guidelines may be followed:

- i) First identify the work from which the passage is given and the author of the text.

- ii) Next write in brief (two or three sentences) about the author, the background of the work or the conditions under which the work was produced.
- iii) Then write one or two sentences about what the writer said in the lines preceding the passage (the context) which is given in the question paper. Your argument should be smooth and logical. Your introduction should lead to the given lines.
- iv) After that discuss the passage given – the idea contained, why the writer has said so, his purpose and implicit idea, if there is any. You can bring in parallels, i.e. similar ideas dealt with by other writers.
- v) In the concluding paragraph, you can highlight one or two aspects of the writer's style which seem relevant to you. Highlight the use of figurative language (simile, metaphor, allusion, hyperbole, etc.) and consider the author's purpose for using that element in the passage.
- vi) Consider the author's tone.
- vii) Go beyond simply identifying a symbol, simile, allusion, etc. Consider the significance of the device. Always ask yourself: Why did the author include this device? What purpose does it serve?

## 6.2. OF STUDIES

### 6.2.1.

Read the first of the following as the model annotation.

#### **“Studies serve for delight, for ornament and for ability”**

- *Context:* Francis Bacon is considered as the father of the English essay. He is a thinker as well as a moralist. The essay “of Studies” is one of the most read essays. Most of the sentences Bacon used in this essay are proverbial in meaning. The above words are taken from *his* essay “Of Studies” which discusses the advantages of studies in our life. These are the opening words in the essay.
- *Explanation:* Bacon says that studies have a threefold purpose. We study: for *personal enjoyment in privacy*, for *cultivation of ability in speech and writing* and also for *development of ability to manage business*. He means that studies offer not only pleasure but also have an ornamental value in our day-to-day communication and add to our ability.

- *Comment:* We can find Bacon's views on studies in these lines. The uses of studies that he quotes are agreeable to all. Studies certainly develop our abilities and skills. People who have made a lot of reading have excelled in their personal and public life. Good readers are good communicators and managers of various events in life. However Bacon warns us that too much of bookish knowledge is also dangerous. It is to be noted that the real value of studies lies in the application of knowledge. We find in these lines his aphoristic style in a precise form.

### 6.2.2. "Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; writing an exact man"

- *Context:* Bacon in this essay "On Studies" describes how studies shape the personality of man.
- *Explanation:* In the above lines Bacon talks about how our abilities get sharpened by studies. Reading makes a well-shaped man. Conversation (conference) makes man alert. Similarly it is writing that makes man precise and exact. By writing he means taking notes from great authors. The wise and great quotations of authors help us build our personality and character.
- *Comment:* Bacon certainly emphasises on the uses of studies in these lines. He advises us that reading is not just enough. We have to make use of the knowledge that we have acquired by studies. Conversation makes us quick so that we can never falter at any point of time. By taking down quotes from eminent authors we can be precise and exact in thinking and expression.

### 6.2.3. "Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed and some few to be chewed and digested".

- *Context:* Bacon describes in his essay "On Studies" certain methods of reading books. He compares reading with stages of eating like tasting, swallowing, chewing and digesting.
- *Explanation:* Bacon says that some books are to be read in parts (tasting) only. Some books are to be read quickly and not curiously (swallowing) while some books are to be read thoroughly, closely and curiously as well (chewing and digesting).
- *Comment:* Bacon makes it clear that there are only a small number of books which provide knowledge and wisdom to us. We have to be aware of those books which are to be read curiously and thoroughly. Such reading makes a man's personality complete and comprehensive. Bacon also indirectly suggests that some books can be read partially and some can be skimmed through quickly from the first page to the last. The third category of books has to be read fully with great attention and concentration.

### 6.3. OF FRIENDSHIP

#### 6.3.1. “Whosoever is delighted in solitude is either a wild beast or a god”.

- *Context:* Bacon in this essay “Of Friendship” emphasises on the point that man is a social animal.
- *Explanation:* Bacon discusses the nature of life in solitude in the beginning of his essay. We are social beings and prefer to live our lives in the company of people who are near and dear. None chooses solitude. But those saints of the past went into forests in search of solitude. They thought that they were in god’s company. But we cannot find pleasure in such remote societies where animals live.
- *Comment:* Bacon reminds us of those saints who enjoyed themselves in solitude. We consider them as god like. In modern times there are no such saints. We, as social animals want company of our near and dear. We never prefer solitude at any point of time. Hence Bacon tells us that one who wants solitude is either a wild beast( an unsociable creature ) or a god.

#### 6.3.2. “Those that want ( are without/lack) friends to open themselves unto are cannibals of their hearts”

- *Context:* Bacon in this essay “Of Friendship” emphasises on the importance of friendship in life and how we suffer when we don’t have a friend.
- *Explanation:* Friendship according to Bacon is a blessing in life. A true friend shares our feelings, particularly those sad ones with us. In a friend’s company we can get solace when we are in grief. A friend will multiply our joy and diminish our grief. However those people who have no such a sharing friend will harm themselves. The grief that tortures will percolate into their hearts and eat it up.
- *Comment:* Bacon tries to elaborate the purpose of friendship in our life. It enables us to give an outlet to our feelings and emotions. Friendship is useful to keep up our emotional health. A person without a friend will lose his stability of mind and eat himself or eat away his heart with grief, like a cannibal.

### 6.4. Of TRUTH

#### 6.4.1. “That mixture of falsehood is like alloy of gold and silver, which make the metal work the better, but embaseth it”.

- *Context:* Bacon in his essay “Of Truth” tells us that truth is good but a mixture of truth and falsehood seem to work better.
- *Explanation:* Bacon takes the side of truth throughout this essay. However he says that if falsehood is mixed with truth on certain occasions, it will yield better results.

He makes a comparison of an alloy of gold and silver. Men generally resort to a mixture of truth and falsehood out of necessity and demand of circumstances. Undoubtedly such a practice will degrade man.

- *Comment:* Bacon says that adding a lie to truth is like making an alloy by mixing pure gold or silver with a baser metal like copper. The mixture makes gold or silver more flexible and elastic but it lowers the value of gold or silver. So is the case with man also. ‘A mixture of a lie adds pleasure’ says Bacon. But if we resort to the practice of mixing falsehood and truth every time, our character will be at stake. The comparison is made in the form of a ‘simile’ by Bacon.

#### 6.4.2. “For a lie faces God, and shrinks from man”.

- *Context:* Bacon in his essay “Of Truth” contrasts the courage of man to tell the truth with that to tell a lie.
- *Explanation:* Bacon says that a man is a coward to tell a truth to another man. He does not have the courage to give out the truth. But he is courageous to tell a lie to others. Bacon says that truth endears us to god whereas a lie incurs the wrath of god. This is a paradox.
- *Comment:* Bacon comments on the nature of man with regard to truth. Man shows inhibitions to give out truth. He is bold and audacious to tell a lie to others. Bacon opines that one needs courage to tell the truth. But man always resorts to lies and hence there is every possibility of incurring the wrath of god. But man cares nothing for god’s displeasure. Hence he can face god boldly.

### 6.5. OF MARRIAGE AND SINGLE LIFE

#### 6.5.1. “Certainly wife and children are a kind of discipline of humanity”

- *Context:* Bacon in his essay “Of Marriage and Single Life” elaborates on the significance of marriage and having children in a man’s life.
- *Explanation:* Bacon says that a man who is married seems to be blessed and content. He leads a composed, organised and secure life. He will generally take no risks because he has a family to support. He remains affectionate and considerate to others. Thus marriage certainly disciplines a man’s life.
- *Comment:* Bacon considers marriage as a pious bond in one’s life. A man with a wife and children is considered lucky. A husband is more responsible and duty-minded than an unmarried man. A married man will devote himself to the future welfare of his children. He is aware that he has to build a bright future for them and hence he disciplines himself for it. A wife and children have a humanising effect on a man.

#### 6.5.2. “Wives are young men’s mistresses; companions for middle aged and old men’s nurses”.

- *Context:* Bacon in his essay “Of Marriage and Single Life” explains the importance of a wife in one’s life and also how a woman serves man at different stages of his life.
- *Explanation:* Bacon says that a wife serves a young man as his mistress. Young men adore their wives as objects of ardent love. They value their wives high. For a middle aged man she is a companion. The heat of youth is no more in middle age. Hence a middle aged man takes his wife for a companion. For an old man she serves as a nurse. The companionship is required more during old age. An old man falls into the caring hands of his wife.
- *Comment:* Bacon opines that a wife is a necessity in every stage of a man’s life. A wife plays an important role in a married man’s life. She is a mistress, a companion and a nurse to man. Hence marriage is essential in one’s life.

### 6.5.3. “Unmarried men are best friends, best masters, best servants but not always best subjects”

- *Context:* Bacon in his essay “Of Marriage and Single Life” takes a balanced view of both marriage and single life. He makes some important observations about unmarried men.
- *Explanation:* Bacon says that an unmarried man is a good friend, a good employer and also a good servant. But he may not be a good citizen. His single life has no responsibility to shoulder because he has no family. A married man cannot take risks because he has a wife and children to look after. A single man has no such family bonds. Citizenship dwells mostly on one’s realising responsibilities.
- *Comment:* Bacon goes wrong in his observation here. Responsibility is not a patent right of anybody whether he is married or single. Bacon himself admits in this essay that an unmarried man showers his affection and generosity upon the public around him. He treats the public in the same way as a married man treats his family.

## 6.6. OF PARENTS AND CHILDREN:

### 6.6.1. "Children sweeten labours; but they make misfortunes much bitter."

- *Context:* Bacon in his essay “Of Parents and Children” gives some advice to parents. He details in these lines how the idea of fortunes and misfortunes to children affects the parents.
- *Explanation:* Bacon says that children sweeten the labours of their parents. The labours that parents perform taste sweet to them when their labours benefit their children. They undertake any extreme labour keeping in view the future of their children. The thought that children will enjoy the fruits of their labours adds pleasure to their life. At the same time the idea of misfortunes that their children are supposed

to face in their future will frustrate the parents. Children aggravate these worries and anxieties.

- *Comment:* The idea expressed in these lines by Bacon is true. Parents are naturally connected to their children. They want to take care of their children's future by working hard. They always aim at a successful career for their children. Thus they show themselves as responsible and committed to the welfare of their children. If friendship multiplies joys and divides sorrows, the affection parents have for their children makes any labour for their welfare a pleasure and the misfortunes where they are involved much more bitter or intolerable to bear.

#### **6.6.2. “The illiberality of parents in allowance towards their children is a harmful error”.**

- *Context:* Bacon in his essay “Of Parents and Children” advises parents to be liberal with regard to sanction of allowance to children. Any miserliness in this matter will do a lot of harm to children.
- *Explanation:* Bacon feels that parents should be liberal in sanctioning pocket allowance to their children. A small amount of such an allowance will make the child dishonest and in the process he will use all kinds of tricks to get hold of more allowance. He tries to cheat his parents. Having been denied adequate pocket allowances at a young age, a child will take to evil ways when sufficient money comes into his hands. Hence this advice.
- *Comment:* Bacon goes wrong in his idea of sanction of allowances to children. Liberality in sanction of allowance sometimes is harmful. Children with enough money in hands, will fall into bad company and squander the money. Too much liberality just like Illiberality spoils children.

### **6.7. OF YOUTH AND AGE:**

#### **6.7.1. Young men are fitter to invent than to judge, fitter for execution than for counsel, and fitter for new projects than for settled business.”**

- *Context:* In this essay “Of Youth and Age” Bacon compares and contrasts the advantages and disadvantages of youth and old age. In these lines he opines on what young men are suitable for.
- *Explanation:* Bacon feels that young men are fitter to invent than to judge. As they are energetic, enthusiastic and adventurous they are inquisitive in nature and go for inventions. Because of lack of experience they are unable to judge. Similarly, they are fitter or suitable for implementation of a project than to conceive a project. Bacon also says that young men are fitter for starting a new project than for continuing a project that is already established.
- *Comment:* Young men are normally adventurous and hence they can take risks without thinking of the consequences. Hence they can invent or start a new project. Sometimes they may be unplanned and unorganised. But it does not mean that they

cannot judge or manage a settled business. Young men have their own strengths and weaknesses as the old have.

**6.7.2. “The errors of young men are the ruin of business; but the errors of aged men amount but to this, that more might have been done, or sooner”.**

- *Context:* In his essay “Of Youth and Age” Bacon puts forward the case of youth versus old age and thus comments on their attitude.
- *Explanation:* Bacon says that young men can start a business. But if they commit any errors when they are doing it they would ruin the business. Young men get easily frustrated by failures. On the other hand, if the aged men commit errors, their business would not be ruined but delayed. The final achievement too would be at a lower level. They would not achieve what they may have anticipated at the start of the business.
- *Comment:* This is purely a generalization of the reality. What Bacon has said in these lines may not be totally agreeable. Errors are a part of any enterprise and are common in case of anybody, young or old. Wisdom lies in how we rectify our errors and go further to achieve success.

**6.8. OF REVENGE:**

**6.8.1. “But base and crafty cowards are like the arrow that flieth in the dark.”**

- *Context:* Bacon in his essay “Of Revenge” elaborates on the issue of taking revenge. He feels that it necessary on the part of an avenger to reveal his identity to his wrong doer.
- *Explanation:* Revenge is not a natural kind of justice. In some circumstances where a wrong doer cannot be punished by legal means, revenge becomes inevitable. In such cases, the avenger should reveal his identify and also the reasons (for his taking law into his own hands), to his victim when he takes revenge. Thus he is giving his victim a chance to repent his misdeed. However there are certain cunning and cowardly fellows who take revenge concealing their identity. It is like shooting an arrow in the dark.
- *Comment:* Bacon suggests that the real pleasure is not in taking revenge but in making the enemy repent. The motive of making the victim repent his misdeed is noble and far from the thoughts of taking revenge. Bacon uses the ‘simile’ of shooting an arrow in the dark to compare the idea of taking revenge without revealing the avenger’s identify to the victim.

**6.8.2. “This is certain, that a man that studieth revenge, keeps his own wounds green which otherwise would heal and do well.”**

- *Context:* Bacon in these lines tells us how a person who is planning revenge keeps the memories of the injuries fresh.

- *Explanation:* Bacon says that a man who plans revenge on his wrong doer will never let the insults and injuries cool down and heal. He will always keep them fresh in his mind. The passage of time normally allows man to forget the injuries. However the man who nourishes those tormenting thoughts of revenge will never be cool.
- *Comment:* Bacon explains how wild and unnatural it is to nourish the thoughts of revenge. An avenger gets tortured by the memories of the injuries of the past. His heart longs for revenge and the more he nurtures the thoughts of revenge in his mind, the more he becomes like a savage. Hence Bacon advises against the idea of revenge.

## 6.9. OF ADVERSITY:

### 6.9.1. “Prosperity is not without many fears and distastes; and adversity is not without comforts and hopes.”

- *Context:* Bacon in his essay “Of Adversity” comments on the qualities of prosperity and adversity.
- *Explanation:* Prosperity and adversity have their own advantages and limitations. None is safe and secure in prosperity. A man in a state of prosperity will have his own fears and annoyances. Material riches cannot endorse any safety and security. Similarly a man in a state of adversity will have his own hopes and consolations. Adversity cannot continue in any man’s life for longer periods. It is the virtue of a man that lasts long whether he is in prosperity or adversity.
- *Comment:* Bacon advises us not to lose heart in adversity. In fact adversity strengthens our moral character to encounter the difficulties. Similarly Bacon warns us not to feel great of prosperity. One should be aware that the state of prosperity will have its own fears and anxieties. Hence we should always keep in our mind that we should remain virtuous whether in prosperity or adversity.

### 6.9.2. “Certainly virtue is like precious odours, most fragrant when they are incensed or crushed; for prosperity, doth best discover vice, but adversity doth best discover virtue.”

- *Context:* Bacon in his essay “Of Adversity” contrasts the qualities of prosperity and adversity and details on how virtue comes out from adversity of a man.
- *Explanation:* Bacon gives us examples of spices and incense so as to justify his idea of virtue and adversity. The scent of spices becomes stronger when we grind them or crush them. The fragrance of incense will be greater when we burn it. The virtue in man just like the scent and fragrance comes out only when man faces adversity. His inner strength and his moral character will be revealed in misfortunes only. Bacon says that vice is discovered in prosperity and virtue in adversity.

- *Comment:* Bacon seems to be didactic in these lines. He says that the chief blessing of adversity is the strengthening of man's moral character. It brings out the real potential and the latent courage of man in adverse conditions of life.

**6.10. SUMMING-UP:**In this lesson you have seen some of the important lines from the essays of Bacon prescribed for detailed study. Hope you have gone through the analysis of each of Bacon's essays of the previous lessons. Annotations will help you understand the context of the quotes from the text as they are given to you along with explanation and comment.

Take more lines from those prescribed essays of Bacon and add a brief explanation and comment. Some sample lines are given under comprehension check.

### 6.11. COMPREHENSION CHECK:

**Annotate the following quotes in your own words:**

1. "Truth may perhaps come to the price of a pearl, that sheweth best by day; but it will not rise to the price of a diamond or carbuncle, that sheweth best in varied lights." (Of Truth)
2. "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," (Of Truth)
3. "He that hath wife and children hath given hostages to fortune" (Of Marriage and Single Life)
4. "A principal fruit of friendship is the ease and discharge of the fullness and swellings of the heart" (Of Friendship)
5. "A friend is another self" (Of Friendship)
6. "Read not to contradict and confute, nor to believe and take for granted, nor to find talk and discourse, but to weigh and consider." (Of Studies)
7. "Crafty men condemn studies; simple men admire them; and wise men use them." (Of Studies)
8. "So every defect of the mind may have a special receipt." (Of Studies)
9. "The most tolerable sort of revenge is for those wrongs, which there is no law to remedy." (Of Revenge)
10. "Public revenges are for the most part fortunate;" (Of Revenge)
11. "The joys of parents are secret, and so are the griefs and fears." (Of Parents and Children)
12. "A wise son rejoiceth the father, but an ungracious son shames the mother." (Of Parents and Children)
13. "And certainly, the more a man drinketh of the world, the more it intoxicateth;" (Of Youth and Age)
14. "Young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams," (Of Youth and Age)
15. "Prosperity is the blessing of the Old Testament, Adversity is the blessing of the New" (Of Adversity)

# LESSON- 7

## CHARLES LAMB

### OBJECTIVES:

In this lesson you are going to:

- Learn about the age of Charles Lamb
- the Romantic Age and its features
- Know about the life and literary works of Charles Lamb

### STRUCTURE OF THE LESSON:

#### 7.0. The Romantic Age and the Age of Charles Lamb

##### 7.0.1. Intro

##### 7.0.2. What is 'Romantic'

##### 7.0.3. Literature in the romantic age

#### 7.1. Lamb's Life and Works

##### 7.1.1. Intro

##### 7.1.2. Parentage

##### 7.1.3. Schooling, job and love

##### 7.1.4. His works

##### 7.1.5. His last days and death

##### 7.1.6. Summing-up

#### 7.2. Comprehension check

#### 7.3. References

### 7.1. THE ROMANTIC AGE AND THE AGE OF CHARLES LAMB:

**7.1.1. Intro:** The period of the Romantics in English literature normally begins with the beginning of the French Revolution in 1789 or with the publication of "Lyrical Ballads" by William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge in 1798. The period ends with 1832 when the Bill of Reforms was passed in the Parliament.

**7.1.2. What is 'Romantic':** The word 'Romantic' means 'new' but not obscene or vulgar. Originally the word 'Romantic' signified the characteristics of romances or fanciful stories. The German critic Schlegel at the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> century first used the word to refer to a school of literature opposed to the classic. It denotes a kind of literature that is centered upon the 'inner world' of the author and tries to convey the

feelings and personality of the author. The Romantic period was shaped by many political, social, and economic changes. Many writers of the period were aware of a pervasive intellectual and imaginative climate, which some called “the spirit of the age.” This spirit was linked to both the French Revolution and religious awareness.

**7.1.3. Literature in the Romantic age:** The reaction to the standard literary and critical practices of the eighteenth century occurred in many areas of the romantic period. Reason held a high place in the eighteenth century and its place was taken over by imagination, emotion, and individual sensibility. During the Romantic period, the writer used himself as the subject of his literary works. Interest in urban life was taken over by an interest in nature, particularly in untamed nature.

Classical literature quickly lost its esteem after Alexander Pope. The Medieval and Renaissance periods were ransacked for new subject matter and for literary genres. Literary forms such as the ballad, the metrical romance, the sonnet, blank verse, and the Spenserian stanza which had been neglected since Renaissance times were once again sought after.

The French Revolution and its promise of liberty, equality, and fraternity have become guiding principles in the Romantic period. Wordsworth, the great champion of the spiritual and moral values of physical nature, tried to show the natural dignity, goodness, and the worth of the common man.

William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge created an historic moment in their *Lyrical Ballads* (1798). It revolutionized the theory and practice of poetry. Wordsworth declared that the source of a poem is located in the psychology and emotions of the individual poet. Hence the lyric became a major Romantic form. The immediate act of composition of a poem must be spontaneous—arising from impulse and free from rules. Shelley felt that poetry is not the product of “labor and study” but an unconscious creativity.

Books became a big business because of growing readership. A few writers became celebrities. The Romantic period chiefly belonged to poetry, yet the prose essay, the drama and the novel also flourished during this age. This period also saw the emergence of the literary criticism.

The novel began to rival poetry for literary prestige. Henry Brooke, Mackenzie and Charles Lamb wrote in the sentimental novel fashion. Horace Walpole chose the Gothic novel as his form. Ann Radcliff, Matthew Lewis, Mary Shelley and James Hogg wrote horror and terror novels. Jane Austen was committed like Wordsworth, to find much of her subject in the everyday. She developed what is called the ‘domestic novel’. Mary Wollstonecraft championed the cause of women. Sir Walter Scott was the first of historical novelists with his ‘Waverley novels’.

**7.1.4. SUMMING-UP:** In the above essay you have learnt about the social, political, literary aspects pertaining to the Romantic age. You have also known about some of the exponents of literature who have contributed to the period.

## 7.2. CHARLES LAMB'S LIFE AND WORKS:

**7.2.1. Intro:** Charles Lamb was an important English poet and literary critic of Welsh origin. He was born in the house of Samuel Salt (his father's employer) in Inner Temple, London, in February 1775. He proved himself to be an expert on the Shakespearean period. He was also known to be one of the most significant literary critics.

Lamb is regarded for his simple style and his personal reflections on daily life touched with humor and tragedy. Lamb's two most famous works are "*Essays of Elia*", and, "*Tales from Shakespeare*". He wrote the tales along with his sister, Mary Lamb. Other than Mary, Lamb had an older brother John, as well as four other brothers and sisters who could not survive their infancy.

**7.2.2. Parentage:** Lamb's parents were Elizabeth Field and John Lamb. Charles was the youngest and last child. John Lamb, (Charles Lamb's father) was a clerk for a lawyer. Years later Charles wrote a biographical sketch of his father in his essay "Old Benchers" and referred to him by the name of "Love".

**7.2.3. Schooling, job and love:** Lamb studied in Christ's Hospital for seven years, where he had intimate association with poet and literary critic Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Lamb had a stutter. He stopped his schooling at the age of 14 partly because of this speech inability and partly because of his family poverty. For a short time Lamb was employed in the South Sea House where his brother John was holding a good appointment. Later he moved to the East India Company where he served for over two decades. While living in London, Lamb kept up his school friendship. He fell in love with a young lady named Anne Simmons whom in his essays he calls 'Alice Winterton'. However his love could not get materialized in marriage. She married some other gentleman. Later Lamb never married and died single. Being unmarried, Lamb lived with his sister, Mary Lamb, who too was single and was suffering from severe mental disorders. In 1796, in a fit of insanity, she stabbed their mother and killed her with a kitchen knife. After that, Lamb stayed close to his sister till his death.

**7.2.4. His works:** Together with his sister Mary, Charles wrote the famous "*Tales of Shakespeare*", a collection of 20 stories. The book was published in 1807 and remains even to this day a classic children's book. Since its first publication by William Godwin (a British journalist, political philosopher and novelist) the book has been constantly reprinted and also been translated into several languages in many nations across the world.

In the *Essays of Elia*, Lamb's intimate and informal tone of voice would captivate many readers, old and young. The name of "Elia" had actually been the **alias** (pen name) he had used whenever he would contribute to the renowned London Magazine. He adopted this name from the name of a former employee of the South Sea House. He

tells his readers to pronounce the name as “ell-ia” because he did not want to hurt the feelings of the employee.

The first series of these essays “The Essays of Elia” appeared in between 1820 and 1823. The second series was brought out in 1853 in the name “the Last Essays of Elia”. The essays describe the strange fictional world of the author. In those essays Lamb makes good use of irony, nostalgia, shares with us his vivid fascination for the details of things, including the very minutes of everyday life.

In Lamb’s writings we can find poetry such as “*Blank Verse*” (1798), and “*Pride’s Cure*” (1802). He also wrote a novel “*The Adventures of Ulysses*” (1808) keeping children in mind, as the readers. His “*Specimens of English Dramatic poets who lived about the time of Shakespeare*” (1808) is essentially a kind of anthology of sections from Elizabethan dramas together with commentaries. Lamb also attempted to produce drama but he was a failure there. His dramas were ‘John Woodvil’, a tragedy and “Mr. H-“a farcical comedy. Though he wrote them in his favorite Elizabethan style and diction they could not receive popularity.

**7.2.5. His last days and death:** Only several months after Coleridge, Charles Lamb died at Edmonton, a suburb of London in December, 1834 at the age of 59. He was buried at All Saints Churchyard. Mary, his sister would survive him by more than a decade and was buried next to him.

**7.2.6. SUMMING-UP:** In this essay you were introduced to some of the major events of Lamb’s life and the persons who played a major role in his life such as the members of his family, friends and other kinsmen and also about the works of literature that Lamb produced.

### 7.3. COMPREHENSION CHECK:

Answer the following questions briefly in your own words:

1. How is classic literature different from that of the romantic?
2. What does French Revolution convey to the Romantic period?
3. Mention some of the important poets of the Romantic period.
4. Who is “Elia” in the essays of Lamb?
5. Write a few lines on the ‘Tales of Shakespeare’.

### 7.4. REFERENCES:

1. “A Dictionary of Literary Terms” – AN Gupta & Satish Gupta
2. “Charles Lamb” – Alfred Ainger
3. “The English Essay and Essayists” - Hugh Walker

**For more information visit**

4. <http://www.infoplease.com/encyclopedia/entertainment/english-literature-the-romantic-period.html>
5. [www.online-literature.com](http://www.online-literature.com) > Literary Periods > Romanticism
6. [www.poemhunter.com/charles-lamb/biography/](http://www.poemhunter.com/charles-lamb/biography/)

# **LESSON- 8**

## **SYNOPSIS OF SELECTED ESSAYS FROM “ESSAYS OF ELIA”**

### **OBJECTIVES:**

In this lesson you are going to:

- Learn a summary of some of the selected essays of Lamb
- Understand the personality of Charles Lamb
- Understand some recollections of Lamb on his past life

### **STRUCTURE OF THE LESSON:**

- 8.1. The Christ’ Hospital**
  - 8.1.1. Intro**
  - 8.1.2. Characters**
  - 8.1.3. Summary**
- 8.2. The South Sea House**
  - 8.2.1. Intro**
  - 8.2.2. Characters**
  - 8.2.3. Summary**
- 8.3. My Relations**
  - 8.3.1. Intro**
  - 8.3.2. Character of James**
  - 8.3.3. Summary**
- 8.4. The Old Benchers of the Inner Temple**
  - 8.4.1. Intro**
  - 8.4.2. The old benchers**
  - 8.4.3. Post script**
  - 8.4.4. Summary**
- 8.5. Dream Children-A Reverie**
  - 8.5.1. Intro**
  - 8.5.2. His dream children**
  - 8.5.3. Mrs. Field**

**8.5.4. John****8.5.5. Alice****8.5.6. Summary****8.6. Comprehension check****8.7. References****8.1. THE CHRIST'S HOSPITAL:**

- 8.1.1. Intro:** This essay is a memoir. The subjective voice of this essay is that of Coleridge, Lamb's school fellow. Lamb wrote this essay so as to present the unpleasant side of life (the earlier essay named "Recollections of Christ's Hospital" spoke of the other side of it) he had with the Christ's Hospital.

Christ's Hospital was the charity school where Lamb studied. Lamb spoke in the guise of the pretended writer in this essay. The writer informs that Lamb enjoyed certain privileges at Christ's Hospital. He had relatives in the town and Lamb was permitted to visit them. The writer on the other hand was friendless. So the writer envied Lamb's comforts. He went with Lamb to picnics on holidays.

- 8.1.2. Characters:** There used to be a cruel fellow in the school whose name was **H- (Hodges)**. He forced forty boys to contribute half of their meal so as to feed the ass which he smuggled in to the house.

There were also certain **nurses** who stole away meat that was to be served to children. In fact Lamb did not know much about the hardships of the students. He described the paintings, the well fed children in his essay.

The writer tells us about a **detestable fellow who collects gag** (fat of boiled beef). He is also believed to have eaten it and hence he was excommunicated. It was also reported that he was taking the gag to another house. Later it was discovered that he was feeding his parents with the gag. For this, he was praised and was awarded a gold medal.

The writer recollects the punishments at the school. Those students who tried to run away from the school were punished cruelly. The writer also recollects the games conducted after school hours. There were **two masters :Reverend James Boyer and Reverend Matthew Field**. Boyer had two wigs. If he wore the old wig the boys would have a miserable day. In a better wig he was nice and gentlemanly. Matthew was mild and would never be serious-minded.

- 8.1.3. Summary:** In the above essay you have learnt about the schooling of Lamb. You have also learnt how Lamb employed his friend Coleridge as a narrator. You are also introduced to some of his school mates, teachers and nurses. You can compare your own school days with those that are described in the essay.

## 8.2. THE SOUTH SEA HOUSE:

- 8.2.1. Intro:** This essay is another memory of the office where Lamb worked for some time. The South Sea House was located in between the Bank of England and the Flower Pot Inn. It was the office of the South Sea company.

Forty years ago the South Sea House used to be a center of heavy business activity but now it is calm and looks deserted. It reached the peak of prosperity and suddenly collapsed. The people describe it as a ‘bubble’ that has burst.

Charles Lamb was a clerk in the office though for a short time. He still remembers many of his colleagues and introduces some of them to us. Lamb tries to visualize his memories in this essay. The information on most part of the character sketches was in fact supplied by his brother John who was an employee with the office.

- 8.2.2. Characters:** One such was **Evans, the cashier** who was of Welsh origin. He was punctual in eating at two p.m and visiting friends at six p.m. He was a bachelor.

There was **Thomas Tame, the deputy cashier**. He had aristocratic airs on him though he was poor. He was impressive in conversation. Yet Lamb makes fun of him saying ‘his mind was in its original state of a white paper’. Even a breast fed baby could puzzle him with questions.

Then there was **John Tipp, the accountant**. He thought high of himself as an accountant. He posed to be a great musician and singer. Yet his music and singing were unbearable. He held musical concerts once every fortnight. He had a great demand as an executor of wills. He was proud of it. He felt pleased to have won the trust of people about wills. However he was such a man who could never take the smallest of risks.

Then there was **Henry Man**. He was a witty scholar. He was in fact an office boy. There were two musicians also in the same office, namely, **Plumer and Maynard**. There was also **Woollett**, a court litigant.

- 8.2.3. SUMMARY:** In the above essay you have learnt about the workplace of Lamb. You are also introduced to some of his colleagues and their personal traits. This essay reflects Lamb’s ability of visualization and accurate detailing.

## 8.3. MY RELATIONS:

- 8.3.1. Intro:** This essay is also a memoir. Lamb tells us that his parents were no more. He had nobody else except his aunt and her two sons. Lamb says that he had so many cousins in Hertfordshire but they were not intimate. **Aunt** was a Protestant and was fond of reading holy books. She loved her cousin well.

**8.3.2. Character of James:** Lamb's cousins were **James and Bridget**. They were older than Lamb and used to give him advice. James is a man of contradictions. He hates all innovations yet his mind is full of many innovative ideas. He is eccentric but he advises others against eccentricity. He is fond of collecting art pieces but tells others that he collects them only to sell them off for a good profit. He preaches patience but he cannot wait for dinner even for a few minutes.

In his youth James was highly emotional and now he wants to live like that in old age as well. Lamb likes this particular quality of James. James has the habit of starting an argument but he never follows the point of others. He is against laughter because laughing is not natural to him. However, the very next moment he laughs as loudly as the crowing of a cock.

Now that he is old he is leading a leisurely life. He makes purchases of art pieces and talks eloquently over his purchases. James lives in a world of his own. Though he professes a great love for others he takes no interest in what others do. He never cares to know about others, their habits, their knowledge so on and so forth. He goes on advising others without reading the minds of others. He advises Lamb to take walks though the latter has been a regular walker for many years.

James is not that much sentimental. But he cannot bear the sight of a wounded or an over worked beast. The very thought of a boiled lobster or an eel skinned alive would take away his sleep.

Although James is a man of eccentricities and inconsistencies, Lamb tells us that he is not ready to exchange him with a consistent relative. He assures finally that he will make an account of his other cousin Bridget in another paper.

**8.3.3. SUMMARY:** In this essay of Lamb you have come to know of the author's aunt and his cousin James. This is another memoir where Lamb is seen at his best as a visualizer of the past. You may compare the qualities of your own cousin with James and have a better conception of your kinsmen.

## **8.4. THE OLD BENCHERS OF THE INNER TEMPLE:**

**8.4.1. Intro:** In this essay Lamb tries to call back those childhood memories associated with the Temple of London. The Temple is a district of London known for colleges and societies associated with the legal profession. The Temple was the birth place of Lamb and it had a special place in his memories. Lamb regrets that the Temple is only a past glory.

The beauties of the Temple are no more. Lamb recollects the sun-dials of those days which are now replaced by clocks. The old fountains have vanished. They are dried up or bricked over. Lamb still remembers one such fountain in the square of Lincoln's Inn behind the South Sea House.

**8.4.2. The old benchers:** Lamb recollects the benchers of those days. The first bencher is the lion faced **Thomas Coventry**. He is authoritative in his very appearance and tone. There is also a noble minded and gentlemanly **Samuel Salt**. He is milder than Coventry. Salt and Coventry were in rival camps in politics. Coventry was provocative whereas Salt was calm and undisturbed.

Salt had the reputation of being a competent and clever man in the Inner Temple. However in difficult situations he would depend on his assistant Lovel. **Lovel** was a quick little fellow who would dispatch any trouble by his natural understanding. Salt on the other hand was bashful, indolent and procrastinating to the last degree. Lovel stood by his side and helped him come out of discomfiture easily. Lovel was his clerk, servant, dresser, friend, guide, auditor and treasurer. Lamb says that Salt put himself too much in Lovel's hands.

Similarly Lamb could never forget other benchers like **Peter Pierson, Daines Barrington, old Barton, Read and Twopenny, Mingay and Baron Maseres**. In these old men walking upon the earth, Lamb says that he saw Gods.

**8.4.3. Post script:** In the post script of the essay, Lamb corrects himself saying that Salt was not married. He learnt from Randal Norris (who was the sub treasurer and librarian of the Inner Temple) that Salt married a woman who died in the process of child birth in the very first year of their married life.

**8.4.4. Summary:** In this essay again you have learnt about some of the reminiscences of Lamb. You have also understood the importance that Lamb attached to the places and persons of his past life and how vividly he describes them in his essay.

## **8.5. DREAM CHILDREN- A REVERIE**

**8.5.1. Intro:** This essay is considered as one of the best prose lyrics (A reverie is a day dream). It is also one of the most quoted autobiographical essays of Lamb. Lamb tries to bring before us his brother John and his grandmother Mrs. Sarah Field. This essay is pathetic rather than humorous.

**8.5.2. His dream children:** Lamb describes **Alice and John as the dream children** (Lamb treats them as his own children) who are curious to know about their grandmother. The interesting part of this story is that the children interrupt the narration of their story here and there. Thus the narration travels in between the present and the past.

**8.5.3. Mrs. Field, his grandmother:** Mrs. Field lived in a large, spacious house. She was a pious lady and was loved and respected by all. In fact she was only the caretaker of the house, yet, her funeral was attended by large groups of people because of the respect and love they had for her.

**Mrs. Field** was a good dancer when she was young. She was a tall, graceful and upright lady in her youth. But unfortunately she was affected by cancer which stopped her from dancing. The cruel disease made her body stoop but could never bend her good spirits. As a child, Lamb used to visit the house in holidays. He enjoyed the beauties of the house and the garden.

**8.5.4. John:** Mrs. Field loved all her grandchildren. She had a special love for **John** because he was handsome and spirited. He was a king to the rest of the children. He was a good rider and hunter. He used to carry young Lamb on his back when he had got his foot hurt. Later John also became lame footed. Lamb feels so sorry now that he could not sympathize with his brother at that time. Lamb did not feel sorry even at the time of John's death. Now Lamb tells his children that he has really missed his brother.

**8.5.5. Alice:** Lamb tells his children about his beloved lady **Alice W-n** whom he loved seven years later. She was modest. At this point Lamb finds his daughter young Alice look exactly like his wife. He falls in doubt whether he is talking to his wife or daughter. He stands gazing at his children. They start going away from him. Lamb could find now only two speechless and mourning faces at a distance. Lamb understands that they are trying to convey to him that they are not his children at all. The children seem to convey: "*We are not of Alice, nor of thee, nor are we children at all.... We are nothing; less than nothing, and dreams*". They are the children of somebody else. Lamb wakes up and finds that it was all a dream.

**8.5.6. SUMMARY:** In this you are introduced to the grandmother Ms. Field and his imaginary children whom he calls dream children. You would have by now understood how the nostalgic mood of the author gives a gentle and touching impression on us, the readers.

## 8.6. COMPREHENSION CHECK:

Answer the following questions briefly in your own words:

1. Describe the school Christ's Hospital as you have understood from the lesson.
2. Narrate at least two characters you have studied in the South Sea House.
3. Which qualities of James are appealing to you?
4. What do you understand from the characters of Lovel and Salt?
5. How does Lamb describe his grandmother?

## 8.7. REFERENCES:

1. "Essays of Elia" – Edited by NL Hailward, SC Hill
2. "Essays of Elia" – Edited by A H Thompson

For full e-text visit:

3. <http://www.archive.org/details/completeworksch00lambgoog>
4. <http://archive.org> > eBook and Texts > American Libraries

# LESSON- 9

## LAMBA'S ESSAYS

### OBJECTIVES:

In this lesson you are going to:

- Know about the autobiographical element in Lamb's essays
- Learn about the elements humour and pathos in Lamb's essays
- Understand what constitutes the style of Lamb

### STRUCTURE OF THE LESSON:

#### 9.1. Autobiographical element in Lamb's essays

##### 9.1.1. Intro

##### 9.1.2. Expansion

##### 9.1.3. Conclusion

##### 9.1.4. Summing-up

#### 9.2. Humour and Pathos in Lamb's essays

##### 9.2.1. Intro

##### 9.2.2. Examples

##### 9.2.3. Summing-up

#### 9.3. Lamb's Prose Style

##### 9.3.1. Intro

##### 9.3.2. Critical comment

##### 9.3.3. Summing-up

#### 9.4. Comprehension check

#### 9.5. References

### 9.1. AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL ELEMENT IN CHARLES LAMB'S ESSAYS

- 9.1.1. Intro:** Charles Lamb's essays are largely autobiographical. His essays deal with mankind at large as seen through the medium of Lamb's own experiences and impressions. They present, with exquisite humour and pathos, in a brilliant and inimitable style, such characters that the author had known. They are recollections of childhood or of later life focusing on personal experiences. His essays also convey his personality, nature, character, relatives, work places and people around him. We find the dominant subjective note in all his essays. Hence the personal "I" is prominent in his essays.

The appealing feature of his essays is their subject. The subject of the "Essays of Elia" is Lamb himself. And the personal "I" is abundant in his essays, which, according to some critics, add an extra charm to the essays. They give the impression of someone (Lamb) talking very personally and sharing very private thoughts and experiences. They can be treated as prose lyrics or prose odes.

**9.1.2. Expansion:** The autobiography is a writing which records its writer's life and conditions and his personal experiences honestly. As the writer himself is the narrator, the readers can believe what is said in the books to be true. After reading Lamb's essays, we know all about his stammer, his work at India House and his companions there. Lamb talks to the reader as if he were intimate. His own memories are reflected in these essays.

Charles Lamb is a true lover of the past. He loves people from the past, even books, buildings and fashions, and does not care much about the future. Memories of the past haunt him; recollections of events of the past are more important than the present. So, old and familiar faces hold more attraction for him. In his essays Lamb visualizes and relives the past memories. In "The South Sea House", he says about the building as "it was forty years ago, when I knew it- a magnificent relic".

From his essays, we come to know about Charles Lamb's life and many of his life experiences. We learn that he was born at the Inner Temple, schooled at Christ's Hospital and worked at South Sea House and East India Company as a clerk. We also know that he was a bachelor, and remained a bachelor as he was disappointed in his first love.

A great deal about his school life was narrated in the essay "Christ's Hospital Five and Thirty Years Ago". We are informed about the privileges he enjoyed in his school. He says about himself in the guise of Coleridge, "I remember L- (Lamb) at school, and can well recollect that he had some peculiar advantages, which I and others of his school fellows had not". Again he says "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".

The readers also become acquainted with his relatives and friends. In the essay "The South Sea House", he writes about his colleagues vividly. Similarly, In "Christ's Hospital", he tells about his relatives and friends. Some of his relatives and friends lived in London and they were very caring towards him. They used to bring delicious eatables for him in Christ's Hospital and used to look after him very cordially.

Charles Lamb never hides any of his traits. He declares his love for good food and drink. He also loves the theatre, books, good company, gossip and scandal. And again from many of his essays, we know that he likes irony, jokes, pun and paradox. He never wanted to hide his likes, dislikes, whims and oddities. He frankly confesses all these things to the readers. He desires the friendship of his readers, and not merely their respect.

As Charles Lamb loved fun, he sometimes used to mystify the readers by declaring something true to be false, or by mischievously changing names and speaking under an assumed personality. In the essay, "Christ's Hospital Five and Thirty Years Ago", he writes in the guise of Coleridge. And it is in the last three or two paragraphs that he unveils the curtain and writes as Charles Lamb.

Lamb speaks of his personal reactions to various aspects of life in all his essays. In his essays he is primarily concerned with other people; he talks about them from his personal point of view. In "The South Sea House", he portrays the characters of Evans, Thomas Tame and John Tipp by his thoughts and feelings and the comments about them are his personal observations only.

**9.1.3. Conclusion:** Thomson writes: "The Essays of Elia' is primarily a work of imagination. Autobiographical detail is not his purpose, but is merely incident to it, and the writer is at liberty to keep the strict truth or draw upon his imagination as he will".

**9.1.4. SUMMING-UP:** In this essay you must have understood what an autobiographical essay is and how well Lamb has made his "Essays of Elia" autobiographical. You can also go through some other essays of Lamb and pick out examples to support your answer with regard to the autobiographical element in these essays.

## 9.2. HUMOUR AND PATHOS IN CHARLES LAMB'S ESSAYS

**9.2.1. Intro:** Charles Lamb is a great artist in showing humour and pathos (tragic instinct) in a single row. He was keen to capture simultaneously the funny side as well as the tragic side of life. Humour and pathos are seen as the mingling ingredients in his works. Laughter is followed by tears of sympathy in many of his essays.

Humour may be described as an extreme sensitiveness to the true proportion of things and pathos is what appeals to our feelings of compassion and evokes sympathy. We are so accustomed to exaggerate one or the other side of a fact that the proportion strikes with a sense of incongruity and so excites laughter.

**9.2.2. Examples:** In the essay "South Sea House", both humour and pathos exist side by side. There is a touch of melancholy in the wistful description of the decaying building. The readers feel sorry for its decadence. In the description of the clerks of this company, the comic element appears as Lamb describes the clerks as "a sort of Noah's Ark" and "odd fishes". The readers find humour while John Tipp is said to be making horrible sounds while singing and yet holds a musical concert once every fortnight.

Lamb describes the aristocratic pretensions of Thomas Tame in a humorous way. He says, "He (Tame) had the air and stoop of a nobleman." By stoop the author means "that gentle bending of the body forwards, which, in great men, must be supposed to be the effect of a habitual condescending attention to the applications of their inferiors." The readers feel sorry for the pathetic situation of Thomas Tame who had developed an aristocratic air to save himself from the insult of others but never to insult others. A poor man with such shallow intellect could find solace in life only by aristocratic pretensions.

Similarly, in the essay "Christ's Hospital Five and Thirty Years Ago" we find the touch of humour and pathos at the same time. We feel sympathetic towards the big boy (the gag eater) who got ill-cooked food in Christ's hospital. The readers are stunned when Lamb says, "There was love for the bringer; shame for the thing brought, and the manner of its bringing;

sympathy for those who were too many to share in it" as the big boy was reported to have taken the food to share with his old parents.

Lamb says in the guise of Coleridge, "I was a poor friendless boy." Again he says, "O the cruelty of separating a poor lad from his early homestead!" The sad enumeration of things happening at the Christ's Hospital adds pathos to the essay. However, there is humour again. The account of Hodges' pet ass, which he smuggled and kept in the dormitory, is funny. It is hilarious to read about how the ass betrayed the owner by braying loudly.

Lamb also spoke of fun and games which relieved the darkness and gloom, by portraying two masters. The Upper Master and the Lower Master were presented with a remarkable contrast. Field, The Lower Master, was a mild and lenient man who did not enforce discipline. The Upper Master Boyer was very strict and his students were frightened of him. He had two wigs so as to give a clue to the mood he was in for the day. One better wig suggested that he would remain calm that day; the other old wig certainly showed his bad mood and the terrible time the students were supposed to face.

There is humour as well as pathos in the description of his poor relations in one of his essays. The comparisons that Lamb used, to show the poor relation, such as 'a frog in your kitchen', 'a drain on your purse', 'a fly in your ointment' etc. are humorous. However the sight and plight of the poor relation melts our hearts. The anecdote of the Oxford student who fled from the university certainly moves the hearts of the readers. The anecdote of Mr. Billet's bearing the mild insult at Lamb's house tells of a humanitarian side.

**9.2.3. SUMMING-UP:** In this above essay you have learnt about what humour and pathos are and how Lamb has succeeded in presenting both these contrasting emotions simultaneously in his essays. We will be learning more and more literary works consisting of the elements of humour pathos in the other semesters to come.

### 9.3. LAMB'S PROSE STYLE

**9.3.1. Intro:** Charles Lamb is very much fond of the Elizabethan writers. Alfred Ainger feels that there are many points in which Lamb imitates the Elizabethan writers e.g.: his love for coining words, his fondness for alliteration, his use of compound words, his formation of adjectives from proper nouns and his frequent use of Latinisms. Lamb also makes use of archaic or obsolete words. Apart from these, Lamb also thinks in the same way as the Elizabethans did. The result is a kind of mannerism which Lamb himself calls 'a self-pleasing quaintness'.

The style of Charles Lamb's essays is old-fashioned as he borrowed unconsciously from the early English dramatists. Burton's 'Anatomy of Melancholy' and Browne's 'Religio Medici' and Montague's writings impressed him the most, to cultivate a suitable style to his essays. Lamb liked to read Greek art and literature.

"The Essays of Elia" are of various kinds. They comprise character-sketches, fantasies, personal experiences, reminiscences, so on and so forth. Lamb treats all of them with the same type of personal reaction. Lamb's style is his own. It has 'humor' 'wit' and 'fun'. Wit is based on intellect, humor on insight and sympathy,

and fun on the freshness of body and mind. Humor is very nearly related to pathos which is beautifully expressed in 'Dream children'.

Lamb's style is profusely interspersed with quotations, allusions and recognizable echoes from others writers. The quotations attract fresh attention to the source from which they are cited and serve to popularize his favorite authors. His "mind and memory were so stored with English reading of an early date, that the occurrence of a particular theme sends him back, quite naturally to those early masters who had specially made that theme their own".

**9.3.2. Critical Comment:** Hugh Walker gives a striking commentary on Lamb's style: "Lamb's style is inseparable from his humor. His "whim-whams", as he called them, take best expression in the quaint words and get multiplied and sometimes go far fetched. Strip Elia of these and he is nothing ... of no one else is saying that the style is the man more true than of Lamb."

**9.3.3. SUMMING-UP:** In this essay you have learnt by now that style makes the man. You have also understood that style and a literary work are inseparable and that style comprises so many elements. Try to learn more from the suggested websites given below and have a better idea.

#### 9.4. COMPREHENSION CHECK:

Answer the following questions briefly in your own words:

1. What is an autobiography and how is it different from a biography?
2. What is humour and how is it different from fun?
3. Define pathos and give two examples from the essay 'Dream Children'.
4. What are the elements of Lamb's style as you have observed?

#### 9.5. REFERENCES:

1. "A Dictionary of Literary Terms" – AN Gupta & Satish Gupta
2. "The Theory of Literature" – Rene Wellek

For further references:

1. "Charles Lamb" - Alfred Ainger
2. "Introduction to the works and letters of Lamb" – Edmund Blunden

For e-sources visit the following web links:

1. [allrfree.blogspot.com/2009/02/autobiographical-elements-in-charles.html](http://allrfree.blogspot.com/2009/02/autobiographical-elements-in-charles.html)
2. [ardhendude.blogspot.com/.../charles-lambs-essays-of-elia-study-of.html](http://ardhendude.blogspot.com/.../charles-lambs-essays-of-elia-study-of.html)
3. [www.bartleby.com/209/980.html](http://www.bartleby.com/209/980.html)
4. [www.enotes.com/.../comment-lambs-prose-style-seen-his-essay-dream-4](http://www.enotes.com/.../comment-lambs-prose-style-seen-his-essay-dream-4).
5. [www.oldandsold.com/articles33n/english-books-5.shtml](http://www.oldandsold.com/articles33n/english-books-5.shtml)

# LESSON- 10

## JONATHAN SWIFT

### OBJECTIVES:

In this lesson you are going to:

- Know about the various features of the age of Jonathan Swift
- Learn and understand the life and works of Swift

### Structure of the lesson:

#### 10.0. Objectives

#### 10.1. The age of Jonathan Swift

##### 10.1.1. The age of prose

##### 10.1.2. The Age of classicism

##### 10.1.3. The Age of reason

##### 10.1.4. The Age of satire

#### 10.2. Life and Works of Swift

##### 10.2.1. Intro

##### 10.2.2. Swift's career

##### 10.2.3. Controversies in his personal life

##### 10.2.4. Swift's major literary works

#### 10.3. Summing-up

#### 10.4. Comprehension check

#### 10.5. References

### 10.1. THE AGE OF JONATHAN SWIFT:

The period to which Jonathan Swift belongs (from 1700 to 1745) is known by a variety of names. It is called the Augustan age. It is also known as the age of reason or age of prose. During this period Swift produced most of his literary output. It is called the Augustan age because it resembled the reign of king Augustus of Italy which was the golden age of Latin literature.

**10.1.1. The Age of Prose:** Dr. Arnold called this age 'the age of prose'. During Swift's period there were great writers of prose and poetry (e.g.: Alexander Pope, Swift, Addison, Steele, Gibbon, Daniel Defoe, John Arbuthnot, Henry Fielding, Burke etc.). In this period most writers produced a lot of prose and it is also observed that even poetry of this period

was more prose like. Just like the prose writers, the poets too used their creative works for ethical, satirical and critical perspectives. Even the poetry of Alexander Pope though refined and polished, lacked the basic qualities like fire, passion, enthusiasm.

The writers of this age were more critical rather than creative, more realistic rather than imaginative, more cold and intellectual rather than emotional. The greatest literary genres like drama, epic and lyric lost their intensity in the hands of these writers. There was an emergence of pamphlets, magazines, newspapers and periodicals. The novel was also developing fast. The interests of the readers changed considerably and there was a shift from poetry to prose.

**10.1.2. Age of Classicism:** Some critics also call this age ‘the age of classicism’. The word classic is used normally for literature that stands in a class by itself. The writers of this period considered the ancient writers of Greece and Rome to be their models. They desired to follow the footsteps of the past masters and also the rules and principles pertaining to ‘the form and the expression’ as far as possible. These writers rebelled against the poetic wildness of the Elizabethans and the fantastic excess of the metaphysical poets of the previous periods.

**10.1.3. Age of Reason:** The writers of this period were guided by **reason, good sense, intellect and wit**. They felt that literature should follow rules correctly. The rules established by those classic masters like Horace and Aristotle (which were interpreted by French writers like Boileau and Rapin) were of great importance to them. The French influence was predominant during this period which insisted on the manner of expression rather than on matter. Stress was not laid upon the originality of the idea but upon the form. It was definitely the age of understanding and the age of enlightenment when literature began to diffuse knowledge among a growing public.

**10.1.4. Age of Satire:** Satire was the prominent form of expression in this period. Even in the preceding periods (i.e. the Elizabethan period, the Restoration period) there was satire. But during this period, the love for satire dominated through all the genres and the cold, hard worldliness of Augustan life found its expression in polished wit and satire. The artificial, polished and refined social life plus the political background resulted in the production of satirical works in this period. Every writer of the day had his own political prop, either of the Whigs or the Tories. For them literature became the most suitable platform to expose one another. Through literature the writers exhibited the vices and foibles of the society. Poetry became the poetry of the town, the coffee house and the artificial society. Often the life of town (the powerful world of London) was portrayed in minute detail.

## **10.2. JONATHAN SWIFT - LIFE AND WORKS:**

**10.2.1. Intro:** Jonathan Swift, author, journalist, and political activist is best known for his satirical novel ‘*Gulliver's Travels*’ and for his satirical essay on the Irish famine, "A Modest Proposal." He was born into a poor family that included his mother and his sister. His father was a clergyman who died seven months before Jonathan's birth. Swift's childhood

is not much known. Jonathan's mother, after her husband's death, left the children to be raised by relatives while she returned to her family in Leicester. Swift, as a baby, was taken by a nurse to England where he remained for three years before being returned to his family.

Beginning in 1673, Swift attended Kilkenny Grammar School, where he enjoyed reading literature and excelled especially in language study. It is where he got acquainted with William Congreve. In 1682, Swift entered Trinity College where he received a B.A. by "special grace," (i.e. receiving an honour without performing well). Upon leaving Trinity College, Swift went to England to work as a secretary for Sir William Temple. In 1692, Swift received an M.A. and in 1702, he received the Doctor of Divinity (a course in religion) from Dublin University.

**10.2.2. Swift's Career:** From approximately 1689 to 1694, Swift was employed as a secretary to Sir William Temple (a maternal uncle). Later he moved to work for the church for some time. In 1699 Sir William passed away. In fact Swift decided upon his career as a clergyman and planned to make his career in association with the church. So he served the church at various levels sometimes on salary and at times on an honorary basis for a long time. Throughout this time, Swift continued writing satirically in various genres, including both prose and poetry, using various forms to address different causes: personal, behavioural, philosophical, political, religious, civic, and others.

During the reign of Queen Anne (1702-14), Swift visited London several times, with an intention to prove himself as a talented essayist. He began his political career as a part of the Whig political party but in 1710 joined the Tory group and took over the Tory journal *The Examiner*. Swift was disgusted by the Whigs' aversion to the Anglican Church. Swift focused his time as a Tory on supporting their cause by writing lengthy pamphlets and essays on religion and politics while continuing to satirize those with different views. When Queen Anne died in 1714, the Tories were put to disgrace and thus Swift lost favor in England. He resigned himself to leaving for Ireland to live there.

Later, in 1724, Swift led the Irish people in their resistance against the English, who were still oppressing them. He wrote many public letters and political pamphlets with the purpose of uniting the people. One of his most famous essays, "A Modest Proposal," satirically suggests that the Irish could solve their problems of starvation and overpopulation by eating their own children.

Swift was a great friend of Alexander Pope, a fellow satirist best known for "the Rape of the Lock." Both possessed similar qualities of mind and emotion. They were aggressive and misanthropic. They showed their bitterness and venom through their personal satires.

For the majority of his life, Swift was a victim of some imbalance and also hearing impairment and dizziness. When Swift was about 72 years old, his disease began to strike him harder by keeping him away from his duties and social life. He slowly withdrew himself from all active life into seclusion. Swift died in October 1745. He was buried in St. Patrick's Cathedral, where he had worked as a dean.

**10.2.3. Controversies in personal life:** Swift was said to have shared a close relationship with a girl Esther Johnson. He first met her when she was eight years old. In later course of time they were believed to have secretly married. Swift gave her the nick-name “Stella”. It was certain that she enjoyed a special place in his heart till she died. In his later life, Swift was linked to another fatherless girl, Esther Vanhomrigh (whom he called “Vanessa”), who presumably was infatuated with him, though Swift later tried to break his relationship with her. He is also rumored to have had a relationship with the celebrated beauty Anne Long.

**10.2.4. Swift's Major Literary Works:** Swift's first work was ‘*Dissensions in Athens and Rome*’ which relates the evil consequences of disputes between the Nobles and the Commons and points out a moral against the quarrelsome nature of the English Commons.

Swift wrote two major works. *Tale of a Tub (a satire on religious issues)* is considered to be the best of his works. It is a vigorous satire on the church defending the middle position of the Anglican and Lutheran churches. With *The Battle of the Books* (a satire on literary issues) which was in fact published as a part of the ‘Tale of a Tub’, Swift supports strongly the Ancient authors and those authors who believed in the superiority of the classics and the humanities, and mocks at the Modern authors and those who uphold the superiority of modern science, modern scholarship, modern politics, and modern literature.

In *The Mechanical Operation of the Spirit*, Swift made his satiric attack on questionable religious views and knowledge acquisition, particularly scientific knowledge. *The Journal to Stella*, is a series of letters written from 1710 to 1714 by Swift to Esther Johnson (an illegitimate daughter of Sir William) and her companion Rebecca Dingley.

Swift is also recognized as a defender of Ireland. *A Modest Proposal* is his reaction to English commercial practices that negatively impacted Ireland and in this piece, Swift wrote one of the greatest works of sustained irony in English or in any other language. In “Gulliver's Travels” also, Swift made an attempt to expose the British Empire's efforts of encroaching into other domains (in his Book –III.)

*The Drapier's Letters* (1724) is Swift's (anonymous) response to the continued subjugation of all aspects of the lives of those living in Ireland by England. The *Letters* are full of political rhetoric and popular arguments. It aroused so much opposition that the English offered a reward of £300 against the name of the author. Although the Irish knew that he had written the letters, they did not betray him. They made him a national hero instead.

In *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), Swift presents a satire on all aspects of humanity by pointing out the weaknesses, vices, and follies of all human beings. It is a wonder tale of strange adventures of a sea-man Gulliver. It is written in four books narrating the adventures of Gulliver in four unknown regions. Swift magnifies man into a giant and immediately reduces him into a Lilliput and finds him again mean and insolent. The satire reaches its peak in Swift's comparison of Houyhnhnms (horses) and Yahoos (human-like creatures) in Book IV.

### 10.3. SUMMING-UP:

In this lesson you have learnt about some of the features of the age of Swift, also the life and career and the major literary contribution of Swift, how satire dominated all the genres and how prose writings were more popular than poetry in this age of reason. You can learn more details about Swift by visiting the e-sources mentioned hereunder.

### 10.4. COMPREHENSION CHECK:

1. Why is the age of Swift called the age of Prose?
2. Mention some of the important writers in the age of Swift?
3. What similarities do you find between the age of Swift and the Augustan age?
4. How did Swift prove himself to be a champion of the Irish cause?
5. Name the two major satires of Swift.

### 10.5. REFERENCES:

For further reading you can visit the following sites:

<http://www.liu.se/isk/eng/cs/cs2home5.html#Art>  
[www.thefamouspeople.com/profiles/jonathan-swift-3.php](http://www.thefamouspeople.com/profiles/jonathan-swift-3.php)  
[www.biography.com/people/jonathan-swift-9500342](http://www.biography.com/people/jonathan-swift-9500342)

For print reference:

“Jonathan Swift” – by Middleton Murray

“English Literature of the early 18<sup>th</sup> century” – by Binamy Dobra

# LESSON- 11

## BATTLE OF THE BOOKS

### 11.0 OBJECTIVES:

In this lesson you are going to:

- Know about how the controversy of ancient and modern learning originated in France and England
- Understand how the battle of the books takes place in the royal library in London

### STRUCTURE OF THE LESSON

#### 11.0. Objectives

#### 11.1. Genesis of the Battle

##### 11.1.1. Intro

##### 11.1.2. The controversy

##### 11.1.3. Classical references

#### 11.2. Summary of the text

##### 11.2.1. Intro

##### 11.2.2. Prelude-the causes of war

##### 11.2.3. The argument

##### 11.2.4. Reasons for the battle of the books

##### 11.2.5. The episode of the spider and the bee

##### 11.2.6. Aesop's interpretation

##### 11.2.7. Intervention of the supernatural

##### 11.2.8. The battle

##### 11.2.9. Individual combats

##### 11.2.10. The episode of Wotton and Bentley

##### 11.2.11. Critique

##### 11.2.12. Classical references

#### 11.3. Summing-up

#### 11.4. Comprehension check

#### 11.5. References for further reading

### 11.1. GENESIS OF THE BATTLE

**11.1.1. Intro:** The Battle of the Books is a satire of Swift, written with a definite purpose. He wanted to support his patron Sir William Temple with regard to the

controversy about the learning of the ancient and modern writers and also about the comparative superiority of the ancients.

**11.1.2. The controversy:** There was a controversy going on in France for some time before Sir William Temple entered the picture. Two French writers namely **Charles Perrault** and **Bernard Fontenelle** wrote in 1687 about the superiority of the modern writers and of their learning over the ancient writers'. Perrault published his poem '*the Century of Louis, the Great Monarch*' followed by an essay '*Comparative Estimate of Ancient and Modern Writers*', wherein he praised the modern authors at the cost of the ancient writers. He gave a high praise to the modern authors and condemned the learning of the ancient authors. Boileau gave a suitable reply in France immediately. It became a burning issue in France.

Sir William, a man of refined manners and diplomacy introduced this controversy into England in 1692 by publishing a treatise '*Essay upon the Ancient and Modern Learning*' in favour of the ancient writers. His essay was not at all critical but half playful and half serious. He made an attempt to establish the superiority of ancient authors particularly by applauding the works namely "*the Epistles of Phalaris*" and "*Aesop's Fables*".

William Wotton, a man of accurate scholarship and wisdom challenged Temple's views on the superiority of ancients in 1694. Wotton in his '*Reflections on Ancient and Modern Learning*' asserted that the moderns deserve to be exalted sky-high and he even questioned the scholarship of Temple. He had objections about the epistles of Phalaris and he had made a serious attack on the letters. In the same year some enthusiastic scholars of the church published a new edition of the epistles of Phalaris, under the name of Charles Boyle.

At that time Swift was staying with Sir William. Swift felt that his patron was quite unnecessarily insulted and he wished to take his uncle's stand. Meanwhile Wotton brought out another edition of his previous essay 'Reflections'. He raised his doubts on the authenticity of the letters of Phalaris.

Richard Bentley, the keeper (chief librarian) of the King's libraries poked his finger into the controversy. He wrote 'Dissertation on the Letters of Phalaris' and added the second edition of Wotton's 'Reflections' to it as an appendix. Bentley concluded that the letters attributed to Phalaris were not written by Phalaris. He gave examples to substantiate his argument. According to him Phalaris belonged to 6<sup>th</sup> century BC and the contents of the letters pertained to a period three centuries later. Similarly he also commented that the animal stories of Aesop too were not actually written by Aesop but by some other author of a later period.

Later Charles Boyle, a scholar replied through his '*Examination of the Dissertation on the Epistles of Phalaris and the Fables of Aesop*' in 1698, to which Bentley responded. Like this the controversy continued in England for some more time. Swift could not keep himself silent as his patron had been insulted. He too entered the list of champions with his '*Battle of the Books*'. He attacked on both Wotton and Bentley and poured his scorn and satire on those modern writers and the supporters of modern learning.

Swift had another personal reason behind the publication of the ‘Battle of the Books’. He wrote some odes and sent them to his contemporary poet and relative John Dryden, for betterment. Dryden replied, “Cousin Swift you will never be a poet”. Swift took it to be an insult and waited for an opportunity to pay it back. In one of the episodes of the battle he utilised the chance to avenge it seriously.

### 11.1.3. Classical references:

1. **Phalaris:** a tyrannical ruler of Agrigentum (6<sup>th</sup> century BC).. He was said to have written certain letters (epistles) on the life of his times. Bentley called the epistles spurious.
2. **Aesop:** a writer of animal stories (620 BC) of entertainment and instruction. These stories are read even today as Aesop’s fables. Bentley wrote that there was no such man called Aesop and the stories were from some other man.
3. **Perrault:** Charles Perrault (1628-1703) a French writer and one of the earliest champions of Moderns learning in France
4. **Fontenelle:** Bernard Fontenelle (1657-1757), another French scholar who took the side of Moderns in the controversy

## 11.2. SUMMARY OF “THE BATTLE OF THE BOOKS”

**11.2.1. Intro:** This literary satire is in fact “*a full and true account of the battle fought last Friday between the ancient and the modern books in St. James’s Library*”. It starts with a note to the reader from the book seller, and it refers to a “famous dispute ... about ancient and modern learning.” As we discussed in the ‘origin of the battle’ the controversy over the comparative merits of the ancient and the modern writers had spread to England from France. The writers of the day started taking sides of their favourites. Sir William Temple had already decided to take sides with the ancients. Charles Boyle had praised the ancient writer Phalaris. However William Wotton and Richard Bentley had stood by the side of the modern authors.

The controversy did not stop there with the authors only but also spread among the ‘books’ (apparently inanimate but full of life here) themselves, in the King’s library in London. The **book seller** in this context, warns his readers ‘to be aware of applying to persons what is here meant only of books in the most literal sense’. The names of writers that appear in the text are suggestive of only the books (*certain sheets of paper, bound up in leather*) but not persons. And also the manuscript about the battle is incomplete, so we still do not know who won.

In the **Preface of the author**, Swift elaborates the nature of satire. He says “*Satire is a sort of glass, where in beholders do generally discover everybody’s face but their own*’. Most people feel that the satire is not aimed at them, and they see only others in it. It is not a problem even when someone sees himself and gets offended, because anger weakens his counter-arguments.

**11.2.2. Prelude-Causes of war:** At the outset Swift reflects on the causes of battles: We all feel that wars result from pride and riches. But pride and want (poverty) are closely related to each other and are responsible for wars. Swift views that men can't surpass dogs in lust and avarice. Like dogs, they long for what they don't possess and try to fight with those who possess.

**11.2.3. The argument:** Swift brings in his argument now. It is said that the two tops of the hill Parnassus were occupied by the Ancients and the Moderns. The Moderns grew jealous of the Ancients as the latter occupied the higher one. The Moderns were dissatisfied with their own position. They proposed to their rivals to come down to their level and surrender (there by both of them would be equal) or they would have no other option except proceed to remove them from that place by destroying the higher hill with spades and mattocks.

The Ancients, being aborigines (native inhabitants) of the summit, were surprised by the insolence of their fellow new tenants. Their hill was made of solid rock and so it could not be so easy to break it down. Hence they suggested that the Moderns should raise themselves up instead of thinking of a war, and they would gladly offer their help and cooperation in the matter. The Moderns being big in numbers rejected that alternative and chose war. Swift tells that this quarrel has continued since then from age to age. And it has finally reached to their books too.

**11.2.4. Reasons for the battle of books:** Swift makes fun of the books of history and other "books of controversy". The writers of such books contribute their lot to the controversy with their personal and prejudiced opinions. Even after their death their soul would stick forever to the books they produced in their life time. Swift suggests that such books of controversy of both ancient and modern writers should be kept mixed up and be chained up on separate shelves in the libraries. Thereby they would quarrel among themselves and there would be peace in the rest of the libraries.

Unfortunately the advice of Swift was not being followed and the outcome was an outbreak of a great war in St. James's library on Friday last. Swift assures that he knows the full details of the battle and so he would give an impartial account of it. This war in fact resulted because of Dr Bentley, an avowed champion of Moderns. He wanted to place the books of Moderns at higher and cleaner places and throw those of the Ancients in to obscure corners. But he was so shallow headed and confused that he got all the books mixed up. Thus the Ancients were placed alongside the Moderns.

**11.2.5. The episode of the spider and the bee:** War was imminent in the Royal Library in London. The Moderns were getting ready for warfare claiming that they got their best armour. They examined their forces, held discussions and affirmed that whatever they had; was original and of their own making. Plato saw them and laughed in agreement that it was 'all their own.'

There is a well-fed spider who has built a web-fortress in the corner of a window "in the modern style" of science and mathematics. A bee by chance

alights upon the web. Having been disturbed and terrified the spider abuses the bee. The spider claims superiority over the bee in several respects. The bee is a vagabond and lives by plundering. The spider boasts of its creative and constructive skills by which it can build a castle with sources generated within itself.

The bee at first agrees that it is a vagabond and lives on plunder. But it enriches itself from flowers and will never harm their beauty. The bee further says that it acknowledges the architectural skills of the spider's web but it is so weak and unsubstantial that it can't last long. Further the web is made of venom and dirt generated from the spider's own bowels. On the other hand the bee says that it is bestowed with two beautiful gifts: a pair of wings and a drone pipe. It further argues for the ancient values of "long search, much study, true judgment, and distinction of things". The debate continues and the spider grows angry at this. The spider is about to reply but the bee knows that such a discourse is just a waste of time, so flies off, freeing itself from the cobweb and leaving its opponent in fury.

**11.2.6. Aesop's interpretation:** The books are so transfixed by the discourse of the spider and the bee that they cease to quarrel. **Aesop** (he is known for his interpretation of those animal stories with moral implication) takes the opportunity to escape to the side of the Ancients, remarking, characteristically, that the argument between the bee and the spider is a good allegory for the battle between the Ancients and the Moderns: the spider boasts "of his native stock and great genius," (though it is poison and dirt generated of killing and eating the insects) particularly in architecture and mathematics, while the bee and the Ancients are content "to pretend to nothing of our own beyond our wings and our voice" and "whatever we have got has been by infinite labour and search... through every corner of nature." The moderns like the spider are proud of their own generation of resources which are venom and dirt i.e. worthless satires and poetry. The ancients move freely in nature like the bee, collect honey and wax which are the sources of sweetness and light.

This reflection inspires the books in the library to prepare for the battle, to choose their leaders and make their strategy. There are **horsemen, light horse, bowmen, heavy armed foot, dragoons, and mercenaries**. They have lots of fighters "without arms, courage, or discipline". They appear to be a crowd of "disorderly" and generally worthless writers. They are in fact more in numbers than the Ancients. The Ancients, though small in numbers are well-disciplined and well organised. Their commanders are noble and skilful, hailing from Greece (**Homer, Pindar, Plato, Aristotle, Hippocrates, Euclid, and Herodotus**) and Rome (such as **Livy**).

**11.2.7. Intervention of the supernatural: Goddess of Fate** flies to the heaven and alerts **Jupiter** about the impending battle and a meeting of the gods is instantly called for. The gods and goddesses too are divided into factions in support of the writers. For example, **Momus** is on the side the Moderns; **Pallas** (Athena or her close relative) is on the side of the Ancients. Swift makes fun of how the meeting is held. At the end, **Jove** consults the **book of Fate** and understands the result of

the battle, but he tells nobody. He sends a number of his messengers to the scene of battle.

Momus smells the threat of defeat for the Moderns and goes to the **Goddess Criticism** in order to gain victory. He requests her to visit the British Isles and save her devoted children, the Moderns. Goddess Criticism sits upon a mountain **Nova Zembla** in the Arctic regions; along with *Ignorance and Pride*, her parents; and others including *Opinion, Noise, and Dullness and Il-manners*, her children. After hearing of the battle, she herself indulges in a soliloquy and proceeds to England. She has a loving son there in Wotton. She disguises herself as Bentley (the book version) and encourages him to make an attack on the Ancients, having Dullness and Ill-manners for support.

**11.2.8. The battle:** The battle of the books finally begins. Swift, imitating the manner of the epic writers, invokes to the **Goddess of History** to enable him to present the course of the battle as honestly and exactly as it was fought. We find at certain places of his narration, some *details of the battle missing, leading to gaps here and there in the text*. They may suggest that the battle is unfinished. We also find one to one (individual) combats.

**11.2.9. Individual combats:** At first **Paracelsus** hurls a javelin with a mighty force at opponent Galen, the brave Ancient, but the weapon just touches his shield. **Aristotle** flings an arrow at **Bacon** the Modern, which misses and hits **Descartes**. Swift prays in the mode of epic poetry, "Say, goddess, whom he slew first and whom he slew last". **Homer** mounting upon a furious horse runs into his enemies' camp and kills many like **Gondibert, Denham, Wesley, Perrault, Fontenelle** and the like.

**Virgil** is found coming on a horse, searching for his enemies. His horse is a bit slow. He encounters **Dryden** mounting an old and lean horse whose 'speed is less than his noise'. At first Virgil is disappointed to see such a feeble rival whose helmet is nine times too large for his head. Dryden in a weak voice claims some relationship with Virgil and calls him 'father'. He finally tricks Virgil into changing his armour with him (Though Virgil's is better he shows generosity in exchanging the armour).

The ancient Roman poet **Lucan**, on meeting his rival **Blackmore**, darts his javelin with a mighty arm which falls short of his enemy. Then he throws a lance and again fails to touch Blackmore as **Aesculapius** comes invisibly and diverts the point of the javelin. Lucan understands that his rival is being guarded by some god and so agrees to exchange gifts and fight no more.

The goddess Dullness gives **Thomas Creech** a flying figure of the ancient poet **Horace** to fight. He gladly chases his foe and finally lands at a bower of his father **John Ogleby**.

The Greek poet **Pindar** slays **Oldham, Afra** and the like. He finally faces the Modern **Abraham Cowley**. The Modern tries to flee but '*thrice he fled, and thrice he could not escape*'. He pleads with the mighty Ancient to spare his life but Pindar shows no mercy and cuts him in two. **Venus** takes the better half of his

body ‘*washed it seven times in **ambrosia**, and then struck it thrice with a sprig of **amaranth***’ and finally makes it into a dove.

**11.2.10. Episode of Bentley and Wotton:** After another gap in the text comes “the episode of Bentley and Wotton.” By then most of the Moderns were slain. And they are almost ready to retreat when Bentley takes up their cause. He is so litigious and spiteful that he speaks rudely to the Moderns and rails at them for timidity. He turns to his friend Wotton for help; the two of them march past. In fact they are not so sure of any success in the battle. Hence these two Moderns go in search of those stray Ancient soldiers passing aloof from the rest of the troops.

The Modern warriors at last find two Ancients, Aesop and Phalaris asleep. Bentley goes forward while Wotton stands back. Bentley is about to kill Phalaris when Affright (a child of one of the low goddesses), sensing danger, stops him with an icy hand. The two Ancients are now in their respective dreams. Bentley leaves the two heroes asleep, seizes their armour feeling satisfied with his achievement.

Wotton, in the meanwhile, tries to drink at the fountain on **Mountain Helicon** (which is sacred to the Muses). ‘*Thrice with profane hands he essayed to raise the water to his lips and thrice it slipped all through his fingers*’. When he falls prostrate to drink, **Apollo** places a shield betwixt the Modern and the water; thereby he gets nothing except mud. At the fountainhead Wotton finds two heroes and recognises one of them to be Sir William Temple (the other he could not distinguish) who is having large draughts of water there. Wotton, taking this as an opportunity, prays to his mother god to lend him help to hit the enemy there. He flings a lance but it could not reach his enemy. Apollo is furious at Wotton's attempt, so in the guise of **Atterbury**, urges Boyle to get revenge.

Boyle ‘*as a young lion in the Libyan plains..... wishing to meet a tiger or a wild boar*’ in the hunt, runs after the fleeing Wotton, but, seeing Bentley with the armour (stolen from the sleeping Phalaris), chases Bentley too. Having understood that the flight is useless, they attempt to fight. Bentley throws a spear with all his force but the divine **Pallas** comes to help Boyle. He kills both Bentley and Wotton with a single stroke of a lance, which pierces through the two men's bodies and they die instantly. Swift makes fun of them saying, “*Till down they fell, joined in their lives, joined in their deaths....*”

### 11.2.11. Critique:

This story is very much an **allegory**. Swift names his book “The Battle of the Books” with a purpose to mock at the pedantry of the modern writers. The books may not be interchangeable with the authors; but they represent at least the main ideas that the books comprise. It is not literally a battle of books, but an allegory. We can't generalise the argument of Swift. It is purely one-sided and biased. We can't undermine the works of the moderns nor can we overestimate the ancients' works. However Swift, in his book, treats the works of Ancients to be solid and superior to the Moderns'.

The allegory also works at a more general level. For example, the offer to level the Ancients' hill is an attack on the Moderns. Swift views that the Moderns are supposed to be grateful to their forerunners and labour under their protection. By attempting to dislodge the position of the Ancients, the Moderns prove themselves to be arrogant and high handed. Swift expects everybody to be loyal to the superiors, i.e., Ancients. The spider and the bee represent the Moderns and the Ancients respectively. The spider is known for the scientific precision in his intricate web, yet the bee points out that he eats insects instead of the nectar of better things, spewing out bile instead of honey, suggesting the relative advantages of each group.

Swift uses the deities to make further suggestions about the Ancients and Moderns. The Goddess of Criticism supporting the Moderns along with Momus, god of satire, implies that criticism and mockery characterize the Moderns' writings. Swift of course is a modern satirist, so this does not simply mean that the modern satirists are all bad. We must remember that there is "criticism" but also "true criticism". This Goddess, however, seems to represent much of the worst kind, given her description as something like a wild pig full of spleen. The gods, for the most part, take the side of the Ancients and also of those few Moderns who are on the side of the Ancients.

In the final section, Swift parodies Bentley's and Wotton's close intellectual friendship and relatively weak abilities to fight the Ancients or even to drink at their fountain of wisdom. At the end, they are bound together just like in real life (in one book, both their writings were bound together), basically indistinguishable. It is also comical that the great authors somehow need the help of these two men. It is fitting that when they die at the end, the battle rages on perfectly well without them. This is a lesson for other critics.

#### 11.2.12. Glossary/Classical references:

**Swift makes use of the following war terminology to represent the books/writers which/who are going to partake in the war:**

1. *Horsemen*: writers of epic poetry
2. *Light horse*: non-epic poetry
3. *Bow men*: philosophers
4. *Heavy armed foot*: historians
5. *Dragoons*: physicians/writers on medical subjects
6. *Mercenaries*: those who don't actually fight in the war but they support (mostly the historians)

**The following are some of the writers/books/places/literary forms you have come across while reading through the summary of the 'Battle of the Books':**

7. *Homer*: an ancient Greek epic poet, the author of Iliad and the Odyssey
8. *Pindar*: a Greek lyric poet known for his odes (Pindaric odes)
9. *Plato*: an ancient Greek philosopher (427 BC-347 BC)
10. *Aristotle*: another ancient Greek philosopher (384 BC- 322 BC)

11. *Hippocrates*: a Greek physician of 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, known as the father of medicine
12. *Livy*: a Roman historian known for his ‘History of Rome’
13. *Herodotus*: an ancient Greek historian, known as father of history
14. *Euclid*: an ancient mathematician of 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC.
15. *Goddess of Fame*: Fame is personified here.
16. *Jupiter*: the chief god in Roman mythology (also known as Jove)
17. *Momus*: the god of merciless criticism, mockery
18. *Pallas*: goddess of wisdom, industry and war (also known as Pallas Athene)
19. *The book of fate*: the book contains an account of all happenings of past, present and future
20. *Goddess of Criticism*: as such there is no goddess of criticism. Swift invents his own mythology for making fun of the Moderns who are experts in criticism.
21. *Nova Zembla*: an Arctic mountain land where Goddess Criticism dwells with her crew of parents and children
22. *Soliloquy*: a speech made (aloud) by somebody alone when nobody is present around. It is rather ‘thinking aloud’
23. *Goddess of History*: there are nine Muses in all whom the epic writers invoke to enable them to proceed with the heavy task of writing the epic. ‘Clio’ is the name of the Muse who presides over history.
24. *Paracelsus*: a Swiss physician (1493-1541) one of the founders of modern medicine
25. *Galen*: an ancient physician
26. *Aristotle*: an ancient Greek philosopher and theorist
27. *Bacon*: an English philosopher in modern times on whom Swift has respect and so he doesn’t want to show Bacon being directly defeated by Aristotle.
  
28. *Descartes*: a French philosopher (1596-1650)
29. *Gondibert*: is the name of an epic poem of Sir William Davenant in 1650. Swift considers it as a dull epic
30. *Denham*: Sir John Denham (1615-1668) an English poet and author of “Cooper’s Hill”
31. *Wesley*: Samuel Wesley (1662-1735) an English poet and author of a Heroic poem “The Life of Christ”
32. *Virgil*: an ancient epic poet from Rome (70 BC-19 BC) and the author of the epic “Aeneid”
33. *Dryden*: an eminent poet in English and a contemporary writer to Swift on whom Swift bears a personal grudge
34. *Lucan*: Marcus Lucanus, an ancient epic poet and author of “Pharsalia” in Latin
35. *Blackmore*: Sir Richard Blackmore an illustrious physician and poet
36. *Aesculapius*: Roman god and patron of physicians
37. *Thomas Creech*: a modern poet (1659-1700) who made attempts to translate Horace’s poetry
38. *Ogleby*: John Ogleby (1600-1676) too attempted to translate Virgil and Homer
39. *Pindar*: an ancient Greek poet (522 BC-443 BC) known for his odes (Pindaric odes)
40. *Oldham*: John Oldham (1653-1683) an English poet who wrote odes in the manner of Pindar
41. *Afra*: Mrs. Afra Ben, a contemporary writer and author of several novels

42. *Abraham Cowley*: one of the Metaphysical poets (1618-1667) who attempted to write odes in Pindar's lines
43. *Venus*: Goddess of Love
44. *Ambrosia*: a heavenly drink
45. *Amaranth*: a heavenly plant with unfading flowers
46. *Mount Helicon*: name referred to the spring of Helicon which falls from the mountain which is sacred to god Apollo
47. *Apollo*: god of poetry and song
48. *Atterbury*: Francis Atterbury helped Boyle to reply to the attack of Bentley in the form of "*Dissertation on the Epistles of Phalaris*"
49. *Pallas*: goddess of wisdom and industry (hard work) and war
50. *Allegory*: a narrative which can have meaning at a literary level and also at a metaphorical level. The metaphorical (symbolic) meaning comes out only through an intensive reading. Allegory has a moral purpose to convey.

### 11.3. SUMMING-UP:

In this lesson you have learnt how the battle of the books takes its origin and also how the battle takes place. The gaps in the text suggest the high degree to which the battle is unfinished (particularly in the details of the conflicts between specific individuals). The ending of the story without a conclusion might suggest the futility of the entire argument between the Ancients and the Moderns, since both sides have their virtues and each writer should be taken on his own merits.

### 11.4. COMPREHENSION CHECK:

Answer the following questions briefly in your own words:

1. How did the literary controversy start in France?
2. What is the personal grudge of Swift with John Dryden?
3. How did Richard Bentley contribute to the controversy in England?
4. What according to Swift, are the causes of war?
5. What is Swift's suggestion with regard to the books of controversy?
6. How does Aesop interpret the spider and the bee episode?
7. Mention some of the military terms you have noticed in the summary above.
8. Name the relations of Goddess Criticism you have learnt in the lesson.
9. Describe the encounter of Virgil and Dryden.
10. How do Bentley and Wotton meet with their death?

### 11.5. REFERENCES:

visit the following websites:

1. [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org) > 47,124 free ebooks > 31 by Jonathan Swift
2. [archive.org/.../battlebooks00swifgoog/battlebooks00swifgoog\\_djvu.txt](http://archive.org/.../battlebooks00swifgoog/battlebooks00swifgoog_djvu.txt)
3. pdf version [www.almabooks.com/excerpts/The-Battle-of-the-Books.pdf](http://www.almabooks.com/excerpts/The-Battle-of-the-Books.pdf)
4. [www.gradesaver.com/a-modest-proposal-and-other-stories/study-guide/summary-the-battle-of-the-books](http://www.gradesaver.com/a-modest-proposal-and-other-stories/study-guide/summary-the-battle-of-the-books)

For printed text you may read:

1. Swift, the Man, His works and the Age – Irvin Ehrenpreis
2. Jonathan Swift: an Introductory Essay – David Ward

# LESSON- 12

## LITERARY CONTROVERSY ON ANCIENT AND MODERN LEARNING

### 12.0. OBJECTIVES:

In this lesson you are going to:

- Know about the literary controversy on ancient and modern learning
- Learn about the features of epic and mock epic poetry
- Understand the role of supernatural machinery in epic and mock epic poetry

### Structure of the lesson:

#### 12.0. Objectives

#### 12.1. The quarrel between the Ancients and the Moderns

- 12.1.1. Intro
- 12.1.2. The controversy
- 12.1.3. Swift's stand
- 12.1.4. The causes of war
- 12.1.5. Allegorical significance
- 12.1.6. Aesop's interpretation
- 12.1.7. The battle
- 12.1.8. Conclusion
- 12.1.9. Summing-up

#### 12.2. "The Battle of the Books" as a Mock Epic

- 12.2.1. Intro
- 12.2.2. Swift's purpose in writing the mock epic
- 12.2.3. Episodic nature
- 12.2.4. Supernatural machinery
- 12.2.5. Speeches and soliloquies
- 12.2.6. Invocation
- 12.2.7. Grand style and use of similes
- 12.2.8. Conclusion
- 12.2.9. Summing-up

#### 12.3. Significance of Supernatural machinery

- 12.3.1. Intro
- 12.3.2. Purpose of machinery in epic poetry
- 12.3.3. The first intervention
- 12.3.4. Momus' flight to goddess Criticism
- 12.3.5. Intervention of the supernatural during the battle
- 12.3.6. Wotton and Bentley episode
- 12.3.7. Conclusion
- 12.3.8. Summing-up

#### 12.4. Comprehension check

#### 12.5. References

## 12.1. THE QUARREL BETWEEN THE ANCIENTS AND THE MODERNS:

**12.1.1. Intro:** *The Battle of the Books* is considered to be a part of another of Jonathan Swift's satire "*A Tale of a Tub*". It was written in 1704. Swift names his book so because it depicts a literal battle between books in the King's Library, in support of their respective the authors.

**12.1.2. The controversy:** Swift's "The Battle of the Books" reflects the contemporary polemics (controversy) taking place in France and England at that time. The controversy was the quarrel between the so called supporters of the "Ancients and Moderns". Those scholars of literature as well as writers who had faith in ancient models of taste and morality went into the Ancients' camp. There were also defenders of the modern science, art and literature who stood for the Moderns' side. Swift took the side of his patron Sir William Temple and the Ancients (though not explicitly). If we look into the controversy, the debate of the Ancients and the Moderns looks petty.

In fact the words "Ancients" and "Moderns" were not to be taken as old authors and new authors. They were two groups of authors advocating two different concepts of knowledge. "Ancients" stressed that the proper end of learning is a good moral life. "Moderns" viewed that knowledge lies in success and material progress. The recent advancements and achievements in the field of science prompted them to assume that they were superior to the Ancients. They thought they could know and win more than their predecessors.

**12.1.3. Swift's stand:** Swift's contribution to the literary debate was "The Battle of the Books" in which the books, instead of real authors take part in the battle. Swift's attitude towards the discussion is ambiguous but he defends Temple (because Temple was his patron) and sides with the Ancients. Throughout "The Battle of the Books" he emphasizes aesthetics and morality standing comfortably on the Ancients' side. He was disgusted with the pedantic learning and false scholarship of the writers of his day.

**12.1.4. The causes of war:** In the beginning Swift compares mankind with the republic of dogs. He says that if a leading dog of this republic possesses a bone or a female, the other dogs which are denied of the possession grow jealous. This brings a brawl in the street. Swift sarcastically says that human beings also feel jealous of those who have got larger possessions. Beggary (poverty) becomes thus the reason for battles. He directs us to the conflict that arose between dwellers of the mount Parnassus, namely the Moderns and the Ancients. The jealous growling of lower summit occupants at those of the higher summit emphasizes the fact that battles are directed from poverty but not from riches.

Swift is of the opinion that the controversy over the merits of Ancients and Moderns has resulted from such a jealousy on the part of the Moderns. They wanted to prove a case of superiority for themselves showing the evidences of material progress and scientific advancement. Quite deftly, Swift brings us to St James's Library where the books had taken part in a '*decisive*'

battle last Friday. As a supporter of the Ancients' cause, he tells us that he is going to give us a true and honest account of the battle.

**12.1.5. Allegorical significance:** Swift presents 'The Battle of the Books' as an allegory. He brings in the episode of the spider and the bee before the actual *battle of the books* begins. A bee by chance alights on a spider's cob web high up at the corner of a window in the library. The spider has been living there for a long time, consuming the flies and building a 'wonderful work of art' i.e. the web. The spider is terrified when the web is shaken to the center. Seeing the damage caused to its castle, the spider starts abusing the offender-bee. The bee has by then freed itself from the web and is about to fly off.

At the outset the spider claims superiority over the bee. It says proudly about its ability to build a large castle with science and mathematics. The spider is living quietly by consuming flies and building the web with the secretions of its own bowels. The spider decries the bee as a homeless vagabond living by plunder. The bee replies strongly to the spider. The bee admits that it is a vagabond but at the same time it roams freely over nature collecting honey from flowers without causing harm to them. It further says that the spider kills insects and collects venom from them. From dirt and poison, the bee says that the spider has built its so-called castle which is so weak and unsubstantial that it could be swept away easily with a broom stick. The bee concludes that it collects honey and wax by wandering outside whereas the spider collects poison by staying at home.

**12.1.6. Aesop's interpretation:** Swift brings in Aesop to give a conclusion to the allegory. Aesop points out that like the bee the Ancients have produced great works of art and offered them to mankind as a gift. They gave away honey and wax (*Matthew Arnold, a Victorian poet and critic later called them 'sweetness and light' in his essay 'Culture and Anarchy'*) to mankind by wide study of nature. Thus their work is substantial and long lasting. The Moderns resemble the spider and are proud of their skill in producing superficial works like cobwebs. They are proud and convinced of their self-sufficiency like the spider, which in fact, spins filth from its own bowels and creates a web that could soon disintegrate.

**12.1.7. The battle:** When the battle is about to commence Swift sarcastically says: "*The Moderns were in very warm debates upon the choice of their leaders; and nothing less than the fear impending from their enemies could have kept them from mutinies upon this occasion. The difference was greatest among the horses (epic poets), where every private trooper (soldier i.e. every modern epic poet) pretended to be the chief commander, from Tasso and Milton to Dryden and Wither*". This is the opinion of Swift about the point of leadership and followership among modern writers.

During the battle Swift presents the Ancient warriors as mighty, heroic and gentle beings. The Modern warriors are shown as timid, dull and ill-mannered beings. Swift depicts Bentley and Wotton as cowardly warriors who plan to steal the armor of sleeping Phalaris and Aesop. He also shows Wotton as one who is prevented by Apollo from drinking celestial waters at Helicon. There are so many examples and episodes in this book where in Swift treats the Moderns contemptuously. Swift views the Moderns as timid warriors who could never dare to encounter the great Ancients. Even during the single combats, the Ancients are never wounded by the

Moderns' weapons. The battle is left incomplete and thus the Ancients' esteem remains unspoiled.

Despite his contempt for the Moderns, Swift skillfully manages to avoid saying which way victory fell. He portrays his manuscript as having been damaged in places, thus leaving the end of the battle up to the reader's discretion. The incompleteness of the "**Battle**" with its missing passages, tends to undermine the Ancients' position. We do not, actually, have the complete picture of "*A Full and True Account of the Battle Fought last Friday between the Ancient and the Modern Books in Saint James's Library*" which Swift announces in his title. Thus, not assuring the reader of the Ancients' victory, Swift leaves us wondering how we can trust in the completeness of Ancient learning and its transmission over far greater reaches of time.

**12.1.8. Conclusion:** Perhaps in all this fuss about spiders, bees and warring books in a dusty library on a Friday afternoon, Swift suggests the absurdity of the controversy. Although the Ancients fare better than the Moderns in "The Battle of the Books", the author's precise position remains unclear.

**12.1.9. Summing-up:** As a curious learner of Swift you might have understood the intention and method of presentation of the controversy that was going on in England between the supporters of ancient learning and those of the modern learning. You may have also noticed Swift's biased and unscientific evaluation of the advanced scientific learning of the moderns in the above essay.

## 12.2. THE MOCK EPIC:

**12.2.1. Intro:** A mock epic is a term used for a literary work which parodies the epic style or manner by treating a trivial subject in a grand style. The mock epic writer uses the epic formula for a ridiculous subject, by overstating it. Alexander Pope is a great exponent of this genre. His narrative poem "The Rape of the Lock" is considered as one of the best mock epics.

As said, the mock epic is based on the epic convention. You may have learnt the epic features in Milton's "Paradise Lost". Just to help you recall, the qualities of an epic are given hereunder. An epic:

1. narrates the adventures of a hero or heroes,
2. presents a number of episodes and also digressions (which go parallel with the main story)
3. introduces the supernatural (also called machinery) as a controlling agency over man's deeds,
4. contains long speeches and soliloquies
5. begins abruptly in the middle of action (in media res)
6. contains an invocation to the muses,
7. is written in an exalted style and diction much in tune to the greatness of the theme,
8. contains figures of speech, particularly grand and long drawn 'similes'.

**12.2.2. Swift's purpose in writing the mock epic:** "The Battle of the Books" is written in the fashion of a mock-epic. Swift adopts the epic formula for this satire in prose and makes use of many of the epic features in it. The subject of this mock epic is the controversy which was going on in France and England between the supporters of the ancient learning and those of the modern learning. Swift presents this controversy as a battle which was fought between the books of ancient and modern writers on the shelves of St. James' Library.

Swift intends through his prose satire and mock epic to make fun of that controversy by belittling the modern writers and modern learning. At the back of it, Swift felt an urge to support his mentor-patron Sir William and strengthen his views on ancient learning. Thus Swift treats modern writers and their learning with contempt and makes them inferior to those of the ancient writers.

**12.2.3. Episodic nature:** "The Battle of the Books" contains many episodes. The book starts with the controversy of the Ancients and the Moderns on the hill of Parnassus which marks the episode. This controversy spreads to the St. James Library in London where books make factions in support of the Ancients and the Moderns and get ready for a battle. Then Swift brings in a digression through the spider and the bee episode. In fact this episode is not a digression but it elevates and strengthens Swift's intention of the mock epic. Then there is the episode of the war preparations. Swift uses military terms such as horse (epic poets), light horse (non-epic or lyric poets), engineer (mathematicians), bowmen (philosophers), footmen (historians), dragoons (physicians) and the allies (other supporters) etc to represent the various groups of army in the battle. Swift introduces the supernatural (machinery) involving gods and goddesses and their conference in the Milky Way. The warriors are armed with lances, spears and make use of them in the battle. There is the episode of goddess of Criticism as well. During the battle of the books there are one-to-one combats and the description of these combats is made in the fashion of the traditional epics.

**12.2.4. Supernatural machinery:** The supernatural machinery is used in 'The Battle of the Books' effectively by Swift. However his machinery is not of the epic standards. It is like the 'light militia' as described by Alexander Pope in 'The Rape of the Lock'. Gods and goddesses are represented as such deities who do not show their fullest mettle. Jupiter, himself is indifferent to the battle and its conclusive ending. There are Pallas, Momus, Mercury, Apollo, and Venus who take part in this mock epic but they do not give any mighty performance. Swift creates a goddess for Criticism who has father and husband in *Ignorance* and mother in *Pride* and sister in *Opinion* along with children like *Noise*, *Impudence*, *Dullness*, *Vanity*, *Positiveness*, *Pedantry*, *Ill-manners*. All these caricatured beings, designated as machinery, play their roles in the war proceedings.

**12.2.5. Speeches and soliloquies:** In "The Battle of the Books" there are certain discourses, speeches and soliloquies much in the fashion of an epic but depicted in a lighter way. For example, there is the speech of Aesop after the discourse of the spider and the bee. Aesop gives out what actually the episode of the spider and the bee is about and also interprets and evaluates the whole controversy (in paragraph 14). We also find the soliloquy of goddess Criticism who takes the readers into confidence and brings out the very concept of modern criticism (in paragraph 20).

**12.2.6. Invocation:** However in “The Battle of the Books”, Swift does not make use of the principle of ‘in media res’. He starts his book with the causes of war and introduces the quarrel that arose between the Ancients and the Moderns on the mountain of Parnassus. Swift prays to the Muse of History in a comic way. He pleads with her to come to his help because he is taking up a heavy task of writing a history of the battle. He says, “I must, after the example of other authors, petition for a hundred tongues, and mouths and hands and pens which would all be too little to perform so immense a work”. He petitions to Clio, the muse of History, “Say, goddess whom Homer slew first and whom he slew last”.

**12.2.7. Grand style and use of similes:** As an epic poet Swift also employs a grand style to his mock epic. His theme is trivial but his style has all the grandeur of an epic. Like all epic writers, Swift uses similes deftly. But his intention is making a parody and hence he makes use of mock epic similes. For example, there is a description of Wotton and Bentley who move out in search of some wounded soldiers or straggling sleepers in their enemy camp almost after the closure of the day’s war proceedings (in paragraph 29) *“as two mongrel curs, whom native greediness and domestic want provoke and join in partnership.....if haply to discover, at distance from the flock some carcass half devoured, the refuse of gorged wolves, or ominous ravens.”*

Similarly Boyle while he is chasing Wotton (in paragraph 31) is described as *‘a young lion in the Libyan plains or Araby desert, sent by his aged sire to hunt for prey, or health or exercise .....and hunts the noisy long eared animal’*. At the end of the battle the death of Wotton and Bentley is also described through a simile in a comic way. *“As when a skilful cook has trussed a brace of woodcocks, he with iron skewer .....wafts them over Styx for half his fare”*.

**12.2.8. Conclusion:** This work of Swift showcases his scorn for pedantry and false erudition of the modern writers and critics. It is evident in every part of ‘The Battle of the Books’ where ever there is a mention of the moderns. His main purpose is not merely to come to the rescue of Temple but to denounce the modern learning and put it to a serious attack. His purpose is totally served through this mock epic.

**12.2.9. Summing-up:** After reading the essay, you may have understood the features of an epic and how Swift has made use of them in a lighter vein. This is a prose mock epic but you can find similar features in Alexander Pope’s mock epic in verse “The Rape of the Lock”.

### **12.3. SIGNIFICANCE OF SUPERNATURAL MACHINERY:**

**12.3.1. Intro:** Swift has presented ‘The Battle of the Books’ in the fashion of an epic in prose, though in a comic way. The epic writers of the past, like Homer and Virgil, used the supernatural agency like gods and goddesses with a firm conviction that they control man and his actions. They incorporated the supernatural machinery in their works in such a way that it should become an integral part of the epic. The writers of later generations too depicted the supernatural.

**12.3.2. Purpose of machinery in epic poetry:** The supernatural machinery serves many functions in epic poems. It elevates the action of the epic much above the human range. It would also elevate the hero and his deeds. It would add a great range of variety to the epic narration. The intervention of gods and goddesses would also show that they are interested in the fate of man. It would also stress upon the moral fibre of the epic poem. Swift followed the epic convention of the interference of the supernatural in ‘The Battle of the Books’ as well. He uses it for comic effect. Let’s study the role of the supernatural in this prose mock epic.

**12.3.3. The first intervention:** We find the supernatural for the first time when the forces of the Ancients and the Moderns are making preparations for the battle. Fame flies to Jupiter and gives an account of what has been happening in the Royal Library in London. Jupiter calls a conference of gods in the Milky Way. Momus, the god of ridicule reports in favour of modern writers. Pallas, the supporter of ancients gives a reply to him. The gods and goddesses get themselves divided into factions in support of their favourites. Jupiter fetches the book of Fate, reads the decree silently (tells none about it) and gives instructions to the lesser gods to go down to the library and to dispatch their duties.

**12.3.4. Momus’ flight to goddess Criticism:** Momus fearing the worst for his supporters flies to goddess Criticism. He prays to the goddess to go to the rescue of her dear children, the Moderns. Then the goddess, along with her train of kith and kin, flies over to the British country and enters the library, unseen. She arranges Dullness and Ill-manners for the safety of her dearest son Wotton.

**12.3.5. Intervention of supernatural during the battle:** The gods appear frequently during the battle and participate in it in one way or the other. When Dryden proposes the exchange of armour with Virgil, the latter consents as the goddess Diffidence comes unseen and casts a mist before his eyes. Thus Virgil accepts the armour without his knowledge. Similarly when Lucan, the great ancient throws a lance at Blackmore, Aesculapius, the Roman god of medicine turns off the point of the lance.

In the encounter between Horace and Creech, goddess Dullness takes the shape of Horace and mounts a horse and appears before Creech in a flying posture. Creech pursues the image and finally lands himself in the peaceful bower of his father. Thus the goddess prevents a certain death of the Modern.

During the encounter between Pindar and Cowley, we will find the intervention of the supernatural. When Pindar hurls a large and weighty javelin, his opponent thrusts forward the shield which Venus, the Roman goddess of love had given him and saves himself. Later, Pindar, with a heavy blow, cuts his rival’s body in to two. Venus takes away one half of his body and transforms it into a dove so as to yoke it to her chariot.

**12.3.6. Wotton and Bentley episode:** The supernatural appears in the final episode of Wotton and Bentley. We find Apollo, the god of Wisdom, preventing Wotton from drinking the sacred spring of Helicon. Goddess Criticism is shown adding strength to her beloved son Wotton while the latter tries to hit Temple. Apollo goes to Boyle in the guise of Attenbury and exhorts him to

take revenge on Wotton because he has spoiled the spring of Helicon. Similarly, Pallas Athene too involves herself in the battle and makes it impossible for Bentley to kill Boyle.

**12.3.7. Conclusion:** In epics the gods and goddesses are shown as exalted beings capable of doing wonders and controlling everything in the human world. But in Swift's satire they are made to play mean roles. We are amused to read about goddess Criticism and her kith and kin as they are shown capable of doing petty things only. Thus Swift handles the supernatural in his work and makes a parody of epic poetry.

**12.3.8. Summing-up:** In this essay you have learnt about the use of supernatural by Swift in 'The Battle of the Books'. You can read more about the use of machinery in Alexander Pope's "The Rape of the Lock".

#### 12.4. COMPREHENSION CHECK:

Answer the following questions briefly in your own words:

1. How does the spider claim superiority over the bee?
2. What do the gaps in the narrative of the battle suggest?
3. Mention any three features of a traditional epic.
4. Who are the members of the family of goddess Criticism?
5. Whom does Swift invoke before the commencement of the battle?
6. Write a brief note on the use of similes in 'the Battle of the Books'?
7. Why is the supernatural machinery employed by the epic writers?
8. How do the gods and goddesses get involved in the Wotton and Bentley episode?

#### 12.5. REFERENCES:

1. [bek.blogs.uv.es/2010/12/08/the-battle-of-the-books/](http://bek.blogs.uv.es/2010/12/08/the-battle-of-the-books/)
2. [www.gradesaver.com/a-modest-proposal-and-other-stories/study-guide/summary-the-battle-of-the-books](http://www.gradesaver.com/a-modest-proposal-and-other-stories/study-guide/summary-the-battle-of-the-books)
3. [books.google.co.in/books/about/The\\_Battle\\_of\\_the\\_Books.html?id=sGIGLnCEWVsC](http://books.google.co.in/books/about/The_Battle_of_the_Books.html?id=sGIGLnCEWVsC)
4. [www.enotes.com/topics/battle-books](http://www.enotes.com/topics/battle-books)

# **LESSON- 13**

## **SWIFT'S STYLE**

### **OBJECTIVES:**

In this lesson you are going to:

- Know about the features of a satire and consider 'Battle of the Books' as a satire
- Learn the constituent features of Swift's prose style

### **Structure of the lesson:**

#### **13.1. The Battle of the Books as a Satire**

##### **13.1.1. Intro**

##### **13.1.2. Use of various weapons of satire**

##### **13.1.3. Bestial diminution**

##### **13.1.4. Use of sarcasm**

##### **13.1.5. Use of irony**

##### **13.1.6. Use of allegory**

##### **13.1.7. Use of mock epic technique**

##### **13.1.8. Conclusion**

##### **13.1.9. Summing-up**

#### **13.2. Swift's Prose Style**

##### **13.2.1. Intro**

##### **13.2.2. Perfect style**

##### **13.2.3. Clear, direct and easeful style**

##### **13.2.4. Vigorous style**

##### **13.2.5. Concrete and homely style**

##### **13.2.6. Use of imagery**

##### **13.2.7. Summing-up**

##### **13.2.8. Classical references**

#### **13.3. Comprehension check**

#### **13.4. References**

### 13.1. THE BATTLE OF THE BOOKS AS A SATIRE:

**13.1.1. Intro:** “The Battle of the Books” is a satire both literary and personal. A satire is a humorous exposure of absurdities, follies and pretentiousness. It employs irony, sarcasm, mockery, and invective as weapons to attack a person or a society or an institution (system). It may be personal or impersonal. The personal satire aims at individuals with all their weaknesses and shortcomings. The impersonal satire may be social, academic or literary. The main objective of a satirist is to expose the mean nature of the targeted person or system.

Swift, apart from Alexander Pope and Dryden, is considered one of the greatest masters of satire. His “A Tale of a Tub”, “Gulliver’s Travels” and “The Battle of the Books” are regarded as master pieces in satire. “A Tale of a Tub” reflects the quarrel between the churches of his day. “Gulliver’s Travels” is a travelogue of a sea-man called Gulliver which comprises a severe attack on mankind in general. “The Battle of the Books” is a satire on the modern authors and their so-called scientific learning.

Swift himself once admitted, *“I have ever hated all nations, professions....But principally I hate and detest that animal called man, although I heartily love John, Peter, Thomas and so forth”*. One can understand that this misanthropic attitude is the back bone for his satires. Hence in each of his satires he pours anger, disgust and venom upon the animal called man.

**13.1.2. Use of various weapons of satire:** Swift intends his satire “The Battle of the Books” to belittle the moderns for their pedantry, false erudition, pretentiousness, and subjectivism. Hence he employs various satirical devices like irony, sarcasm, mockery and invective (highly critical language) as chief weapons to expose shallowness of modern learning. He works out his book in the fashion of a mock epic to achieve his purpose of attacking the modern authors. He also introduces allegory through the episode of the spider and the bee so as to establish the superiority of the Ancients over the Moderns.

**13.1.3. Bestial diminution:** Swift’s chief weapon is the use of ‘*bestial diminution*’ (figure of speech by which man is reduced to the level of animals). He belittles the Moderns by comparing them to dogs and donkeys. His comparison of mankind to the republic of dogs is the best example for his disgust. His chief intention in writing this prose satire is to lend support to his patron Sir William and take personal vengeance on writers like Dryden. Thus he gives an outlet to his personal feelings of hatred against certain of his opponents.

**13.1.4. Use of sarcasm:** Swift depicts the origin of the quarrel between the Moderns and the Ancients on the summit of the Parnassus in a sarcastic manner. Quite sarcastically he refers to the argument made by the Moderns who are angry with the occupancy of the higher summit by the Ancients. In fact the Moderns are ready to dislodge the Ancients from their summit though the latter have occupied it for centuries. He also

mentions the efforts of Scotus and Aristotle to dethrone Plato. Swift points out how rivulets of ink were exhausted during the quarrel. Swift's sarcastic humour is evident in the description of goddess Criticism and her kith and kin. He shows how the modern critics are shallow minded, opinion driven, ignorant, proud, subjective, ill mannered, dull, vain and noisy by introducing the parents, sister and children of goddess Criticism. More over the god of ridicule Momus and goddess Criticism take the side of the Moderns during their battle with the Ancients.

**13.1.5. Use of irony:** Swift uses irony ( a literary device with which language can be used to mean otherwise) as his chief weapon of satire. In the description of Bentley, the chief library at the St James' Swift says, "the guardian of the regal library, a person of great valour, chiefly renowned for his humanity, had been a fierce champion of the Moderns". We can find the opposite meaning in reality when Swift treats him with venom and sarcasm. But Bentley is shown as a man of incredible animosity against the Ancients: "*in an engagement upon Parnassus had avowed with his own hands to knock down two of the Ancient chiefs (Phalaris and Aesop) .....but endeavouring to climb up, was cruelly obstructed by his own unhappy weight...*" and thus he falls down. Having failed thus he mixes up all books together and thus becomes responsible for the battle of the books in the library. This can be taken as the best example for his use of irony.

**13.1.6. Use of allegory:** Swift presents his satire in an allegorical manner by introducing the episode of the spider and the bee. The spider with all its features represents the Moderns and the bee stands for the Ancient authors. The debate between the two insects stands for the actual literary controversy that was going on there in England. Both the spider and the bee make arguments parallel to the issue of the Moderns and the Ancients. The spider is proud of its '*method and art*' in building the web with its own materials (dirt and poison). It also denounces the bee as being a homeless vagabond living by plunder. Thus Swift presents the spider as an egoistic, arrogant and spiteful creature. Aesop tells that the spider in 'his airs, turns, paradoxes' represents the Moderns. It is a family custom for the spider not to move out of the web and hence it remains stationary within the web.

The bee agrees that it is a vagabond but it is blessed with a drone pipe and a pair of wings. Hence it wanders over nature and collects honey without causing any damage to the flowers. The bee says that as a token of love it provides humanity with honey and wax which are undoubtedly rare gifts. Aesop tells that the bee represents the Ancients in its nobility and a sense of service.

**13.1.7. Use of mock epic technique:** Swift employs mock epic technique and describes the battle of the books. He depicts the books as warriors fully armed with lances, spears, swords, bows and arrows. The individual combats are shown in the mock epic fashion. In the Ancients' camp there are gigantic heroes like Homer, Virgil, Horace and Pindar victorious in single combats with their respective opponents. On the other hand, there is a lack of leaders in the modern camp. Every '*private trooper pretended*

*to the chief command, from Tasso and Milton to Dryden and Withers*". Swift presents each of the combats with subtle fun and satire.

**13.1.8. Conclusion:** On the whole this satire is a 'fantasia mainly in the form of a burlesque of Homer'. It is fired by anger; aiming at a special subject and also certain forms of intellectual ambition and error. By exposing pedantry, false erudition, and rabid controversies the author gets success.

**13.1.9. Summing-up:** In this essay you have learnt what a satire is and how Swift has made 'The Battle of the Books' a literary satire. You can read the other satires of Swift like "A Tale of a Tub" and "Gulliver's Travels" and compare them with 'the Battle of the Books' in terms of satire.

## 13.2. SWIFT'S PROSE STYLE:

**13.2.1. Intro:** Bonamy Dobree views that style is not an ornament; it is not an exercise but it is the sense of one's own self, the knowledge of what one wants to say in the most fitting words. It is true in the case of Swift. He made his style most befitting to the content he had taken up. He knew that he had a challenging task ahead and hence he adopted satire as a literary form. Let's study some of the features of Swift's style.

**13.2.2. Perfect style:** Swift is one of the greatest prose satirists in English. Many critics agree that his style is simple, clear and comprehensive. Hugh Blair, a critic says, "*his style is of the plain and simple kind; free of all affectation, and all superfluity*" and "*he is highly imaginative as well as critical*". He made use of prose- a pleasant and fitting vehicle for communication. He avoids high sounding words, obscure notions and quotations. He uses appropriate words in their appropriate places. His prose represents '*the perfection of English style because of its clearness, directness and ease*'.

**13.2.3. Clear, direct and easeful style:** Swift is said to have admired the simplicity of the Bible and hence he has adopted it. There is neither obscurity nor ambiguity in his expression. *Louis Cazamian*, a critic, views that Swift is clear, direct, vigorous, straightforward and easeful in his style. There are no intricate, involved, labyrinthine sentences to puzzle or mystify the reader. He mentions his aim of work before the mind's eye of the readers. "*His style was well suited to his thoughts, which are never subtilized by nice disquisitions, decorated by sparkling conceits, elevated by ambitious sentences or variegated by far sought learning*" says Dr Samuel Johnson. In the age of 'reason' he is the apostle of reason. He is a reader-friendly author who always feels that obscurity and ambiguity will hamper the understanding of his work.

For example, in the comparison of mankind with the republic of dogs, Swift says, "*the whole state is ever in the profoundest peace after a full meal; and that civil broils arise among them (dogs) when it happens for one great bone to be seized by some leading dog, who either divides it among the few and then it falls to an*

*oligarchy; or keeps it to himself, it runs up to a tyranny". Swift continues the theory, "the same reasoning also holds place among them in those dissensions (quarrels) we behold upon turgescency (sexual excitement) in any of their females" and the whole of commonwealth of that street is reduced to a manifest state of war. One might observe his theory of simplicity, ease and clarity in the above example.*

**13.2.4. Vigorous style:** Swift's style has all force and vigour. Without being vigorous, a writer of Swift's standards cannot succeed as a satirist. His vigour is blended with directness and clarity and hence he appears dominant in his satires. In 'the Battle of the Books' he mocks at Bentley pointing out the reasons for mixing books in the regal library: "Some imputed it to a great heap of learned dust, which a perverse wind blew off from a shelf of moderns into the keeper's (Bentley) eyes.....and lastly, others maintained, that by walking much in the dark about the library, he had quite lost the situation of it out of his head; and therefore in replacing his books he was apt to mistake, and clap **Descartes** next to **Aristotle**; poor **Plato** had got between **Hobbes** and the **Seven Wise Masters**....".

During the single combats between the Ancients and the Moderns also, Swift shows such a force and vigour. The attack of **Homer** upon **Devnant, Denham, Wesley**, Perrault and Fontenelle depicts the vigorous style of the author. Swift writes, "*Then Homer slew Wesley, with a kick of his horse's heel, he took Perrault by mighty force out of his saddle, then hurled him at Fontenelle with the same blow dashing out both their brains*".

**13.2.5. Concrete and homely style:** Swift, according to a critic, is known for his '*concrete, homely speech; fresh figures, with no varnish of rhetoric; quick colloquial rhythms; syntax so idiomatic, expressive, so plainly hinged and turned, that it seems the language of proverbs*'. He touches deeply at the mind of his readers with his abilities of humour and irony and thus becomes homely.

**13.2.6. Use of Imagery:** Swift employs imagery as a part of his narrative and gives it no special importance. In fact he uses imagery very sparingly, yet when used, it becomes so purposeful and fitting. For example the origin of the quarrel on the summits of Parnassus is described pictorially. The episodes of the spider and the bee and their debate, the conference of gods in the Milky Way, the flight of goddess of Criticism to the British country, the individual combats are all examples for the descriptive style of Swift.

**13.2.7. Summing-up:** You might by now understand what Swift's style exactly is. After reading the 'Battle of the Books' you will agree that his 'style is very near perfection; clear, pointed, precise'.

**13.2.8. Classical references:**

1. *Descartes*: a French philosopher (1596-1650)
2. *Aristotle*: an ancient Greek philosopher and theorist
3. *Plato*: an ancient Greek philosopher (427 BC-347 BC)

4. Hobbes: Thomas Hobbes (158-1679) an English philosopher of modern times
5. *Seven Wise Masters*: Anonymous author, perhaps Swift mistakes this name for a modern author.
6. *Homer*: an ancient Greek epic poet, the author of Iliad and the Odyssey
7. *Devnant*: Sir William Davenant, a modern epic poet who wrote “Gondibert”
8. *Denham*: Sir John Denham (1615-1668) an English poet and author of “Cooper’s Hill”
9. *Wesley*: Samuel Wesley (1662-1735) an English poet and author of a Heroic poem “The Life of Christ”

### 13.3. COMPREHENSION CHECK:

Answer the following questions briefly in your own words:

1. How did Swift employ bestial diminution in his ‘Battle of the Books’?
2. What is irony? Give a few examples of irony you have noticed in the book?
3. What devices of satire have you noticed in the “Battle of the Books”?
4. Trace out the opinions of various critics on Swift’s style.
5. What qualities of style have you noticed in Swift?

### 13.4. References:

For print references:

1. “An Approach to Swift” – DW Jefferson
2. “English satire” – James Sutherland

For further reference you may visit the following websites:

1. *The Economic Journal of Takasaki City University of Economics vol.46 No.3 2003*  
([www1.tcue.ac.jp/home1/k-gakkai/ronsyuu/ronsyuukeisai/46\\_3/tamura.pdf](http://www1.tcue.ac.jp/home1/k-gakkai/ronsyuu/ronsyuukeisai/46_3/tamura.pdf))
2. [www.ourcivilisation.com/smartboard/shop/swift/battle/chap0.htm](http://www.ourcivilisation.com/smartboard/shop/swift/battle/chap0.htm)

## LESSON-14

# ANNOTATIONS FROM SWIFT'S "THE BATTLE OF THE BOOKS"

### OBJECTIVES:

In this lesson you are going to

- Learn a few quotes from Swift's "The Battle of the Books" with explanation and critical comments
- Understand the context and reference of those quotes

### Structure of the lesson:

- 14.1. Quotes and explanations
- 14.2. Summing-up
- 14.3. Comprehension check

#### 14.1. Selected quotes from the "Battle of the Books":

Read the following annotation as a model:-

The initial introduction to the writer has been omitted as you know by now, how to write a few lines about the writer and his age before proceeding to the context in the text.

- *"Some imputed it to a great heap of learned dust, which a perverse wind blew off from a shelf of moderns, into the keeper's eyes. Others affirmed, he had a humour to pick the worms out of the schoolmen, and swallow them fresh and fasting, where of some fell upon his spleen, and some climbed up into his head, to the perturbation of both".*
- *Context:* These lines appear in the prose satire of Swift "The Battle of the Books". After the dispute of the moderns with the ancients on the summit of Parnassus, Swift brings us to the regal library in London. The above lines represent the character of Sir Richard Bentley, the keeper of the library who according to Swift is shallow headed but arrogant, bearing scorn and prejudice against the ancient authors.
- *Explanation:* Swift noticed in the regal library that the books were not in their appropriate shelves. They were disorderly and creating confusion owing to the rancour of Bentley. In this context Swift comments upon the reasons behind the mixing up of books of ancient and modern authors in the library. According to one version, a heap of learned dust from the books of modern authors had fallen into his eyes and thus he became semi blind and confused. Similarly the keeper had collected a number of worms from the books of medieval philosophers and had swallowed them on an empty stomach. Thereby he developed a strange humour towards ancients as the worms climbed up into his mind and spoiled him totally.
- *Comment:* In these lines Swift makes fun of Bentley. In fact Bentley is not an inferior scholar. But in order to establish the superiority of ancient writers over the modern

writers Swift portrays Bentley as a fool of the first order. Bentley is shown as an ignorant, prejudiced and confused modern. Swift makes fun of Bentley by enumerating funny reasons for the confusion in the librarian's mind. A reference to Jonson's 'humours' cannot be missed.

- *“It is I (said she), who give wisdom to infants and idiots; by me, children grow wiser than their parents; by me, beaux become politicians, and school-boys judges of philosophy; by me, sophisters debate and conclude upon the depths of knowledge..”*
- *Context:* The lines are found in Swift's mock epic “The Battle of the Books”. It is a part of the soliloquy of goddess Criticism which is made when the goddess is about to start her journey to the British country.
- *Explanation:* Swift makes fun of the modern critics and their lop-sided modern criticism. Swift personified criticism as a goddess. She lives in Nova Zembla along with her parents, sister and numerous children. Instigated by Momus, she moves to Britain. Before that, she makes a short speech unto herself. She claims that it is she who gives wisdom to children and idiots. It is she who makes children wiser than their parents. It is she who makes fashionable young men turn to politics and become politicians. She makes school children judges of philosophy. She also makes learners debate on the depths of knowledge.
- *Comment:* Swift exposes the improbable if not impossible achievements of goddess Criticism. In this soliloquy the goddess, in a boastful manner, speaks about her successful achievements. These lines actually indicate the pedantic, egoistic and proud qualities of modern critics. We find a lot of fun, humour and satire in these lines. Swift points out the way that the infants grow wise and also how the children grow wiser than their parents. Goddess Criticism makes these impossible things possible.
- *“The brave ancient suddenly started, as one possessed with surprise and disappointment together; for the helmet was nine times too large for the head, which appeared situate far in the hinder part, even like the lady in a lobster, or like mouse under a canopy of state, or like a shrivelled beau, from within the penthouse of a modern periwig..”*
- *Context:* The lines appear in the “Battle of the Books” during the individual combats. Swift gives a detailed account of the combat between the ancient epic commander Virgil and the modern epic leader Dryden.
- *Explanation:* During the battle both Virgil and Dryden meet face to face. When Dryden, mounting a horse, faces Virgil and lifts up his helmet, the ancient champion is searching for some valiant warrior in the enemy camp. But when he finds a small and weak enemy he is much surprised. Swift presents Dryden to be funny and timid. He describes Dryden as one who wears a helmet that is nine times larger than his head. His head appears to be located in the hinder part of his body. His head resembles the lobster's body (the word 'lady' means a small part of the body of a marine animal called lobster). His head is compared to a mouse under a royal canopy. It is also compared to the head of a fashionable young man who wears a modern wig.

- *Comment:* Swift tries to take his personal vengeance upon Dryden for the insult he had met with. This entire description is made in a contemptuous tone. By using similes Swift compares Dryden to a mouse under a canopy, or to a shrunken man of fashion wearing a periwig and gives a degrading picture. This description can be taken as an example for personal satire which is always unjust and irrational.
- *“.....So was this pair of friends transfixed, till down they fell, joined in their lives, joined in their deaths; so closely joined, that Charon will mistake them both for one, and waft them over Styx for half his fare”.*
- *Context:* these lines can be found in the last part of the prose satire by Swift, “The Battle of the Books”. Charles Boyle, in the last encounter, kills both Wotton and Bentley with a single throw of the lance.
- *Explanation:* When Boyle hurls a lance it catches both Wotton and Bentley together. It pierces through the bodies of the modern warriors. They hang transfixed to the lance like a pair of woodcocks fixed to a skewer before the cook roasts them on fire. Swift mockingly says that both of them lived together and hence they have met their death also together. They prove themselves to be inseparable even in death. Swift continues his mockery further. At the time of their souls being transported over the river Styx, the ferryman Charon will mistake them for a single soul and charge one fare only for the two souls.
- *Comment:* Swift employs verbal irony and humour in these lines. This is an example for a mock epic simile as well. The comparison of the two bodies of Wotton and Bentley to a pair of woodcocks is an example for bestial diminution. Swift also brings in a mythological allusion to the river Styx and the ferryman Charon.

**14.2. SUMMING-UP:** In this lesson you have seen some of the important lines from Swift's, “The Battle of the Books”, prescribed for a detailed study. You can refer to the e-texts mentioned hereunder where you could find more information. Annotations will help you understand the context of the quotes from the text as they are given to you along with explanation and comment.

Take more lines from the text of “The Battle of the Books” and add a brief explanation and comment. Some sample lines are given under comprehension check.

### 14.3. COMPREHENSION CHECK:

**Annotate the following quotes in your own words:**

- 1) “War is the child of pride, and pride the daughter of riches”
- 2) “In this quarrel whole rivulets of ink have been exhausted, and the virulence of both parties enormously augmented.”
- 3) “I, being possessed of all qualifications requisite in an historian, and retained by neither party, have resolved to comply with the urgent importunity of my friends, by writing down a full impartial account thereof”.

- 4) "For our horses are of our own breeding, our arms of our own forging, and our clothes of our own cutting and sewing".
- 5) "The spider within, feeling the terrible convulsion, supposed at first that nature was approaching to her final destination; or else, that Beelzebub, with all his legions, was come to revenge the death of many thousands of his subjects, whom this enemy had slain and devoured."
- 6) "Good words, friend, said the bee, (having now pruned himself, and being disposed to droll), I will give my hand and word to come near kennel no more, I was never in such a confounded pickle since I was born".
- 7) "If it were not for breaking an old custom in our family, never to stir abroad against an enemy, I should come and teach you better manners".
- 8) "To all this the bee, as an advocate, retained by us the ancients, thinks fit to answer; that if one may judge of the great genius or inventions of the moderns by what they have produced, you will hardly have countenance to bear you out, in boasting of either".
- 9) "The goddess herself had claws like a cat, her head and ears and voice resembled those an ass; her teeth fallen out before, her eyes turned inward, as if she looked only upon herself, her diet was the overflowing of her own gall..."
- 10) "Say, goddess that presidest over history, who it was the first advance in the field of battle!"

## LESSON-15

# JANE AUSTEN

### OBJECTIVES:

In this lesson you are going to:

- Learn about the origin and development of Novel till Austen's time
- Know the age of Jane Austen and its salient features
- Have an idea on the life and important literary works of Austen
- get a brief summary of the works of Austen

### STRUCTURE OF THE LESSON:

#### 15.1. Origin and development of novel till Austen's time

- 15.1.1 Definition of novel
- 15.1.2 Early novels
- 15.1.3 Novels in Renaissance period
- 15.1.4 Novels of 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> centuries
- 15.1.5 Novels in the Romantic period
- 15.1.6 Conclusion
- 15.1.7 Sum-up

#### 15.2. Life and works of Jane Austen

- 15.2.1 Parentage and childhood
- 15.2.2 Her early works
- 15.2.3 Her love affair
- 15.2.4 At Bath
- 15.2.5 Later literary career
- 15.2.6 Conclusion

#### 15.3. Brief summary of Austen's works

- 15.3.1 Northanger Abbey
- 15.3.2 Sense and Sensibility
- 15.3.3 Pride and Prejudice
- 15.3.4 Mansfield Park
- 15.3.5 Emma
- 15.3.6 Persuasion

#### 15.4 Comprehension check

#### 15.5 References

### 15.1 Origin and development of the English novel till Jane Austen's time:

**15.1.1 Definition of 'novel':** The Oxford English Dictionary defines the novel as '*a fictitious prose narrative or tale of considerable length (now usually long enough to fill one or more volumes) in which characters and actions representative of the real life of past or present times are portrayed in a plot of more/ less complexity.*'

**15.1.2 Early novels:** The word 'novel' was derived from the Italian word '*novella*', originally meant a short story, as we find the stories in Giovanni Boccaccio's collection "*Decameron*". The novel as a literary genre is hence a prose narrative of fictional character longer than the short story. It resembles the drama and the epic. W. H. Hudson calls it '*an arm chair drama*' as it can be read in leisure at home. It is an

epic because it is a long drawn narrative involving numerous characters, many themes, action, and dialogue and plot construction.

Some critics view that some *classical* (Greek and Latin) *romances* are possible sources of the novel. But these romances are mostly written in verse. The stories of romance were popular in the Middle Ages. They usually had the deeds and exploits of medieval heroes (stories of chivalry) or the legendary stories of the war of Troy. There were also stories, translated versions of French stories. Malory's "*Morte d'Arthur*" is one such though a translated version.

**15.1.3 Novels in the Renaissance period:** Caxton was a significant figure in bringing out translated romances. The Italian stories influenced the English writers in the beginning. John Lyly's "*Euphues*" (1578), a romantic intrigue in elegant letters (epistolary method), determined the English prose style (with which the euphuistic style of unfolding a story developed). Sir Philip Sidney's "*Arcadia*" (1590) is a fictional work described on a pastoral landscape. The narratives of Thomas Nash, Robert Greene, and Robert Lodge were all primitive novel forms. Nash's novel "*The Unfortunate Traveller*" was a picaresque narrative (followed by Cervantes' "*Don Quixote*" (1605-15) a translation from Spanish language) which influenced Daniel Defoe and Smollett. Some of the Elizabethan plays too had a strain of prose in them which actually contributed towards the development of the novel. On the other hand there were the prose tales of Thomas Dekker in those times.

**15.1.4 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> centuries:** There is little in 17<sup>th</sup> century prose fiction but for John Bunyan's "*Grace abounding to the Chief of Sinners*" (1666) and "*Pilgrim's Progress*" (1678) which were religious and allegorical in tone. The prose dramas in the period of Stuarts (Restoration), particularly the comedies, provided a model for the story tellers. The character writers like Earle and Overbury are the most notable. The diaries of Pepys and Evelyn describe everyday life in a simple way. Prose narratives of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries have many elements of a novel.

With the decline of feudal dominance there started the emergence of middle class commercial interests. Defoe became the spokesperson. Critics affirm that Daniel Defoe is the first English novelist who is known for his 'imaginative realism'. His works "*Robinson Crusoe*", "*Moll Flanders*", "*Roxana*" expressed the social and economic individualism of the Protestant ethic. The periodical writers also made a valuable contribution to the English novel. In the latter part of the eighteenth century, writers like Samuel Richardson ("*Pamela*", "*Clarissa*", "*History of Sir Charles Grandison*") Henry Fielding ("*Joseph Andrews*", "*Tom Jones*", "*Amelia*"), Tobias Smollett ("*Roderick Ransom*", "*The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle*", "*Humphrey Clinker*"), , Lawrence Sterne ("*The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy*") and Oliver Goldsmith ("*The Vicar of Wakefield*") contributed to the development of the English novel.

**15.1.5 Novels in the Romantic period:** English romanticism found its main expression in poetry, but Sir Walter Scott's romantic interests in the past brought about the historical interest into Europe. His "*Old Morality*", "*Rob Roy*", and "*The Heart of the Midlothian*" were novels worth mentioning. Scott's contemporary, **Jane**

*Austen*, described her own times and scenes. Her novels were mainly domestic, dealing with love and marriage as their main theme.

**15.1.6 Conclusion:** The fervour of writing fiction and nonfiction novels continued in the later periods of English literary history. Novel has become one of the most popularly read literary genres in the recent times. The Victorian novel and the Modern novel are well known for their complexity of themes and characterization and narrative techniques. We can learn them in course of time.

**15.1.7 Summing-up:** You have read something about the development of novel up to the Romantic age and you will come to know about some more details of the novel of the succeeding periods by and by.

## 15.2 Life and works of Jane Austen:

**15.2.1 Parentage and childhood:** Jane Austen was born in 1775, at Hampshire, England. Her father, George Austen, was a rector and a man of considerable intelligence and scholarship. Jane Austen was the youngest of eight children. She had six brothers and one sister. The family was closely-knit, very fond and proud of one another. Jane was particularly close to her elder sister Cassandra, and her fourth brother, Henry. Austen reflected her relationship with her sister Cassandra through the characters Jane and Elizabeth in her novel “Pride and Prejudice”.

Cassandra and Jane were sent to Oxford and Southampton for studies. They studied French, spelling and learnt needlework, music, and dancing. From there, economic constraints forced the girls to return home. Their father maintained a big library and provided his daughters with a plenty of reading material. Thus Jane and Cassandra continued to develop their literary talent despite their lack of a formal education. Austen is reported to have seriously studied the works of Dr Samuel Johnson, Goldsmith, Henry Fielding, Richardson and Fanny Burney who have made in turn a lot of impact on her works.

**15.2.2 Her early works:** In her teens, Austen wrote poems, stories, and comic pieces for the amusement of her family. She produced several of the pieces she wrote in three bound notebooks (entitled volume one, two and three) which are now referred to as Austen’s “Juvenilia.” Most of these are a burlesque on the contemporary novel of horror and sentiment. Austen developed an interest in drama and comedy; she often staged theatrical productions at home with her siblings. As she continued to experiment with writing, Austen experimented parodying the sentimental and Gothic style of eighteenth-century novels.

**15.2.3 Her love affair:** In 1795, Austen met Tom Lefroy, a kinsman of one of her neighbours. In her letters to Cassandra, Austen wrote about Lefroy and also hinted at her romantic feelings for him. Unfortunately, a marriage between them could not happen and LeFroy’s family soon sent him away. After the conclusion of her brief romance with Lefroy, Austen began work on a second work called “First Impressions”, which would later become “Pride and Prejudice”. After that, Austen began to work on ‘Sense and Sensibility’ and developed ‘Northanger Abbey’, a satire on the Gothic literary genre.

After Reverend Austen announced his retirement from the ministry, their family moved to Bath. Jane was unhappy about leaving her childhood home, which resulted in a disinterest in literary productivity. During her time at Bath, Austen only made a few revisions to her draft of 'Northanger Abbey' and did nothing special.

**15.2.4 At Bath:** While in Bath, Austen received her only marriage proposal from Harris Bigg-Wither, an Oxford graduate who was six years Austen's junior. Bigg-Wither was unremarkable both physically and intellectually, but his considerable fortune made him an attractive bachelor. Jane Austen initially accepted his proposal but later withdrew from her promise. *Turning down a marriage proposal was a significant decision for a woman during this time period, as marriage was the only way Jane would have been able to gain independence from her family.* Marrying Bigg-Wither would have helped Austen to provide a fortune for Cassandra, and her brothers in their efforts to secure better careers.

**15.2.5 Later literary career:** After George Austen's death Jane, her mother, and her sister had to move in with her brother Francis because of their poor financial position. In 1809, they moved to Chawton, where Jane's wealthy brother Edward had an estate. Life was much quieter here and Austen found the opportunity to write more. Here four of her novels were published anonymously: *Sense and Sensibility* in 1811, *Pride and Prejudice* in 1813, *Mansfield Park* in 1814, and *Emma* in 1815. In July of 1816, Austen completed the first draft of her next novel, entitled "The Elliots." It would later be published as "Persuasion".

In early 1816, Austen suffered from a serious illness (identified as Addison's disease) that led to her death the following year. Despite her illness, Austen continued to write, revising the ending of "The Elliots" and starting work on "Sanditon" (not finished). She died at the age of 41 in 1817 and was buried at the famous Winchester Cathedral. "Northanger Abbey" and "Persuasion" were published posthumously in 1817.

**15.2.6 Conclusion:** Austen's novels mostly focus on *themes of courtship and marriage. However, her work stands out because of her sharp, satirical depiction of late 18th century English society. She is remembered for creating strong, unusual female characters* and also for her mastery of form, satire, and irony. Her novels reveal a quickness of observation, a sense of the incongruous, and an awareness of the comedy of the society. Unfortunately Austen died before she gained significant public recognition.

**15.2.7 Summing-up:** You have learnt about various stages of the life and works of Austen and what constitutes her novel. You will enjoy reading the novel "Pride and Prejudice" and also the way the family relations are depicted in it.

### 15.3 Brief Note on the Works of Austen:

#### 15.3.1 Northanger Abbey

This was an earlier novel of Jane Austen written when she was in her twenties. It is a comic love story set in Bath about a young reader who must learn how to separate fantasy from reality. Miss Austen sold the novel (then entitled Susan) to a publisher in

1803, and the work was advertised but never published. Her brother Henry bought it back many years later, and published it as *Northanger Abbey* after her death in 1817.

### 15.3.2 *Sense and Sensibility*

*Sense and Sensibility* was the first of Jane Austen's novels to be published. She began to write it sometime around 1797, and she worked on it for many years before it was published in 1811. The title page said that it was written "By a Lady" (it was only her family who knew that she was the author).

### 15.3.3 *Pride and Prejudice*

*Pride and Prejudice* was first written in the late 1700's and published in 1813. It is probably the most-read of all of Jane Austen's novels. At first it was named as '*First Impressions*' as the novel goes about with the misjudgements that occur at the beginning of an acquaintance and how those misjudgements can change as individuals learn more about each other.

### 15.3.4 *Mansfield Park*

*Mansfield Park* was written between 1811 and 1813. It was the third of Austen's novels that was published. During her lifetime, it was attributed only to "The author of *Sense and Sensibility* and *Pride and Prejudice*", and the author's identity was unknown beyond her family and friends. It is Jane Austen's most complex novel and deals with many different themes, from the education of children, to the differences between appearances and reality.

### 15.3.5 *Emma*

*Emma* was written in 1814-1815. Austen intended to dedicate it to the Royal Highness. The novel '*Emma*' deals with a young woman's maturation into adulthood and the trouble she encounters during the course of time.

### 15.3.6 *Persuasion*

*Persuasion* was written in 1815-1816, while Jane Austen was suffering from her fatal illness. She worked on some revisions till her death in 1817. The novel was published posthumously by her brother, Henry Austen. *Persuasion* is a novel of second chances, expectations of society, and the constancy of love. .

## 15.4. Comprehension check:

Answer the following questions briefly in your own words:

1. How does the Oxford Dictionary define the 'novel'?
2. What are the primary models of the English novel?
3. What is the Elizabethan novel?
4. What do you think is the major theme of Jane Austen's novels?
5. Mention the names of the novels of Jane Austen.

## 15.5. References:

1. "Jane Austen: Facts and Problems" – RW Chapman
2. "Essay and Studies by Members of the English Association" – AC Bradley

### For e-texts:

1. [www.pemberley.com/janeinfo/janelife.htm](http://www.pemberley.com/janeinfo/janelife.htm)
2. [www.biography.com/people/jane-austen-9192819](http://www.biography.com/people/jane-austen-9192819)
3. [www.enotes.com/topics/origins-development-novel-1740-1890](http://www.enotes.com/topics/origins-development-novel-1740-1890)

# LESSON-16

## PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

### OBJECTIVES:

In this lesson you are going to:

- Have a background study of the novel
- Understand the summary of the novel “Pride and Prejudice”
- Know the major characters you come across in the novel

### STRUCTURE OF THE LESSON:

#### 16.1. General introduction

- 16.1.1. Intro
- 16.1.2. Title of the novel
- 16.1.3. Theme
- 16.1.4. Plot
- 16.1.5. Comic element
- 16.1.6. Austen’s “two inches of ivory”
- 16.1.6. Summing-up

#### 16.2. Summary of the novel “Pride and Prejudice”

- 16.2.1. Intro-The Bennets
- 16.2.2. The Meryton Ball-Love, Pride and Prejudice
- 16.2.3. Jane’s visit to Netherfield Park
- 16.2.4. Collins and Wickham
- 16.2.5. Revival of Love
- 16.2.6. Dismay to Jane
- 16.2.7. The Gardiners
- 16.2.8. Elizabeth and Darcy meet again
- 16.2.9. Darcy’s proposal and change in Elizabeth’s attitude
- 16.2.10. Lydia’s elopement
- 16.2.11. The happy ending
- 16.2.12. Summing-up

#### 16.3. Brief Introduction to Characters in the novel

#### 16.4. Comprehension check

#### 16.5. References

### 16.1 GENERAL INTRODUCTION:

**16.1.1 Intro:** Jane Austen’s novel “Pride and Prejudice” was written about 1796 and published in 1813. It was her second novel, the first being “Sense and Sensibility”. At first it was rejected for a publication. When published, it gained for the author name and reputation.

**16.1.2 Title of the novel:** Jane Austen intended to name her work as “First Impressions” initially. It was written when she was twenty one. The title ‘First

Impressions” stands for the strength of our emotional responses like love, anger, disgust, hatred etc. The protagonists Darcy and Elizabeth are affected by their first impressions on each other. These impressions continue for some time till a change in their attitude comes up. After making a revision of the novel Jane Austen felt that the present title would be more appropriate than ‘Fist Impressions’. Perhaps the second title needs no further explanation while the first had a bearing of psychological implications.

**16.1.3 Theme:** The novel deals with a simple plot and is used to present the theme of **love and marriage**. With a representation of five marriages in the novel, Jane Austen tries to define reasons for four new marriages and an old one. Mr. Bennet is lured into marriage by the looks of Mrs. Bennet (This marriage is the foundation for many other marriages in the novel) He was sad after his five daughters were born and in a marital life of two score years he always regretted that their marriage was totally wrecked as there was no intellectual compatibility. Thus he remained casual and indifferent to his family. And Mrs. Bennet was left as a bundle of nerves after these years. This incompatibility of parents affected their children as well.

Another marriage is between Charlotte and Collins. For Collins a wife is needed and he never minds whoever she is. Charlotte, a pragmatic woman finds her marriage as the ‘pleasant preservative from want’. Lydia and Wickham get married not because they loved each other. Lydia is infatuated with him and he needs material relief (love on a different plane). Thus three marriages took place for wrong reasons. The marriages of Jane to Bingley and Elizabeth to Darcy are the outcome of some emotional love and affection. Hence they remain happier than the other three couples in the novel.

**16.1.4 Plot:** The novel ‘Pride and Prejudice’ deals with the family story of the Bennets with whom other characters in the novel are connected. It is the pre-occupation of Mrs. Bennet to find husbands to her five grown up daughters. She finds a great opportunity when the neighbouring estate has been occupied by a rich family. There are two young and eligible bachelors Bingley and Darcy. Jane, the eldest daughter of the Bennets falls immediately in love with Bingley whereas Elizabeth, the second daughter, gets prejudiced against Darcy on account of his pride. Darcy however is strongly attracted to her because of her liveliness of temper though he knows that she belongs to a social class below his status.

The plot gets slowly complicated with the arrival of Collins and Wickham. Elizabeth rejects Collins’ proposal of marriage but grows interested towards Wickham. Later Collins marries Charlotte, Elizabeth’s friend. Darcy sees Elizabeth after a long time at Hunsford where Elizabeth makes a visit. In the meanwhile Elizabeth’s prejudice gets intense with the story of Wickham about Darcy. Darcy proposes to her but she rejects him because of the injustice done by him to Wickham and for his role in separating Mr. Bingley from her beloved sister Jane. Darcy who is in deep love with her wants to prove himself innocent and noble. He exposes Wickham’s wickedness through a letter and explains why Jane’s love was misunderstood and how Mrs. Bennet’s behaviour repelled them. He even helps the Bennets’ family in discovering the eloped couple Lydia and Wickham and saves their reputation and does his bit to bring back Jane and Bingley together. Elizabeth realises that her prejudice is baseless. Thus the novel ends on a note of happiness.

**16.1.5 Comic element:** This novel features some fine comedy. The older Bennets are drawn in the comic perspective. Mr. Bennet is shown as an indifferent and irresponsible parent who fails to find eligible bachelors for his daughters. He amuses us with his sarcastic humour. On the other hand Mrs. Bennet is depicted as a garrulous, emotional and foolish woman. Collins is shown as a self-conceited young man whose dream in life is to get a wife. The character of Sir William Lucas is comic in the sense of his preoccupation with his own knighthood. Lady Catherine's character is also comic as she feels herself to be superior and shows the tendency to insult others below her social status. Thus the novel offers some comedy.

**16.1.6 Austen's "two inches of ivory":** Jane Austen is a conscientious novelist with a limited range i.e. she works on a very small canvas. In fact she is born to a country parson. She spent most of her time in the country side with considerably limited circle of friends and relations. She wrote about canvas, "a circle of three or four families in a country village is the very thing to work on". She scarcely touches the aristocracy or the low class. She confines herself to middle class and the sentiments and attachments as a middle class woman writer does. Sometimes she depicts country gentry as well.

She admits her inability to write more serious works of literature as, "*I could no more write a romance than an epic poem. I could not sit seriously down to write a serious romance under any other motive than to save my life... I must keep my own style and go on in my own way*". Hence she really stuck to her 'little bit (two inches wide) of ivory'. As Edward Fitzgerald points out '*she never goes out of the parlour*'.

**16.1.7 Summing-up:** Before reading a summary of the novel, you have learnt some of the features of it. A novel, as mentioned in the earlier lesson, is an 'arm chair drama' and one can enjoy it only when one reads it in leisure. Go through the summary given below and the list of characters that comes up later in this lesson so that you can have a reasonable understanding of the novel.

## 16.2. SUMMARY OF THE NOVEL "PRIDE AND PREJUDICE"

**16.2.1 Intro-The Bennets:** The story of 'Pride and Prejudice' is set initially in the countryside of Hertfordshire away from London. The story centres on the Bennets. The novel opens at *Longbourn*, the Bennet family's estate. Mr. and Mrs. Bennet have five children: Jane, Elizabeth, Mary, Kitty, and Lydia. The chief business of the Bennets is to find suitable husbands for their daughters. Mrs. Bingley desires to have "a single man of large fortune" and a potential suitor, Mr. Bingley, for one of their daughters, when he arrives in the countryside, renting the nearby estate of Netherfield Park.

**16.2.2 Meryton Ball-Love, Pride and Prejudice:** The Bennets first meet Mr. Bingley and his companions at the Meryton Ball. The townspeople unanimously agree that Mr. Bingley is amiable. During the ball Mr. Bingley takes an immediate interest in Miss Jane, the eldest Bennet. Mr. Bingley's friend Mr. Darcy sits down without dancing as he says that he has not found a suitable companion. He also jeers at Elizabeth with some cold comments. Elizabeth gets prejudiced against him as she happens to hear his comments which are filled with pride. The people decide that

Darcy is proud and disagreeable. Jane finds Bingley's sisters - Caroline and Mrs. Hurst to be amiable. But for Elizabeth, they are arrogant.

Soon Jane and Bingley are interested in one another. Their love flourishes. Charlotte Lucas, Elizabeth's best friend advises Jane to make her regard for Bingley more obvious. In course of time Mr. Darcy develops a soft corner for Elizabeth. He is captivated by her fine eyes and lively wit. But Elizabeth remains indifferent to him.

**16.2.3 Jane's visit to Netherfield Park:** Jane falls ill when she visits Netherfield and remains there for many days. Elizabeth walks to Bingley's estate to see her sister. Caroline and Mrs. Hurst dislike Elizabeth's appearance though Darcy sees true love and concern for Jane in her visit. However, Elizabeth continues to see him as a proud man only. Caroline wishes to attract Mr. Darcy, but on seeing Darcy's attention towards Elizabeth, she grows extremely jealous. Mrs. Bennet and her younger daughters also come to Netherfield. Mrs. Bennet is talkative and silly. Elizabeth feels shy and embarrassed of their foolish behaviour and complete lack of manners. After recovery, Jane returns home with Elizabeth.

Meanwhile, a military regiment is stationed near Meryton, where Mrs. Bennet's sister Mrs. Phillips lives. She is as foolish as Mrs. Bennet. Lydia and Kitty decide to stay with their aunt in Meryton with an intention to socialize (and flirt) with the military officers.

**16.2.4 Collins and Wickham:** Mr. Collins, Mr. Bennet's distant cousin would inherit *Longbourn* estate because they have no male children. Mr. Collins is a silly clergyman. His patroness, Lady Catherine de Bourgh (who is also Darcy's aunt), has suggested that he should find a wife. Therefore, Collins hopes of marrying one of Mr. Bennet's daughters and indirectly help the Bennets while he inherits Longbourn. His choice very easily shifts from Jane to Elizabeth but his pride gets hurt when Elizabeth rejects his proposal. He does not hesitate to show his affections elsewhere within a few days itself and it shows his lack of emotional bonding which is essential for matrimony. Mr. Wickham, another key figure, is introduced simultaneously. During one of their walks, the younger daughters of the Bennets - Lydia and Kitty meet Mr. Wickham, a new officer in the regiment. He becomes the ladies' favourite because of his outward charms.

Wickham tells Elizabeth his past with Darcy's family. According to him, Darcy's father had promised Wickham, a good amount of money. But after his death, Darcy cheated him and failed to comply with his dying father's wishes. The prejudiced Elizabeth believed in what Wickham told. When Elizabeth tells the same to Jane she refuses to think badly of Darcy and concludes that there must be some misunderstanding. However Elizabeth's prejudice against Darcy is much deepened.

**16.2.5 Revival of Love:** Bingley hosts a ball at Netherfield. He and Jane spend the whole evening together and their mutual attachment gets strengthened. There, Mrs. Bennet speaks loudly about their engagement, and Elizabeth notes that Darcy overhears her. Darcy asks Elizabeth to dance and she reluctantly accepts and fails to enjoy it. The next day, Mr. Collins proposes to Elizabeth. Much to her mother's displeasure and much to her father's joy, Elizabeth refuses. Mr. Collins quickly turns

his attentions to Charlotte Lucas. He proposes to Charlotte, and she accepts. Elizabeth is disappointed at this sudden shift.

**16.2.6 Dismay to Jane:** Bingley travels to London for business but plans to return to Netherfield Park. His sisters and Darcy soon follow him. Caroline writes to Jane saying that Bingley will not return to Netherfield for at least six months. Caroline also informs Jane that she hopes Bingley will marry Darcy's younger sister. Jane is heartbroken. Elizabeth is sure of the wicked plot of Darcy and Bingley's sisters. At the same time she is convinced of Bingley's affection for her sister.

**16.2.7 The Gardiners:** About that time Mrs. Gardiner, the sister of Mrs. Bennet arrives along with her husband at Longbourn on a Christmas visit. She is amiable and intelligent. She tells Jane that Bingley will return before winter and also invites Jane to stay in London for a while. Mrs. Gardiner understands that Elizabeth is willing to marry Wickham. So she warns Elizabeth against marrying Wickham because of his poor financial situation. At London, Caroline Bingley is extremely rude to Jane. Jane assumes that Mr. Bingley knows she is in London. She believes that Darcy has spoiled Bingley's mind. In Meryton, Wickham suddenly transfers his attentions from Elizabeth to Miss King, a woman who has recently acquired 10,000 pounds from an inheritance.

**16.2.8 Elizabeth and Darcy meet again:** Elizabeth travels to visit Charlotte (now Mrs. Collins) in Kent, along with Sir William Lucas and Maria Lucas. Later they visit Jane and the Gardiners. Mrs. Gardiner tells her about Wickham's change of affections. During her stay in Hunsford, Elizabeth is also invited to dine at Rosings, Lady Catherine's large estate. Lady Catherine is quite arrogant and domineering. She lives there with her sickly and shy daughter. She is fond of enquiring into the affairs of others and gives unasked advice. Elizabeth stays there for two weeks. During that time Mr. Darcy and his cousin Colonel Fitzwilliam visit Rosings. Darcy intentionally meets her during her daily walks. One day, Colonel Fitzwilliam tells Elizabeth that Darcy has recently saved a close friend from an unwise marriage. Elizabeth again suspects that Fitzwilliam is referring to the marriage of Bingley and Jane. It further aggravates her prejudice against Darcy.

**16.2.9 Darcy's proposal of marriage-change in Elizabeth's attitude:** Once Darcy calls on her and confesses that he wants to marry her despite her low family connections. Elizabeth is shocked at such a proposal and rudely refuses him. She also rebukes him for separating Bingley and Jane and betraying Wickham. Angry, Darcy leaves Elizabeth. The next day, Darcy hands her a letter in which he answers her charges. First, Darcy does not deny his part in separating Jane and Bingley. He mentions two reasons: Jane's low family connections and his opinion based on his observations, that she did not love Bingley sincerely and did not show any special attention towards him. Darcy then details Wickham's story. Before his death, Darcy's father asked Darcy to provide Wickham with a living, provided Wickham enter the clergy. Wickham was not interested in the church and so asked Darcy for 3,000 pounds to study law. Wickham soon squandered all his money and came back and asked for another loan promising to enter the clergy this time. When Darcy refused, Wickham tried to elope with Darcy's teenage sister, Georgiana.

Elizabeth initially refuses to believe Darcy's claims, but comes to consider the possibility as she reflects on Wickham's behaviour. She realizes she believed Wickham because she was prejudiced against Darcy. Her prejudice gets weakened soon. She sees some reason in Darcy's reasons for doubting Jane's love towards Bingley as well as the fact of Mrs. Bennet's foolish manners which would be hard to bear for any refined person.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Bennet, Lydia, and Kitty are upset because the regiment is leaving Meryton and moving on to Brighton. Lydia is then invited to join Colonel Forster and Mrs. Forster in Brighton. Elizabeth advises her father to refuse Lydia's request, believing that her sister's frivolous nature will get her in trouble there. However, Mr. Bennet does not heed Elizabeth's advice.

Soon afterwards, Elizabeth goes on vacation with the Gardiners. Their first stop is close to Pemberley, Mr. Darcy's estate. During their tour of the estate, Mrs. Reynolds, the Pemberley housekeeper, praises Darcy appropriately. Later Darcy too arrives there. Darcy is extremely cordial to his guests. The next morning, Darcy and Georgiana visit Elizabeth and the Gardiners at their inn. Bingley too appears there. Elizabeth can see that he is still fond of Jane.

**16.2.10 Lydia's elopement:** One morning, Elizabeth receives a letter from Jane reporting on Lydia's elopement with Wickham. Quite desperate Elizabeth tells Darcy what has happened. Later she leaves for home along with the Gardiners. There, a hysterical Mrs. Bennet has locked herself in her room. They learn from Colonel Forster that Wickham has amassed over 1,000 pounds of gambling debts.

Soon, a letter arrives from Mr. Gardiner announcing that Lydia and Wickham have been found. Wickham is said to have agreed to marry Lydia. After their marriage, Lydia and Wickham visit Longbourn. Lydia behaves as heedlessly as ever. Mrs. Bennet is very happy to have one of her daughters married. At dinner, Lydia tells Elizabeth that Darcy was present at her wedding. Later in a letter, Mrs. Gardiner explains that it was Darcy who found Lydia and Wickham and paid off Wickham's debts. Mrs. Gardiner believes that Darcy did this out of love for Elizabeth.

**16.2.11 The happy ending:** Bingley and Mr. Darcy soon return to Netherfield Park, and they call at Longbourn frequently. After several days, Bingley proposes to Jane. She accepts, and the family is very happy. Darcy tells Elizabeth that his affection has not changed. She then reveals that her feelings have changed and that she would be happy to marry him. They discuss how and why their sentiments have changed since Darcy's first proposal. Darcy has since realized he was wrong to act so proudly and place so much emphasis on class differences. Elizabeth, meanwhile, accepts that she was wrong to judge Darcy prematurely and admits that she allowed her vanity to affect her judgment. The novel ends with wedding bells.

**16.2.12 Summing-up:** In this part of the lesson you have learnt the summary of the novel. This summary will enable you to understand the essence of the novel. You are supposed to go through the web links provided under 'further references' part given at the end of this lesson. You can enjoy more only when the original novel is read.

### 16.3. BRIEF SKETCH OF CHARACTERS

#### 1. The Bennets:

- **Mr. Bennet:** Father of five grown up daughters and also a gentleman of modest income. Mr. Bennet is humorous enough to tickle and irritate his wife. He loves his daughters (particularly Elizabeth). But as a parent he fails in finding husbands to his daughters and thus his wife takes lead.
- **Mrs. Bennet:** Wife of Mr. Bennet. She is a foolish, garrulous woman whose chief ambition is to see her daughters married. Unfortunately because of her low breeding and unbecoming behaviour she becomes intolerable.
- **Jane Bennet:** The eldest and most beautiful daughter of the Bennets. She is innocent, sweet tempered, docile, honest and lovable. She is more reserved and gentler than Elizabeth. Her love episode with Bingley strikes a contrast to that of Elizabeth and Darcy.
- **Elizabeth Bennet:** She is the second daughter of the Bennets. Elizabeth is aged twenty two. She is sharp, well read, witty and sensible of all her sisters. Critics say that she stands for “Prejudice” of the title. However her realization of Darcy’s gentlemanliness dissolves her prejudice and finally both get united in marriage.
- **Mary Bennet:** The middle of the five daughters. She is plain, bookish and pedantic.
- **Catherine Bennet (Kitty):** The fourth of the Bennets’ daughters. Like her younger sister she wishes to flirt with young officers.
- **Lydia Bennet:** The youngest daughter. She is immature, selfish, unprincipled and adamant. Quite foolishly Lydia elopes with a selfish man, Wickham.

#### 2. The Darcys:

- **Fitzwilliam Darcy:** A wealthy gentleman, the master of Pemberley estate, and the nephew of Lady Catherine de Bourgh. Darcy is intelligent and honest and charitable. He represents the ‘Pride’ part of the title. His excess of pride causes him to develop a poor opinion of his social inferiors. He is conscious of his class. But he learns to admire and love Elizabeth for her strong character.
- **Georgiana Darcy:** Darcy’s sister. She is immensely pretty, reserved and shy.

#### 3. The Bingleys:

- **Charles Bingley:** Darcy’s best friend. Bingley’s arrival in Netherfield Park stirs up the action in the novel. He is a well-bred gentleman whose mingling nature contrasts with Darcy’s class consciousness.
- **Miss Bingley:** Bingley’s sister. She disdains Elizabeth’s class background. She is vain, proud and self-willed.

**4. George Wickham:** A handsome fortune-hunting military officer. Wickham’s good looks and charm attract Elizabeth initially. He is reported to have tried many girls but finally lures Lydia with whom he elopes. He is a cheat and a blackmailer.

**5. Mr. Collins:** An idiotic clergyman and distant cousin of Mr. Bennet eyeing upon Mr. Bennet’s property as the latter has no male child to inherit the property. Mr. Collins is insignificant in social status, but he establishes Lady Catherine de Bourgh as his patroness. He is fond of religious sermons.

**6. Lady Catherine de Bourgh:** An aristocratic noblewoman and is Mr. Collins's patron and Darcy's aunt. She is dominating, interfering, vulgar and affected. She can tolerate no opposition. She wants her daughter Miss de Bourgh to marry Darcy.

**7. Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner:** Mrs. Bennett's brother and his wife. The Gardiners are caring, nurturing, and full of common sense. They are more interested in the five daughters of the Bennets and prove themselves to be better parents to the girls than the Bennets.

**8. Charlotte Lucas:** Elizabeth's dear friend and is six years older than Elizabeth. She is plain, unromantic and domestic. She does not view love as the most vital component of a marriage. She is more interested in having a comfortable home. Thus, when Mr. Collins proposes, she accepts.

#### **16.4. Comprehension check:**

Answer the following questions briefly in your own words:

1. Write a note on the theme of the novel "Pride and Prejudice"
2. What do you understand from the title of the novel?
3. Which title do you prefer for this novel "First Impressions" or "Pride and Prejudice"?
4. What is the role of the Gardiners?
5. Compare the love of Jane and Bingley with that of Darcy and Elizabeth?

#### **16.5. Further References:**

You may refer to the following books for further study:

1. "Facts and Problems" – RW Chapman
2. "A Preface to Jane Austen" – Christopher Gillie

**For e-texts you may visit:**

1. [www.cambridge.org/us/...1700.../cambridge-introduction-jane-austen](http://www.cambridge.org/us/...1700.../cambridge-introduction-jane-austen)
2. [ls.unc.edu/dpr/path/janeausten](http://ls.unc.edu/dpr/path/janeausten)

# LESSON-17

## USE OF 'IRONY' IN THE NOVEL "PRIDE AND PREJUDICE"

### OBJECTIVES:

In this lesson you are going to:

- Know about 'irony' and the use of 'irony' in the novel "Pride and Prejudice"
- Understand how love and money form basis for
- Know how the novel is designed as a domestic novel

### STRUCTURE OF THE LESSON:

#### 17.1. Irony in 'Pride and Prejudice'

17.1.1. Irony-intro

17.1.2. Comic irony in the novels of Austen

17.1.3. 'Reversal' situation in Darcy and Elizabeth love plot

17.1.4. Darcy's opposition of Miss Bingley's wish

17.1.5. Elizabeth's dislike for Collins

17.1.6. Irony in Wickham's part

17.1.7. Ironical remarks and comments

17.1.8. Conclusion

17.1.9. Summing-up

#### 17.2. Theme of love, money and marriage

17.2.1. Intro

17.2.2. Five marriages

17.2.3. The old marriage

17.2.4. The first of the 'new marriages' - Charlotte and Collins

17.2.5. The second marriage - Lydia and Wickham

17.2.6. The third marriage - Jane and Bingley

17.2.7. The fourth marriage - Elizabeth and Darcy

17.2.8. Conclusion

17.2.9. Summing-up

#### 17.3. "Pride and Prejudice" as a Domestic novel

17.3.1. Intro-domestic novel

17.3.2. Family relationships

17.3.3. The setting-social classes

17.3.4. Husband hunting and matrimony

17.3.5. Love and money as principal causes of marriage

17.3.6. Conclusion

#### 17.4. Comprehension check

#### 17.5. Further references

### 17.1 IRONY IN "PRIDE AND PREJUDICE"

**17.1.1 Irony-intro:** Irony arises from some kind of contrast. It is generally "*a contrast between appearance and reality. It may be a contrast between what a character thinks himself to be, and what he really is; between what he believes, and what the reader knows to be actually the case; between what a character says, and what he really means to*

*convey; between what a character thinks he will do or achieve, and what he really in the long run does or achieves; between what the reader thinks is going to happen, and what actually happens; between the reader's or a character's anticipation and the actual event"; and so on.*

Irony may produce an effect either comic or tragic but it all depends upon the circumstances of the case. One may find plenty of examples of irony in the comic and the tragic plays of Shakespeare. This means that the use of irony by an author may amuse the reader or may sadden him.

**17.1.2 Comic Irony in the Novels of Jane Austen:** Jane Austen employs irony in her novels to add to the comic effect. Irony may exist in a situation or in a piece of dialogue or in a remark or in a belief which a character has or expresses, and so on. Furthermore, irony may be conscious or unconscious on the part of the character. However the author uses irony consciously. Let us study some examples:

**17.1.3 Reversal of the Situation in Darcy-Elizabeth love plot:** There is an abundant use of irony in the novel "Pride and Prejudice". It percolates into the heart and sinews of the novel. Many situations are characterized by irony. The novelist has employed quite a good number of ironical comments. In these cases what eventually happens is the reverse of what we had anticipated.

The main plot deals with Elizabeth and Darcy. This plot begins with a mutual dislike between these two persons. Mr. Darcy comments within the hearing of Elizabeth that he does not find her attractive enough to dance with. Elizabeth over hears it, gets prejudiced (taking him for a proud man) and develops a strong dislike for him. Elizabeth's dislike goes on increasing in course of time and concludes that Mr. Darcy is proud. Mr. Darcy's initial opinion (that she is of a low social status) of Elizabeth slowly changes and he becomes attracted towards her. At the beginning the relationship between these two persons is described as a sort of mutual antagonism. This antagonism slowly dissolves and the pair gets united in marriage at the end. Here we find a striking case of an ironic reversal.

**17.1.4 Darcy's Opposition to Mr. Bingley's Wish:** Mr. Darcy intends his friend Mr. Bingley to give up his idea of marrying Jane. He meets with success in this endeavour. Darcy tells Bingley that Jane doesn't love him as much as he loves her. Accordingly, Mr. Bingley gives up his idea of proposing to Jane. Soon Darcy undergoes a change in his view and withdraws the pressure which he had been exercising upon Bingley. Eventually, Bingley does propose to Jane, and she accepts him. This too is a case of an ironic reversal so far as Mr. Darcy's original opposition to Mr. Bingley's wish is concerned.

**17.1.5 Elizabeth's dislike for Mr. Collins:** Elizabeth considers Mr. Collins to be worthless. He is such a silly man whom no girl of good family background will agree to marry. Hence she treats him with a sense of contempt. But it is Charlotte who marries this man. The same Mr. Collins arranges for Elizabeth's visit to Hunsford where he and his wife live. At Hunsford Elizabeth meets Darcy, where he makes his proposal of marriage to her, though she turns down this proposal. It is at Hunsford that Elizabeth receives from Mr. Darcy a letter. Darcy defends himself against the charges which she had brought against him. This letter changes her attitude for Darcy. Thus Mr. Collins becomes instrumental in bringing them a bit closer in love.

**17.1.6 Irony in Wickham's part:** Wickham makes a ceaseless effort to defame Darcy. He unconsciously is responsible for Elizabeth's prejudice against Darcy. Both Darcy and Wickham try to avoid meeting each other. It is Darcy's letter that makes a revelation to Elizabeth about Wickham's character. Thereafter she begins to hate him. Ironically the same hatred for Wickham brings Elizabeth and Darcy closer to each other. The same Darcy, though hating Wickham, provides a good life to him and helps him marry Lydia. The irony here is that Wickham by aggravating Elizabeth's prejudice against Darcy ultimately becomes instrumental in creating a positive opinion in Elizabeth for Darcy. This is a case of an ironic reversal of the situation. There is similar irony in Lady Catherine's efforts to prevent the marriage of Elizabeth and Darcy.

**17.1.7 Ironic Remarks and comments:** Let us study some comments which are ironical. Mr. Bennet feels that Wickham has brought disgrace to his family by having eloped with Lydia. However when Lydia and Wickham pay a visit to Longbourn, Mr. Bennet says in joy: "He is as fine a fellow as ever I saw.....I am prodigiously proud of him." This is an example of irony. In other words, Mr. Bennet here means the reverse of what he has said. In fact Mr. Bennet feels ashamed of having Wickham as a son-in-law, but he says that he is proud of that man. In another instance Mr. Bennet says: "I admire all my three sons-in-law highly. Wickham, perhaps, is my favourite."

Mr. Bennet's remark about Mrs. Bennet's nerves is also ironical. Mr. Bennet tells his wife that he has a high respect for her nerves because her nerves are his old friends. Outwardly he seems to be paying a compliment to his wife but actually he is making fun of her. When Elizabeth tells Jane that she hopes to find a good husband like Collins we all notice that the remark is ironical. In fact Elizabeth has no good opinion for Collins, and she has already turned down Collins's proposal of marriage twice.

Sometimes there is unconscious irony. At the beginning of the novel Darcy says that Elizabeth is not handsome enough to tempt him to dance with her. There is a hidden irony in this remark, and even Darcy himself is not conscious of it. The same Darcy finds Elizabeth handsome enough to propose marriage to. In fact Darcy feels bewitched by Elizabeth's charms. Elizabeth tells Collins that she would never refuse a first proposal of marriage and then accept a second proposal from the same man. However Elizabeth does exactly what she here says she would never do. She rejects Darcy's first proposal of marriage, but later accepts his second proposal.

**17.1.8 Conclusion:** Irony in Jane Austen's novels bears a comic undertone. Irony in 'Pride and Prejudice' amuses us and makes us smile. We feel amused by ironical reversals of situation and also by ironical remarks..

## 17.2 THEME OF LOVE, MONEY AND MARRIAGE

**17.2.1 Intro:** One of the major themes in "Pride and Prejudice" is that of love and marriage and its close relation with money. The novel begins with the following sentence: "*It's a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife*". It shows the general views on marriage in Austen's time. The eligible young men are considered as "the rightful property of some one or the other of their daughters". The propertied male and property-less female will contribute to the concept of marriage and in turn the latter will have an access to fortune. Jane Austen also suggests that young women

would have to excel in husband-hunting or be prepared to die as old governesses. It is not surprising therefore, that “business of her (Mrs Bennet’s) life was to get her daughters married.”

Thus when the announcement comes that the Netherfield Park estate has been occupied by some family of large fortune, Mrs Bennet gets excited. The very idea of “A single man of large fortune, four or five thousand a year” attracts Mrs Bennet. Similarly, Darcy is introduced as a young man having “ten thousand a year”. This is a society where marriage and money go hand in hand.

**17.2.2 Five marriages:** The novelist brings before us good reasons and bad reasons for marriage. *There are four new marriages taking place in the novel along with an old one. Charlotte Lucas and Collins, Lydia and Wickham, Jane and Bingley and lastly Elizabeth and Darcy. The old marriage is that of Mrs and Mr Bennet.*

**17.2.3 The old marriage:** Let us start with the old marriage. The senior Bennets are poles apart. Mr Bennet is witty and sharp. His wife is vulgar and garrulous. Mr Bennet understood in course of time that his wife’s “*weak understanding and illiberal mind had put an end to all real affection for her.*” During the twenty three years of marital life they had never been compatible. He married her for her beauty but marriage disillusioned him. Hence he took to reading books. At the same time Mrs Bennet too understood that her husband had grown indolent and irresponsible. She became a nervous wreck. Moreover she was anxious for marrying off her five daughters.

**17.2.4 The first of new marriages-Charlotte Lucas and Collins:** these two are the first couple to get married in the novel. Collins was pompous, foolish and insensible. He was fortunate enough to have got a living at Hunsford under the patronage of Lady Catherine. He was the heir to the Bennet’s property as they had no heir, and as a good will gesture he wanted to marry one of the Bennet daughters and Mrs. Bennet found no fault in this idea. He chose Jane, shifted to Elizabeth and finally when Elizabeth rejected his proposal, adjusted himself with Charlotte Lucas. Jane Austen wrote in this context: “*Mr Collins to be sure, was neither sensible nor agreeable; his society was irksome ... but still.... Charlotte did not think of love and what she required was a husband*”.

Charlotte is 27, not especially beautiful and without a large amount of money. It is therefore her advancing age that hastened her engagement to Collins “*solely from the pure and disinterested desire of an establishment*”. When marriage as an institution is made a commodity, she observes that it is not sensible to marry for ‘love’. Thus, to Charlotte, marriage is an economic transaction undertaken in self-interest.

**17.2.5 The second marriage – Lydia and Wickham:** The next marriage that takes place in the novel is between Lydia and Wickham. They elope before they get married. This marriage is not based on mutual trust, and idea of compatibility. Lydia likes Wickham for his charm and handsomeness. She thinks that she loves him which is not love at all but infatuation. At that time Wickham is under economic pressure and in debts. It is in fact the force of Lydia for marriage that tempts them to elope but not mutual trust and love. Jane Austen writes about their marriage in the last chapter, “*They were moving from place to place in quest of a cheap situation, and always spending more than they ought. His*

*affection for her soon sunk into indifference, hers lasted a little longer.”* Their marriage is built on involvement of passion/infatuation and money.

Wickham-Lydia elopement as a scandal can be taken as an example to illustrate that money is of overwhelming importance in marriage. Their elopement is all together seriously looked down upon in society. Darcy saves the reputation of the Bennets by bribing Wickham into marrying Lydia and then buys him an officer’s rank in the army.

**17.2.6 The third marriage – Jane and Bingley:** Jane and Bingley have actually fallen in love with each other. There is mutual trust, compatibility and respect for each other. They are pure at heart, sincere and affectionate. Bingley is well off whereas Jane is a middle class girl. He never thinks of her low family connections. He takes her as she is. Jane is too docile, domestic and modest to think ill of any one. Hence a happy marital life is assured for them.

**17.2.8 The fourth marriage – Elizabeth and Darcy:** The love of Elizabeth and Darcy occurs at the end. At first Elizabeth takes interest in Wickham. When Collins proposes to her she turns it down. She is shocked at Charlotte’s reasons for accepting Collins though she too wants comfort and security in life with marriage. She might not look for a wealthy person. She is perhaps looking for one who understands her emotions, sentiments and feelings.

Her prejudice for Darcy develops at her first meeting and it continues for a long time. Her visit to Hunsford slowly sees a change in her attitude towards Darcy. On the other hand Darcy wants a girl who need not be wealthy (two wealthy girls are ready to marry him: Miss Bingley and Miss de Borough) but a sensible, understanding girl. He finds in Elizabeth the wife he is anticipating. Though he dislikes her low social relations, his love and affection grow from time to time. Of course in one occasion she says looking over Darcy’s estate, “And of this place I might have been mistress!” This idea comes into her mind just as a passing cloud.

**17.2.9 Conclusion:** In ‘Pride and Prejudice’, Austen puts marriage into all kinds of social and economical relationships from beginning to end, which makes the readers have great understanding of the bitter reality in the society. She uses the relationships of the characters in ‘Pride and Prejudice’ to actually satirize the convention of marriage through love and money. The romantic relationships in this novel show the alliance of the love-interest and the material interest in a self-consciously ironic manner.

**17.2.10 Sum-up:** In the above topic you have learnt how the novelist has dealt with the theme of marriage by showing money and love as reasons. You may add a few more points to the essay by browsing the web links provided at the end of this lesson.

### 17.3 “PRIDE AND PREJUDICE” AS A DOMESTIC NOVEL:

**17.3.1 Intro-domestic novel:** A domestic novel depicts a homely life of a middle class family. The range is narrow as it has already been mentioned as ‘two inches of ivory’. The story will never deal with the political upheavals or social movements. It is neither

philosophic nor moralistic, neither romantic nor imaginative in the generally accepted terms. The characters are down to earth individuals and the theme is realistic and often deals with love and marriage. A domestic novel has a limited scope.

Jane Austen once remarked, "I may boast myself to be with all possible vanity, the most unlearned and uninformed female who ever dared to be an authoress". However she became an authoress by virtue of intuition and a rare gift of genius. Her limited scope and canvas have resulted from her family relations. She never went out of her parlour. She had known 'two or three families in a country village'. At first she started writing to amuse her family. Later on her observations and experiences have elevated her to the range of a mature novelist.

**17.3.2 Family relationships:** In a domestic novel, family sentiments and attachments play an important role. Mr Bennet likes Elizabeth most for her beauty, intelligence and common sense. Lady Catherine shows great love for her daughter. Similarly The Gardiners (the aunt and uncle of the Bennet daughters) are much concerned about the welfare of their nieces. Darcy treats his sister very well. Both Jane and Elizabeth like each other well.

**17.3.3 The setting-social classes:** The novel deals with the domestic life and aspirations of the Bennets, the Lucases, the Bingleys, and the Darcys and such other families. Most of them are middle class people. The Bingleys and the Darcys are wealthy. We can see thus middle class on one side and the wealthy class on the other side in the novel. The middle class families have grown up female children who are ready for marriage. Hence the parents are worried about getting their children married off to rich and eligible bachelors. Marriage is built upon the notion of money. The wealthy class families conduct dinners, pay visits to countryside or arrange balls. The ladies of this class are gossip mongers. They are careless, proud, vain and conceited. The novel begins with the visit of the Bingleys to the Netherfield Park where a ball is arranged. It is here that Jane meets Bingley and Elizabeth gets prejudiced against Darcy.

**17.3.4 Husband hunting and matrimony:** The novel is built upon the concept of husband hunting. Austen is preoccupied with the business of making matches for her women characters. In this novel there are many instances of husband hunting. Mrs Bennet is anxious for getting her five daughters married to young, eligible and rich bachelors. The Lucas family, having an ageing daughter for marriage, is also in the line of husband hunting. Lady Catherine wants to see her daughter married to Darcy. Miss Bingley is also interested in Darcy.

**17.3.5 Love and money as principal causes of marriage:** Austen believes in the institution of marriage. She is interested in delineating marriage in such a way that emotional compatibility and understanding are ensured. In her novels we find parents contrasting with one another. Most of the parents in her novels long to see their unmarried girls wedded to rich husbands. In such cases marriage and money are interlinked. Austen says, "*a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife*". Every parent whether of a middle class or of a rich class expects that his/her daughter marries a rich man. At the same time the unmarried girls too have their own views on marriage. Some fall in love and get it fulfilled in marriage.

- **The old Bennets:** Mr Bennet married for beauty and for good looks but soon got disillusioned with marriage because his wife had a weak understanding and illiberal

mind. Mrs Bennet is said to be vulgar, garrulous and tense. She too was disappointed with her husband for his irresponsibility and indifference. Mutual love and respect had already disappeared in their lives.

- **Charlotte and Collins:** Charlotte has no good opinion about Collins before marriage. Yet she agrees to marry him because he can offer financial security. Even after marriage she could not find any happiness. He makes her feel embarrassed with his absurd comments. She feels comfortable only when he is away from home. To have an obedient wife is a status symbol for Collins and to have the security of marriage is a necessity for Charlotte.
- **Lydia and Wickham:** Lydia thinks that she is in love with Wickham. In fact it is infatuation but not love. She falls a prey to his handsomeness. Wickham is unprincipled in the matter of money. He does not believe in love. He plans to elope with Darcy's sister Georgiana, proposes to marry Elizabeth, then Miss King and finally Lydia, with equal ease and enthusiasm. Lydia becomes his mistress. For the sake of the Bennet's prestige, Wickham is lured into marrying Lydia.
- **Jane and Bingley:** Here in the story of Jane and Bingley we find traces of love. Money is not a matter in their marriage. Jane sincerely loves Bingley and Bingley to a great extent loves her. It is at Darcy's behest, he turns off his mind from Jane but it is only for a while. Love conquers finally and unites Jane and Bingley.

**17.3.6 Conclusion:** In a domestic novel we find a gripping homely drama of universal importance. We come across real life like characters, live situations, family circles, friendship, love and marriage, financial concerns and class distinctions in course of the narration.

#### 17.4.COMPREHENSION CHECK:

Answer the following questions briefly in your own words:

1. What do you understand from the word 'irony'?
2. What is a domestic novel?
3. What do the parents with unmarried daughters in the novel search for?
4. Write a note on the marital life of the old Bennets.
5. Comment on the love of Jane and Bingley.

#### 17.5.Further references:

Refer to the printed texts:

1. "Jane Austen and her Art" – May Lascelles
2. "Jane Austen: Facts and Problems" – RW Chapman

#### For e-texts:

1. [www.jasna.org/persuasions/printed/number25/moses.pdf](http://www.jasna.org/persuasions/printed/number25/moses.pdf)
2. [www.writework.com/.../theme-love-money-and-marriage-jane-austen](http://www.writework.com/.../theme-love-money-and-marriage-jane-austen)
3. [www.enotes.com/.../pride-prejudice-domestic-novel-](http://www.enotes.com/.../pride-prejudice-domestic-novel-)
4. [www.123helpme.com/search.asp?text=pride+and+prejudice&page](http://www.123helpme.com/search.asp?text=pride+and+prejudice&page)

# LESSON-18

## LIFE AND WORKS OF CHARLES DICKENS

### OBJECTIVES:

In this lesson you are going to:

- Learn about some important stages of Charles Dickens' life
- Know about the works of literature produced by Dickens

### STRUCTURE OF THE LESSON:

#### 18.1. Life and works of Dickens

- 18.1.1. Intro
- 18.1.2. His childhood
- 18.1.3. Life in London and horrors of work
- 18.1.4. His early career
- 18.1.5. His literary career
- 18.1.6. His marriage
- 18.1.7. Conclusion
- 18.1.8. Summing-up

#### 18.2. A Brief note on Dickens' novels

- 18.2.1. to 18.2.16: Notes
- 18.2.17. Summing-up

#### 18.3. Comprehension Check

#### 18.4 References

### 18.1. Life and works of Dickens:

**18.1.1.Intro:** Charles Dickens, the most popular novelist of the nineteenth century in England, was a major contributor to English literature. His novels are well read and enjoyed even today by a large number of readers.

**18.1.2.His childhood:** Dickens was born in 1812 at Portsea. His father John Dickens was a clerk in the Navy Pay Office. Charles was the second of six children. Charles's few years of early childhood were comfortable as long as his father was in government service. In fact he dreamt of receiving the education of a gentleman. But illness prevented him from participating in the children's games and so he had to spend time in reading books. He read the works of Cervantes, Daniel Defoe, Smollett, Fielding, and Goldsmith with much interest.

**18.1.3.Life in London and horrors of work:** When Charles was ten years old, his father John was transferred to London. John was a poor manager of financial affairs. Hence his family landed in a financial crisis. Young Charles was compelled to work in a blacking factory. He felt horrified to work with the coarse boys there who spoke filthy language. The experiences of this period of life actually filled his heart with sympathy and love for children working in factories.

Later when his father was arrested for debt and put in a debtor's prison, his mother and other members of the family too went to join the prison at Marshalsea. It was a humiliating

experience which Charles could never forget in his life time. Charles was left alone working in the dirty, rat infested factory, sticking labels on bottles. He was not healthy. Hunger, poverty and illness affected him badly during the period. It ended when John was released.

What Charles remembered throughout his life was the attitude of his parents. Even after his father was released from the prison, his parents thought it proper that Charles should continue with his humiliating job. At last he was withdrawn from the warehouse and sent to school again.

**18.1.4. His early career:** Charles started his career as a lawyer's clerk when he was fifteen. He accepted this modest career gladly. At this time he fell in love with Maria Beadnell (Charles immortalised her by making her Dora in 'David Copperfield'). Later he turned to the career of journalism. He became a popular reporter. He worked to collect news of the proceedings of the Parliament also. During this time he visited the theatres, and learnt acting. He went to the British Library and took to serious reading. Thus by the age of twenty one he became a master of knowledge in various subjects.

**18.1.5. His literary career:** Dickens had a many sided personality. He edited magazines, produced plays and acted in them. He delivered speeches and drew crowds to serve charitable causes. In 1833 he published his initial works in magazines. He got success for these efforts. He put those collections as '*Sketches by Boz*' (Boz was his pen name at that time). Then he produced novels "*Pickwick Papers*" (1837), "*Oliver Twist*" (1838), "*Nickolas Nickleby*" (1839), "*The Old Curiosity Shop*" (1840) and "*Barnaby Rudge*" (1841) in a succession.

Dickens visited America with his wife with the reputation of a novelist and spent some time there. His works "*American Notes*" (1842) and "*Martin Chuzzlewit*" (1844) were based on his impressions on the life there in America. Later Charles produced "*A Christmas Carol*" which was one of the five 'Christmas Books'. His "*Dombey and Son*" (1846), "*David Copperfield*" (1849) came later. The novels mentioned were considered as works of loose structure in the form of episodes.

Dickens tasted an unhappy domestic and marital life. He used to spend most of his time outside as his life at home was miserable. He grew older and his knowledge got enriched with age and experience. He took longer time to write a novel and get it published. His "*Bleak House*" (1853), "*Hard Times*" (1854), "*Little Dorrit*" (1857) were among the later novels. His "*A Tale of Two Cities*" (1859) had the background of the French Revolution. His last novels include "*Great Expectations*" (1860), and "*Our Mutual Friend*" (1864) the latter being the last complete novel.

**18.1.6. His marriage:** Charles Dickens married Catherine Hogarth and fathered nine children. His marital life was no success. He separated from his wife. His children remained with him and he kept his sister-in-law as a caretaker for them.

**18.1.7. Conclusion:** In 1869 Dickens started the novel "*Edwin Drood*" and suddenly was taken ill the following year. He could not recover from that illness. He was buried at the Westminster Abbey.

**18.1.8. Summing-up:** You now know the life and works of Charles Dickens. You have seen the progress of a literary career to great heights from utter penury and childhood labour. The lives of great men are sometimes like this.

## 18.2. A Brief note on his novels:

Let's have a quick glance at the novels of Charles Dickens:

18.2.1. '*Sketches by Boz*': It is his first literary output. Boz is a nickname of one of his brothers. The first sketch was published in 'Old Monthly Magazine' in 1833. Later he produced a good number of sketches which made him an instant success as a writer.

18.2.2. '*Pickwick Papers*': 'The Sketches by Boz' was followed by 'Pickwick Papers'. It was published for twenty monthly instalments by Chapman and Hall publishers. This novel reveals Dickens' comic genius.

18.2.3. '*Oliver Twist*': This is one of the best of Dickens' works. It was the first book published in his own name. He took his readers by surprise with a shift from a light hearted comic tone to a serious sombre tone. In this book Dickens showed his sympathy for poor children. It became a symbol for the innocent and helpless struggling children against the laws of the government.

18.2.4. '*Nicholas Nickleby*': Dickens wrote this novel to expose the private schools of Yorkshire. After the horrible workhouse situation shown in 'Oliver Twist', he took to the pitiable condition of the public institutions.

18.2.5. '*The Old Curiosity Shop*': This novel and 'Barnaby Rudge' are the parts of a periodical called "Master Humphrey's Clock". It is considered as the most sentimental novel told as a rambling tale. It depicts little Nell and her selfless devotion to her selfish grandfather. 'Barnaby Rudge' is written as a historical fiction and Gothic romance. It deals with the mystery of a crime committed long back.

18.2.6. '*American Notes*' and '*Martin Chuzzlewit*': After a visit to America, Dickens felt disappointed and disillusioned because he expected a principled society there. He dreamed of the Land of Liberty but he saw a land of slaves. This caused misery. The American Notes and Martin Chuzzlewit record his disappointment.

18.2.7. '*Christmas Books*': In fact Dickens wrote five fairy tales for Christmas. 'A Christmas Carol' is one of them. The narrative resembles that of a verse.

18.2.8. '*Dombey and Son*': This is another of Dickens' memorable works. It tells the story of the wealthy merchant Mr. Dombey and his rise and fall. At the bottom of it there is the moral of pride and punishment.

18.2.9. '*David Copperfield*': It is the most popular classic novel of Dickens. The novel bears an autobiographical note. David's childhood can be identified with Dickens'. It has also certain memorable character portrayals-of Miss Betsey, Mickaber, Peggoty and Uriah Heep.

18.2.10. '*Bleak House*': Joseph Conrad, an English novelist admired this novel for its realism. The novelist attacks through this novel on the delay and inequity in the court of law, particularly the Chancery court.

18.2.11. '*Hard Times*': In this novel Dickens attacks the industrial evils. He exposed the evil side of the Victorian civilization with its inhumanity.

18.2.12. '*Little Dorrit*': This book was also published in instalments. The central theme revolves round the civil service with all its nepotism and the injustice to the public.

18.2.13. '*A Tale of Two Cities*': This is an historical fiction with a gripping story of love and sacrifice. Dickens describes the novel as a tale. This tale has a background of the French Revolution. The scene revolves round London and Paris. The horrors of the French Revolution are depicted skilfully in the novel. This novel is appreciated by Dickens' critics for his narrative technique and presentation of a memorable character like Sydney Carton.

18.2.14. '*Great Expectations*': This novel belongs to the last phase of Dickens' literary career. Most critics agree that this is the best of all of Dickens' novels. It depicts the life of a boy Pip who tells his story in an autobiographical style.

18.2.15. '*Our Mutual Friend*': This novel is memorable for the character of a school master, Bradley Headstone, who is the first murderer in Dickens' works to exhibit any complexity of character.

18.2.16. '*The Mystery of Edwin Drood*': Dickens thought of writing this novel as a psychological thriller. It is the unfinished novel. It is said that even on the day of his death, Dickens tried to write some chapters but he could not finish them.

**18.2.17. Summing-up:** You have gone through a rather gist of the novels of Charles Dickens and you can have more information on them if you can browse the web links suggested hereunder.

### 18.3. COMPREHENSION CHECK:

Answer the following questions briefly in a few words:

1. What are the major themes you have noticed in the novels of Dickens?
2. What are the horrors of childhood in Dickens' life?
3. Which of the novels of Dickens are in an autobiographical style?
4. Write on any two of the novels of Dickens.

### 18.4. References:

1. "Charles Dickens" – GK Chesterton
2. "Charles Dickens: His life and work" – S. Leacock
3. "Living Biographies of Famous Novelists" – H. Thomas & DL Thomas

You may also visit the following web links:

1. [www.online-literature.com/dickens](http://www.online-literature.com/dickens)
2. [www.charlesdickensinfo.com/novels/complete-works](http://www.charlesdickensinfo.com/novels/complete-works)
3. [www.classiclit.about.com](http://www.classiclit.about.com) > ... > [Book Reviews in Literature](#)

# LESSON-19

## DAVID COPPERFIELD

### OBJECTIVES:

In this lesson you are going to:

- Have a background study of the novel 'David Copperfield'
- Know about the summary of the novel 'David Copperfield'
- Learn about the major characters which come up in this novel

### STRUCTURE OF THE LESSON:

#### **19.1. General Introduction to the novel**

- 19.1.1. Intro
- 19.1.2. Social evils
- 19.1.3. Autobiographical element
- 19.1.4. Plot
- 19.1.5. Style

#### **19.2. Summary of the novel**

- 19.2.1. Intro-David's birth and parentage
- 19.2.2. David at step-father's house-early schooling
- 19.2.3. Life at Salem House
- 19.2.4. The Micawbers
- 19.2.5. Miss Betsey
- 19.2.6. David at Yarmouth
- 19.2.7. David as an apprentice
- 19.2.8. The episode of Emily and Steerforth
- 19.2.9. Miss Betsey's financial ruin
- 19.2.10. Uriah Heep
- 19.2.11. David and Dora
- 19.2.12. Unfortunate Emily
- 19.2.13. Exposure of Uriah
- 19.2.14. Death of Dora
- 19.2.15. Tragedy of Steerforth and Ham
- 19.2.16. The happy ending-Marriage of David and Agnes
- 19.2.17. Summing-up

#### **19.3. Character list**

#### **19.4. Comprehension check**

#### **19.5. Further references**

## 19.1. GENERAL INTRODUCTION

**19.1.1.Intro:** In the Victorian fiction Charles Dickens has a coveted place. His novel “David Copperfield” is a popular classic and the protagonist is known as the favorite child of the author.

**19.1.2. Social evils:** This novel exposes the social evils of the Victorian period such as cruelty to children, child labor, debtors’ prison, poverty and exploitation. We find in the novel the Murdstones and Mr. Creakle as the authority showing cruelty towards children. David and Traddles are the innocent sufferers. We also find David being employed as a child-labor in the wine bottling company working for six shillings a week. David also faces poverty since his birth. He rises from the stages of penury to a stage of solidarity at the end. Prisons are an obsession with Dickens. In most of his novels we find pictures of prison life. He attacked in this novel on the debtors’ prison. We see the suffering of Mr. Micawber in debtors’ prison.

**19.1.3. Autobiographical element:** This novel is mostly written in the autobiographical style. David is Dickens himself. The very initials of Charles Dickens (CD) and David Copperfield (DC) are transposed. Both of them are poor. Both of them learnt their English from their respective mothers. Both were studious readers of classic literature. David’s suffering at Salem House is like that of Dickens at Wellington House Academy. David works at a tender age at Murdstone & Grinby’s wine shop just as Dickens worked in Warren’ Blacking Company. Like that one can trace many a similarity between David and Dickens. When such autobiographical elements are brought out, a question normally arises, “Is David a full length portrait of Dickens?” To this question Dickens himself answered, “The true particulars about my life I keep to myself”.

**19.1.4. Plot:** The plot of the novel is faultless. Dickens used the episodic plot in this novel which is a feature of the Victorian novel. The novelist depicts the two love stories of the hero-one with Dora and the other with Agnes. The love episode of Emily and Steerforth is made a parallel to that of the hero. The plot weaves the rise of David from nowhere to a considerably decent position. The ups and downs that David faces in his life are meticulously dealt with. Moreover Dickens takes absolute care in avoiding the superfluity of scenes or their obscurity in conveying the author’s message. Characters appear life like with all their flesh and blood.

**19.1.5. Style:** ‘Style is the man’ is an old saying. With about fifteen novels to his credit, exhausting every nerve and muscle, Dickens achieved a gifted and inimitable style. He knows that the proper word in the proper place is the key for the style of a writer. The novel ‘David Copperfield’ is an example for Dickens’ perfect prose style. First, the narration of the story is done in ‘First Person Singular’ method which ensures the readers a first-hand experience of David’s life. Secondly, the story of the novel narrates the ‘*events so arranged in their time sequence-dinner coming breakfast, Tuesday after Monday, decay after death and so on*’. This

is a skill that Dickens employs in his style. He uses dialogue so grippingly that he establishes his characters in a most meaningful way.

**19.1.6. Summing-up:** The above part of the essay discusses some of the features of this novel and you can realize them while you are reading the full length text. There may be many more as these, but as a student of literature you will find them out only when you appreciate the novel.

## 19.2. SUMMARY OF THE NOVEL “DAVID COPPERFIELD”

**19.2.1. Intro-David’s birth and parentage:** The novel centers on **David Copperfield**, a posthumous child. He was born on a Friday in Blunderstone, Suffolk. His mother, with no money to support her, looks to **Miss Betsey Trotwood** to look after David. Miss Betsey refuses as David is a boy but not a girl. So Mrs. Copperfield has to bring up her son with the assistance of her house keeper **Peggotty**.

**19.2.2. David at step-father’s house, early schooling:** Mrs. Copperfield marries **Mr. Murdstone** and thus David is forced in to his and his sister **Jane**’s custody. They begin to ill-treat David and one night the panic struck David bites Mr. Murdstone’s hand when the latter whips him badly. Waiting for such an occasion to get rid of an unnecessary burden, Mr. Murdstone sends him to a boarding school named Salem House. This school is run by one named **Mr. Creakle**. Before going to school David is allowed to visit Yarmouth, where Peggotty came from her brother **Daniel**, a generous fisherman who owns a boat (converted in to a house) and shelters two orphans **Ham** and **Emily** and **Mrs. Gummidge**, a widow.

**19.2.3. Life at Salem House:** At Salem House David meets Mr. Creakle, the head master, a handsome boy named **James Steerforth** and a good natured boy named **Tommy Traddles**. Mr. Creakle uses every possible opportunity to manhandle David as he is warned in advance by Mr. Murdstone that David is a bad boy. David learns slowly what he can do to avoid being beaten by Mr. Creakle. One day he comes to know that his mother and his younger step brother are dead. Heartbroken David runs back to Suffolk to attend the funeral.

**19.2.4. The Micawbers:** By now Mr. Murdstone is financially broke and so sends David to London to work at his wine bottling factory. David is only ten years at that time. In London David finds true friends in **the Micawbers**. The Micawbers are also meeting with financial troubles. But they give David some kind of happiness and entertainment. However when Mr. Micawber is arrested and put in debtors’ prison, David feels disappointed.

**19.2.5. Miss Betsey:** As life is miserable without friends, David now decides to move to Dover, keeping in mind Peggotty’s stories about his great aunt Miss Betsey. He walks all the way for about seventy miles to reach Dover. Miss Betsey is stern outwardly but she is

charitable at heart. In addition to David, she adopts a mentally ill old man also named **Mr. Dick**. Mr. Murdstone and his sister come to Dover to track back David but Miss Betsey drives them away. Later David is sent to a school at Canterbury. Here David befriends with **Agnes**, the daughter of **Mr. Wickfield** who is Miss Betsey's manager. Agnes is a clever girl who keeps house for Mr. Wickfield and David. Mr. Wickfield has a clerk named **Uriah Heep** who is a rogue of the first order. Uriah Heep tells everybody that he is humble and sincere but David has all suspicions about him.

**19.2.6. David at Yarmouth:** David finishes his studies and goes to Yarmouth to see Peggotty. He also goes to Salem House to meet Steerforth but he is studying in Oxford and is on vacation. Soon David and Steerforth meet and visit Yarmouth together. David finds that Ham and Emily are in love and are about to marry. He is glad at this. Steerforth is fascinated by the beautiful landscape and desires to visit it in future also.

**19.2.7. David as an apprentice:** David, after some time, returns to his aunt. Miss Betsey decides that David should become an apprentice at a lawyer's office. Thus David goes to London and starts working with **Spewlow and Jorkins**. Here he meets again Tommy Traddles (of Salem House) who is in fact a lawyer struggling to make his both ends meet.

**19.2.8. Episode of Emily and Steerforth:** David is now seventeen and falls in love with Dora Spewlow, the daughter of his boss. Dora too loves him deeply. She is innocent and childlike. It is learnt that Emily, though engaged to Ham, is found to be impressed with Steerforth. With the help of **Littimer**, his servant, Steerforth manages to convince her to marry him and finally both of them run away leaving the heartbroken Ham behind. Mr. Peggotty, angry with this unforeseen incident, resolves to trace her back. David tells Mrs. Steerforth what her son has done. But **Mrs. Steerforth** is furious that Emily has seduced her son and blames her.

**19.2.9. Miss Betsey's financial ruin:** In course of time, Uriah Heep has become a business partner to Mr. Wickfield by his scheming head and blackmailing. He has come up from his position of a clerk. David also comes to know that Miss Betsey has been ruined financially with her unwise stock market investments. Though it is not her fault, she tries to cover the misdeeds of Mr. Wickfield. She requests David to support her in this matter.

**19.2.10. Uriah Heep:** David has to strive hard to come up in life. He learns shorthand and works on reporting to the newspapers in his spare time. Mr. Spewlow dies suddenly leaving his daughter Dora to the custody of her two aunts. Miss Betsey once sends David to Dover to enquire about her property there. David learns to his great surprise that Uriah Heep has become Mr. Wickfield's full partner. Uriah has now a new clerk Mr. Micawber. Mr. Wickfield confesses sorrowfully that he has ruined his daughter's life with his own weaknesses. He also tells David that Uriah is planning to marry his daughter Agnes, but as a father he is helpless.

**19.2.11. David and Dora:** Now David is twenty one. He and Dora marry and set up a house together. David has to work harder for a better life. He starts writing fiction for magazines. Dora is pregnant but miscarries it. Disappointment overwhelms their life. Miss Betsey comes to nurse Dora.

**19.2.12. Unfortunate Emily:** After a long search, Mr. Peggotty with the help of David is able to find back Emily in London. Unfortunately the marital life of Emily with Steerforth has not run smoothly. In fact she has been held as a prisoner in Italy by Littimer, Steerforth's servant. However Emily manages to escape and in course of time she falls ill. Fortunately she finds some charitable people to nurse her. Mr. Peggotty plans to take Emily to Australia so that she can start life afresh.

**19.2.13. Exposure of Uriah:** David goes to Canterbury on Mr. Micawber's request. Mr. Micawber has been waiting to expose Uriah for a long time. Miss Betsey and Traddles and David visit the office of Uriah. Mr. Micawber has produced many documentary evidences for Uriah's conspiracy and forgery. It is proved that Uriah is responsible for Miss Betsey's loss of property. Miss Betsey is extremely happy at the sudden turn of events. She offers Mr. Micawber some money with which he desires to go to Australia.

**19.2.14. Death of Dora:** Dora gets more and more sickly and David realizes that she would die soon. Agnes serves Dora very patiently. Before she dies Dora tells Agnes some secret in the absence of David. Frustrated, David decides to go to Europe to get away from this misfortune. Mr. Peggotty brings a letter from Emily addressed to Ham. Emily thanks Ham for being kind to her and she begs forgiveness for the misdeed done to him.

**19.2.15. Tragedy of Steerforth and Ham:** David visits Yarmouth. There he comes to know the tragic news about the death of Ham and Steerforth. It is reported that Ham went out on the sea to save a passenger boat, but the tide was so strong that he drowned along with Steerforth, a passenger. David decides to keep this a secret from Mr. Peggotty and Emily. He restores the dead body of Steerforth to his mother who faints on seeing her dear son dead.

**19.2.16. The happy ending-Marriage of David and Agnes:** Soon the Micawbers, Mr. Peggotty and Emily leave for Australia. David leaves for Europe and stays there for three years. David realizes soon that he should not have married Dora as he is more interested in Agnes. He feels that it is too late. Returning home he makes it a habit to visit Agnes at Canterbury as frequently as possible. Slowly he realizes that Agnes too is in love with him. They both marry. Agnes tells David the last words of Dora. In fact Dora made Agnes promise not to let anyone marry David unless it was Agnes herself. Thus the story ends in a note of happiness.

**19.2.17. Summing-up:** In this section you have learnt the rise of David's life from nothing. You might have noticed the plight of David at various stages of his life. You might have also seen how he endures them and how overcomes the struggles. You may also understand after

reading the essay, the autobiographical element in the novel, that the life of David and Charles are mostly similar.

### 19.3. CHARACTER LIST:

The following are the characters you have come across while reading the summary above:

- David Copperfield- the protagonist-hero of the novel
- Mrs. Clara Copperfield – mother of David
- Mr. Edward Murdstone – step father of David
- Miss Jane Murdstone – sister of Edward Murdstone
- Miss Betsey Trotwood- a good natured lady and great aunt of David
- Clara Peggotty – servant of Mrs. Copperfield , nurse and friend of David
- Mr Creakle – a cruel school master at Salem House
- Mrs Creakle – wife of Mr Creakle who ill-treats him
- Miss Creakle – daughter of Mr Creakle
- Daniel Peggotty – brother of Clara Peggotty, a rough but good natured fisherman
- Ham Peggotty – nephew to Daniel, an orphan
- Emily – the niece and adopted daughter of Daniel
- Mrs. Gummidge – the widow of Mr. Peggotty’s partner
- James Steerforth – a school friend of David at Salem House, energetic and handsome
- Mrs. Steerforth – mother of James Steerforth
- Littimer – a cruel servant of James Steerforth
- Thomas (Tommy) Traddles – a decent young lawyer, another school friend of David at Salem House
- Mr. Wilkins Micawber – a good natured, optimistic but improvident man
- Mrs. Emma – wife of Wilkins Micawber
- Mr. Francis Spenlow – father of Dora and one of the partners of Spenlow and Jorkins
- Mr. Jorkins – partner of Mr. Spenlow
- Dora Spenlow - only daughter of Francis, timid, sensitive and childlike, wife of David
- Miss Julia Mills – a close friend of Dora
- Uriah Heep – a villainous, cringing-fawning clerk in the office of Mr. Wickfield
- Mr. Wickfield – an old lawyer at Canterbury, father of Agnes who is ruined by Uriah
- Agnes Wickfield – daughter of Mr. Wickfield and wife of David
- Mr. Dick (Richard Babley) – a lunatic old man adopted by Miss Betsey

**19.4. COMPREHNSION CHECK:**

Answer the following questions briefly in your own words:

1. Write a note on the character of Miss Betsey.
2. What villainous nature of Uriah Heep do you find in the above summary?
3. Write a note on the character sketch of Dora Spenlow.
4. Sketch the character of James Steerforth.
5. Describe the episode of love and marriage of Emily and James Steerforth.

**19.5. FURTHER REFERENCES:**

For printed text you may refer to:

1. “Introduction to David Copperfield” – T. Blount
2. “Introduction to David Copperfield” – J. Mersand
3. “Charles Dickens: The World of his novels” – JH Miller

For e-resources you may browse:

1. [www.enotes.com/topics/david-copperfield](http://www.enotes.com/topics/david-copperfield)
2. [www.shmoop.com/david-copperfield/summary.htm](http://www.shmoop.com/david-copperfield/summary.htm)
3. [www.gradesaver.com/david-copperfield/study-guide/summary](http://www.gradesaver.com/david-copperfield/study-guide/summary)

## LESSON-20

# WRITING STYLE OF CHARLES

### OBJECTIVES:

In this lesson you are going to:

- Understand the note of autobiography in ‘David Copperfield’
- Develop an idea about humour and pathos in the novel
- Learn about the character of Uriah Heep in the novel

### STRUCTURE OF THE LESSON:

#### **20.1. Autobiographical element in the novel “David Copperfield”**

- 20.1.1. Intro
- 20.1.2. Novelist’s sympathy for David
- 20.1.3. Similarity in childhood experiences
- 20.1.4. Similarity in schools and work places
- 20.1.5. Similarity in Charles’ and David’s parents
- 20.1.6. Imprisonment of John Dickens and Mr. Micawber
- 20.1.7. Similarity in Charles’ and David’ love affairs
- 20.1.8. Conclusion
- 20.1.9. Summing-up

#### **20.2. Comic art of Dickens**

- 20.2.1. Intro
- 20.2.2. Use of humour
- 20.2.3. Physical deformities as a source of humour
- 20.2.4. Professions as a source
- 20.2.5. Conversations as a source
- 20.2.6. Feelings as a source
- 20.2.7. Bergson’s theory of laughter
- 20.2.8. Conclusion
- 20.2.9. Summing-up

#### **20.3. Character of Uriah Heep**

- 20.3.1. Intro
- 20.3.2. Uriah’s first appearance
- 20.3.3. Uriah’s self-description
- 20.3.4. Career of Uriah with Mr. Wickfield
- 20.3.5. Ambitious Uriah
- 20.3.6. Mr. Micawber with Uriah
- 20.3.7. Animal imagery used to describe Uriah
- 20.3.8. Conclusion
- 20.3.9. Summing-up

20.4. Comprehension check

20.5. Further references

## 20.1. AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL ELEMENT IN THE NOVEL “DAVID COPPERFIELD”

**20.1.1. Intro:** Charles Dickens is a novelist of all times. His novels have a universal appeal to depict real-life characters. His reader will find mirror images of people living around him. Charles feels that some of his novels should discover his life time experiences for his reader. He makes such novels autobiographical. He desires to present them an honest document of his life and experiences.

**20.1.2. Novelist’s sympathy for David:** “David Copperfield” is an autobiographical work of art. It is a tale of David, the protagonist of the novel. The novelist pours the author’s sympathy and feelings of love and affection on David while delineating his character. He bestows personal devotion and identification with David in this novel. On the last page of the manuscript of “David Copperfield” Charles says, “*I seem to be sending some part of myself in to the shadowy world*”. This is a confession about how he would like to make his novel autobiographical.

**20.1.3. Similarity in childhood experiences:** Critics say that “David Copperfield” is an ‘*allegory of Charles Dickens’ physical and spiritual pilgrimage through the world*’. Dickens also admitted: “*If you want to know my life read David Copperfield*”. There are a lot of similarities between David and Dickens. It is already pointed out that the initials of both David Copperfield and Charles Dickens are transposed (*DC and CD*). Like Charles, David also has led a poor life. Both of them are children of poverty. David and Charles are said to have read the popular literature (particularly novels like *Roderick Random, Humphrey Clinker, Tom Jones, The Vicar of Wakefield, Robinson Crusoe* etc.) of the day in their childhood.

Some critics say that only the first part of ‘David Copperfield’ presents the story of Charles’ boyhood days. They argue that David’s life is not wholly Charles’. For example Charles is not a posthumous child like David. Charles has had no rich aunt like David has to support. Yet the sympathies of Charles are not merely confined to David only but he has extended them to the neglected children in his other novels such as ‘Oliver Twist’, ‘Pip’, (Great Expectations) ‘Barnaby Rudge’, ‘Nicholas Nickleby’, ‘Florence Dombey’ etc. also.

Yet let’s try to discover a few more similarities between the life of Charles and that of David.

**20.1.4. Similarity in schools and workplaces:** David’s stay at the Salem House resembles the stay of Charles’ stay for two and a half years at the Wellington House Academy. Charles remembers the use of the cane by his master William Jones in delineating Mr. Creakle’s ill treatment of David at the Salem House. Charles’ account of his sufferings at Jonathan Warren’s Blacking Factory resembles David’s tale of sorrow with Mr. Murdstone and at Grindby’s warehouse. We can find traces of Charles’ father, John Dickens in Mr. Micawber. The lodging house of Mr. Micawber with a brood of children is John’s house itself. Charles also finds an image of his mother in Mrs. Micawber. Just like Mr. Micawber, John Dickens is

also known for his financial irresponsibility in squandering away money and finally falling into troubles.

**20.1.5. Similarity in Charles' and David' parents:** When Charles was about eight years their financial crisis drove them to London where Mrs. Dickens took up the project of running a school in a large house which eventually proved to be a failure. While the creditors pressed for repay of loans, Charles' parents sold off their household goods to overcome financial problems. David helped Mr. Micawber in a similar situation in the novel by selling off books to a shop keeper.

During his stay in the debtor's prison, John Dickens petitioned for a bounty to the inmates of the prison to drink for King's forthcoming birthday. This letter resembles the petition of Mr. Micawber for praying for the abolition of imprisonment for debt.

**20.1.6. Imprisonment of John Dickens and Mr. Micawber:** The imprisonment of Mr. Micawber for debt resembles John Dickens' being put in debtor's prison. John Dickens tells his son, "*if a man had twenty pounds a year; and spent nineteen pounds, nineteen shillings and six pence, he would be happy; but that a shilling spent the other way would make him wretched*". Charles remembers it throughout his life. So is the tone of regret in the voice of Mr. Micawber.

**20.1.7. Similarity in Charles' and David' love affairs:** Charles' work as a shorthand writer is parallel to David's work with Spenslow and Jorkins. After his father's imprisonment, Charles works at Blacking Factory and runs a love affair with Maria Beadnell. However Maria's parents could not accept him as a suitable husband for her and so they sent her abroad. Maria came back home with a change of mind. This actually makes Charles miserable, yet he presents the love of David and Dora in a more plain and honest tone.

In one of his letters (after the publication of the novel) to Maria, Charles confessed, "*I fancy though you may not have thought in the old time how manfully I loved you-that you may have seen in one of my books a faithful recollection of the passion I had for you, and may have seen in little bits of "Dora" touches of your old self sometimes and grace here and there that may be revived in your little girls, years hence, for the bewilderment of some other young lover, though he will never be as terribly in earnest as I and David Copperfield were*".

The self-revealing tone in this letter in addition to deep intimacy and love for Maria can be easily traced out in the love of David for Dora.

**20.1.8. Conclusion:** As it has been pointed out earlier, many critics have concluded that David is not wholly Charles. One, who is sure that this novel is autobiographical, will be surprised on reading Charles' remark (being made to a French translator of the novel) that goes as, "The true particulars of my life I keep to myself".

**20.1.9. Summing-up:** An author's autobiographical interest in a work of literature is sometimes spurious. If we go through any poem, fiction or drama intensely, a touch of personality of the author will always be there at one place or the other in them. Hence you are advised to make note of those touches of autobiography in literature as far as possible so as to connect the author with the characters.

## 20.2. COMIC ART (HUMOUR) OF CHARLES DICKENS:

**20.2.1. Intro:** The word 'humour' has different meanings. Primarily it means a 'disposition' or 'mood' or 'whim' or 'personal eccentricity'. George Eliot defines humour as '*thinking in jest while feeling in earnest*'. Addison says, '*Truth was the founder of the family and father of Good Sense. His son was Wit who married Mirth, and Humor was their child*'. These definitions will make a sense of humour. It is a gentle and sympathetic laughter and is contrasted with Wit, which evokes intellectual and derisive laughter.

**20.1.2. Use of Humour:** Dickens is perhaps a great humorist in English literature. FR Leavis says, "*Dickens is a great genius.....but his genius is that of a great entertainer*". Humour is normally based on absurdities. Dickens loves exaggeration which makes him create absurd characters and situations in his novels. He makes use of traditional themes of humour like deformities, incongruities, social errors etc in a playful language.

**20.1.3. Physical deformities as a source of comedy:** The deformed Miss Mowcher (a fashionable hair dresser) is made a comic figure. Dickens describes her: "*throat she had none, waist she had none, legs she had none, worth mentioning; for though she was more than full sized down to where her waist would have been, if she had had any....*" Look at the exaggerated description of a lady and how he makes fun of her.

The description of the physical deformities of Mr. Creakle at Salem House creates a source of humour in the novel. Creakle is a ludicrous figure with his awful personality and whispering voice. Dickens writes, "*Mr. Creakle's face was fiery, and his eyes were small, and deep in his head; he had thick veins in his forehead, a little nose and a large chin. He was bald on the top of his head, and had some thin wet looking hair that was just turning grey.....*"

**20.1.4. Professions as a source:** Dickens creates humor through satire while describing the activities of the lawyers in the words of Steerforth: "*why he is a sort of monkish attorney. He is, to some faded courts held in Doctor's Commons-a lazy old nook near St Paul's Churchyard, what solicitors are to be the courts of law and equity. He is a functionary whose existence, in the natural course of things, would have terminated about two hundred years*

*ago.* Here Dickens talks about the administration of ecclesiastical law which three fourth of the people know nothing about.

Mr. Spewlow's opinion about professional business (of law) has a touch of humor, "*a good case of a disputed will, where there was a neat little estate of thirty or forty thousand pounds, was perhaps the best of all*". Steerforth continues that there should be some pretty pickings in the way of arguments during legal proceedings with mountains of evidence on interrogation and counter interrogation. See the punch or satire on legal profession.

**20.1.5. Conversations as a source:** The conversation of David with Mr. Omer (a tailor and undertaker at Yarmouth) has also a touch of humour. David meets him after Mrs. Copperfield and his younger step brother were buried. Talking about David's father Mr. Omer says, "*I knew your father before you. He was five foot nine and a half, and he lays in five and twenty foot of ground (if he lays in a fraction), it was either his request or direction, I forgot which*" Dickens makes fun of the undertaker's profession in these lines.

**20.1.6. Feelings as a source:** Miss Betsey's strange behavior with Uriah Heep when the latter's exploitation and blackmail is exposed, is described in a humorous manner. Miss Betsey catches him at his collar and questions him what she wants. Uriah replies, "*a straight waist coat*". She immediately says, "*No, my property!*" she continues, "*Agnes, my dear, as long as I believed it had been really made away with by your father, I wouldn't-and my dear, I didn't, breathe a syllable of its having been placed here for investment. But now I know this fellow is answerable for it, and I will have it. Trot! Come and take it away from him*"

**20.1.7. Bergson's theory of laughter:** While talking about Dora Spewlow, David says "*Until the day arrived on which I was to entertain my newly found old friends, I lived on principally on Dora and coffee*". This is also an example of humour. Dickens believed in Bergson's theory of laughter, which says that the main cause of laughter is the treatment of life '*as if it were a machine, which could repeat, which could be reversed and which has interchangeable parts*'. Dickens has displayed this power of humour throughout the novel by depicting the domestics, professions, common place discussions, human relations so on and so forth in a funny vein.

**20.1.8. Conclusion:** After reading the novel, one may say that Dickens' comic art is multiform and multipurpose. Here Dickens gives us simple entertainment by showing what things are supposed to be and what they actually are. The creation of such discrepancy evokes laughter in the readers.

**20.1.9. Summing-up:** you have noticed that Dickens is a genius of comic art. After reading the novel you can find out more examples for the same. Make notes on those examples and supplement them to this essay and make it more comprehensive.

### 20.3. CHARACTER OF URIAH HEEP:

**20.3.1. Intro:** Uriah Heep is one of the best of ‘polished’ villainous characters in English literature. His name is quite often used to denote a smiling villain. He appears to be quite polished and refined but is very dangerous in behavior.

**20.3.2. Uriah’s first appearance:** Uriah Heep comes on the scene when David and Miss Betsey go to Mr. Micawber’s house. Dickens described Uriah in the words of David, “a red haired person, a youth of fifteen, looking much older, who had hardly any eye brows, and no eye lashes, eyes of a red brown and I remember wondering how he went to sleep”. Continuing with the same description David tells us about Uriah’s long, skeleton-like hand that particularly attracted his attention. Dickens exaggerates Uriah’s damp, sweating palm indicating not only his physical deformity but also his ill-bred nature.

**20.3.3. Uriah’s self-description:** Uriah describes himself. He says that he comes of a poor family. He was brought up at a foundation school where *‘they taught us all a umbleness (he means humbleness)-not much else that I know of, from morning to night. We was (example for his bad English) to be umble to this person, and umble to that; and pull off our caps here, and make bows there, and always to know our place and abase ourselves before our masters! Father got the monitor-medal for being humble. So did I’* This is the picture that Uriah wants to strike on the minds of any new acquaintances.

**20.3.4. Career of Uriah with Mr. Wickfield:** Uriah is appointed as a clerk in the office of Mr. Wickfield. He is very clever but crooked in mind. He knows that Mr. Wickfield is old and nervous. In fact the death of his wife made Mr. Wickfield weak. At the same time he is worried about his daughter’s future also. Uriah cleverly takes this as an advantage. He knows well that Mr. Wickfield may not concentrate on the business any more. He learns a lot of information about Mr. Wickfield from David by inviting him to tea.

Uriah is a cheat and blackmailer but he is hard working. He wins the confidence of Mr. Wickfield and makes him fully dependent on him. He knows the relations of Mr. Wickfield and also his customers. Slowly he manages to get important documents and papers signed by Mr. Wickfield. He is an expert in forgery. He forges his employer’s signatures. Thus he becomes a business partner of Mr. Wickfield.

**20.3.5. Ambitious Uriah:** Partnership with Mr. Wickfield cannot satisfy Uriah. He casts his evil eye on the innocent Agnes. He knows that Agnes obeys her father’s intentions and will be ready to sacrifice anything for her father’s sake. Uriah is cunning and ambitious. He finds David as a hurdle in the fulfillment of his desire to marry Agnes. He instructs his mother to watch David closely whenever he visits Mr. Wickfield.

**20.3.6. Mr. Micawber with Uriah:** Uriah appoints Mr. Micawber as his confidential clerk. Mr. Micawber has learnt a lot about his new employer’s villainy. He has planned to expose

Uriah's villainy. At his suggestion, Miss Betsey, David and Traddles visit his office and meet Uriah. Mr. Micawber brings in many charges against Uriah and produces suitable documentary evidence which proves Uriah's fraud, conspiracy and forgery. Finally Uriah is arrested and put in prison.

**20.3.7. Animal imagery to describe Uriah:** Uriah is dishonest, wicked and selfish. He betrays Mr. Wickfield who raised him from utmost poverty and gave him a social status. Uriah ill-treats and tortures such a kind man. He is a hypocrite, schemer and conspirator. He is ready to ruin anybody's life for his own sake. Uriah is described as a repulsive character by the author by using some animal imagery. Dickens compares Uriah in various contexts to animals like frog, fox, snake, monkey etc. In one context Dickens calls him 'a red headed animal'.

**20.3.8. Conclusion:** This novel shows how one trap leads to another through the example of Uriah Heep. By clever tricks Uriah cheats Mr. Wickfield and becomes rich. Mr. Micawber too traps Uriah and exposes him totally. Uriah is finally sent to model prison at the end. Dickens thus fulfills poetic justice.

**20.3.9. Summing-up:** You have learnt about the character of Uriah Heep. You can enjoy more while you read through the novel. You may refer to the following web links and supplement the topic with more information.

#### **20.4. COMPREHENSION CHECK:**

Answer the following questions briefly in your own words:

1. How is Bergson's theory of laughter employed in this novel?
2. "If you want to know my life read David Copperfield"- why does Dickens say so?
3. What is an autobiography?
4. Sketch the character of Uriah Heep.
5. Why is animal imagery apt in describing Uriah?

#### **20.5. FURTHER REFERENCES:**

For printed texts you may refer to:

1. "Charles Dickens: A Critical Introduction" – KJ Fielding
2. "The Comic World of Dickens" – VS Pritchett

For e-sources you may browse the following web links:

1. [www.victorianweb.org/authors/dickens/dc/patten.html](http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/dickens/dc/patten.html)
2. [www.sparknotes.com](http://www.sparknotes.com) > ... > [Literature Study Guides](#) > [David Copperfield](#)
3. [www.telegraph.co.uk](http://www.telegraph.co.uk) > [Culture](#) > [Charles Dickens](#)
4. [www.jstor.org/stable/2932526](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2932526)

# LESSON- 21

## LIFE AND WORKS OF EMILY BRONTE

### OBJECTIVES:

In this lesson you are going to:

- Know the life of Emily Bronte and the works of Bronte sisters
- Learn the features of Gothic fiction and some exponents of it
- Understand the world of Wuthering Heights

### STRUCTURE OF THE LESSON:

#### **21.1. The Life and works of Emily Bronte**

- 21.1.1. Intro
- 21.1.2. Birth and parentage
- 21.1.3. Death in the family
- 21.1.4. Charlotte and Emily
- 21.1.5. Emily's physical features
- 21.1.6. Early writings of Bronte sisters
- 21.1.7. Novels of Bronte sisters
- 21.1.8. Conclusion-Death of the author of 'Wuthering Heights'
- 21.1.9. Summing-up

#### **21.2. The world of Wuthering Heights**

- 21.2.1. Intro
- 21.2.2. A brief summary of the novel
- 21.2.3. Different dwellings
- 21.2.4. A story of three generations
- 21.2.5. Summing-up

#### **21.3. The Gothic Novel**

- 21.3.1. Intro
- 21.3.2. Gothic tradition
- 21.3.3. Gothic fiction
- 21.3.4. Wuthering Heights
- 21.3.5. Summing-up

#### **21.4. Comprehension check**

#### **21.5. Further References**

### **21.1. THE LIFE AND WORKS OF EMILY BRONTE:**

**21.1.1. Intro:** "*Stronger than a man, simpler than a child*" says Charlotte Bronte (a popular woman novelist of the Victorian Period and also the sister of Emily Bronte) about our author. Charlotte, Emily and Anne are called *the Bronte sisters*.

**21.1.2. Birth and parentage:** Emily's father Rev. Patrick Bronte was an Irishman. He was morose, selfish and impatient. He was a school master till he was thirty. He had his own ideas on how to bring up children. Emily was the fifth of the six daughters of Patrick. The two eldest children Maria and Elizabeth died in childhood, the third was Charlotte, fourth Branwell and the last child was Anne (Emily had a brother also named Patrick Barnwell).

Emily was born in 1818 at Thornton in Yorkshire. Shortly after her birth their family moved to Haworth, a little village on the bleak windswept moors. There Emily's mother died of cancer and her sister, Elizabeth Barnwell came to take care of the motherless children. It was she who trained the girls meticulously in all the household arts. Mr. Bronte took to studies after his wife's death. He wanted his children to be brought up in an atmosphere of self-discipline and composure. Thus his children grew up to be unnaturally reserved and silent.

**21.1.3. Death in the family:** Young Patrick (Emily's brother) was the spoilt member of the family. He had some artistic talent in him and the father sent him to London to pursue his studies. The family exercised utmost economy to provide young Patrick with some funds. But soon it became difficult for them to send money to him, young Patrick had to come back home. He became a tutor then and later on a clerk. He tried many jobs but he could not keep any job because of his dissolute course of living.

The four eldest daughters were sent to a school meant exclusively for daughters of clergy men in 1824. Conditions were frightful there, and as a result Maria and Elizabeth (the eldest two-who were twelve and eleven respectively at that time) died and Charlotte fell very sick. Soon Charlotte and Emily were called back home to pursue their studies under their aunt's direction. All the Bronte's children were delicate and sickly with a tendency towards consumption.

**21.1.4. Charlotte and Emily:** It was Charlotte who had exposure to the outside world. She was a tutor to her younger sisters for some time. She went to Roe Head to study and she worked there as a teacher. As Emily was a homesick child, she could not stay away from her home. Moreover she was passionately fond of nature and animals around. She liked the moors in all weathers and seasons and wanted to have walks on the moors.

**21.1.5. Emily's physical features:** Emily was a reserved and silent kind of girl. She wanted freedom in her aloofness. Charlotte writes, "*In the bleak solitude she found many and dear delights, and not the least and best loved was liberty. Liberty was the breath of Emily's nostrils, without it she perished*". At fifteen Emily was described as being tall, slight with a slouchy, loose jointed gait like that of a boy. She was of pale complexion, dark and beautiful hair, and lovely hazel eyes. All her life she persisted in wearing clothes that were outmoded.

**21.1.6. Early Writings of the Bronte sisters:** The Bronte sisters were highly imaginative. They had love for literature of past times. They knew Shakespeare, William Cowper, Walter Scott, Wordsworth and Byron, and they read the articles, reviews in magazines, particularly the 'Gothic' published in the "Blackwood' Magazine". They were also fond of

writing something creative even from their childhood. The romantic influence was strong upon them. They created worlds of fantasy in their tales. Charlotte discovered the poems of her younger sisters in about 1845. They were later published under assumed names, “Poems by Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell”. Charlotte explained on the pseudonym publication that it was a *deliberate but ambiguous choice* for them because they *wanted those names to be taken for men’s*. However these poems received little success.

**21.1.7. Novels of the Bronte sisters:** The disastrous failure seems to have no effect on the Bronte sisters. Probably the same year Emily started her ‘Wuthering Heights’ (1845). By the next year, Charlotte’s “Professor” and Anne’s “Agnes Grey” were also ready. The authors were in search of a publisher. Their publisher for the poems said that he would publish no novels. The Bronte sisters approached another (Thomas Cautley Newby). He accepted only two novels and not Charlotte’s but he delayed the printing. But Smith, Elder & Co published ‘Professor’ of Charlotte (*Currer Bell*) which received a thumping success. Then Newby published the two novels in a three volume edition with ‘Wuthering Heights’ (by *Ellis Bell*) which occupied two volumes and ‘Agnes Grey’ (by *Acton Bell*) occupied the third. Another novel by Anne “The Tenant of Wildfell Hall” followed the same year.

**21.1.8. Conclusion- Death of the author of Wuthering Heights:** The success of ‘Wuthering Heights’ went unnoticed. It is a story of violence and brutality and differs from the romantic novels of the period. Meanwhile Branwell (brother) had fallen prey to drink and drugs and was dying (He died in 1848). Emily caught cold and never left the house again. Anne too sickened and died in 1849. Emily a few months later died of consumption in the same year. Actually she died without tasting the joy of success of her only novel. However Charlotte survived the two sisters and became a literary celebrity.

**21.1.9. Summing-up:** You have seen the life of Emily and her single novel contribution to English literature. Though her literary output is meagre, she is remembered through all these years because of the range and depth of emotions shown in her novel.

## 21.2. THE WORLD OF “WUTHERING HEIGHTS”

**21.2.1. Intro:** The world of ‘Wuthering Heights’ is unique not only geographically but also emotionally. The novel deals with the lives of people belonging to neighbouring estates: *Wuthering Heights* is located on the bleak, isolated moors and the *Thrushcross Grange* situated in the valley. The two abodes are separated from each other by moors and hills. The people of both estates are linked through a single anti-hero Heathcliff whose passionate blind love brings ruin to the people of both estates. Let’s have a glance at the summary of the novel.

**21.2.2. A brief summary of the novel:** The story goes like this: “Mr. Earnshaw, a Yorkshire man and owner of the estate *Wuthering Heights* (the home of Earnshaws, on the moors), brings home with him a gipsy boy from Liverpool. He calls the boy Heathcliff and brings him up with his own children Catherine and Hindley. The youthful Catherine loves Heathcliff. Hindley hates the unknown, orphan stranger because he is so affectionate to his father. The death of his parents gives Hindley an opportunity to ill-treat Heathcliff which makes the latter brutal. Once Catherine visits a neighbouring estate *Thrushcross*

*Grange*(the home of the Lintons, in the valley)and turns to Edgar Linton there. Catherine marries Edgar leaving Heathcliff to his destiny.

The heartbroken Heathcliff disappears. Of course he returns only to give discomfort to Catherine. He is no more coarse, uncivilized and poor. He has everything to be called ‘a rich gentleman’. Edgar feels jealous and Catherine getsdiverted. Catherine and Heathcliff are now more madly in love than before. She gives birth to Edgar’s child (young Cathy) and dies. Infuriated Heathcliff is determined to ruin the lives of Hindley and Edgar. He marries Edgar’s sister Isabella and turns Hindley into a drunkard and gambler. He wins away finally all of his money and property. As a result Hindley’s only son Hareton becomes penniless. Isabella gives birth to Heathcliff’s son young Linton. Soon Isabella too dies. He arranges a marriage between his son Linton and Cathy. However Linton dies and the widowed Cathy falls in love with Hareton and marries him at the end.”

**21.2.3. Different dwellings:** The two houses form a contrast in setting as well as in the character of its dwellers. Wuthering Heights stands for the principle of storm. Lockwood, one of the two narrators of the story describes it: “Wuthering Heights is the name of Mr. Earnshaw’s dwelling. ‘Wuthering’ is a provincial adjective, descriptive of the atmospheric tumult to which its situation is exposed in stormy weather”. The architect must have sensed danger from the narrow north winds and so he built it strong enough to withstand the force of any weather. On the other hand the Thrushcross Grange stands for the principle of calm and is located in a pleasant valley. It is owned by the Lintons. The estate is described by Heathcliff for Nelly (another narrator of the story) as a beautiful, splendid place. Catherine, the daughter of Earnshaw, is fascinated by the beauty of the moors,the mist, cold, and mud and frost as well as its blue skies and singing birds and budding March crocuses.

The atmosphere of the novel is wild and elemental. Catherine and Heathcliff in the violence of characters are a part of wild nature. They love to roam in the moors by day and night as children do. Even after their death, their spirits haunt the scenes which they have roamed during their life.

**21.2.4. A story of three generations:** It is said that ‘Wuthering Heights’is the story of two families and an outsider. The two families are the Earnshaws and the Lintons. The outsider is Heathcliff himself. The story begins with old Mr. & Mrs. Earnshaw at Wuthering Heights.They have a son Hindley and a daughter Catherine. Similarly the occupants at the Thrushcross Grangeare Mr. & Mrs. Linton. They too have a son Edgar and a daughter Isabella. With the death of the old generation, the second generation of youngsters comes up. Heathcliff loves Catherine, who subsequently marries Edgar Linton and deserts Heathcliff. The third generation starts with Hareton Earnshaw (Hindley’s son), Cathy (daughter of Catherine and Edgar) and Linton (son of Isabella and Heathcliff). Towards the close of the novel two generations pass away leaving behind two survivors Hareton and young Cathy who are preparing to get married.

**21.2.5. Summing-up:** The novel of Emily is romantic, imaginative and emotional. You come across some gripping scenes and incidents in a world which keeps up your interest

throughout. Like all critics you may also admit that Emily created this world with so much of passion and she never dreamt of leaving it.

### 21.3. GOTHIC NOVEL:

**21.3.1. Intro:** It is the type of romance or fiction which was popular in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The word ‘gothic’ refers to Goths—a Germanic tribe to signify Germanic and then medieval. It was inaugurated by Horace Walpole’s “Castle of Otranto, a Gothic story”.

The setting of these novels is medieval. We find a gloomy castle full of dungeons and underground passages haunted by ghosts, mysterious nocturnal spirits; supernatural occurrences, violent incidents in a pervading atmosphere of gloom and terror. There will be chilling horror and nerve shattering terror and heart breaking violence. The tempo of the romance is steady with loose ends in the narration.

**21.3.2. Gothic tradition:** Angela Carter in the Afterword to her collection of tales ‘Fireworks’ says: “*The Gothic tradition in which Edgar Poe writes grandly ignores the value systems of our institutions, it deals entirely with the profane. Its great themes are incest and cannibalism. Character and events are exaggerated beyond reality, to become symbols, ideas and passions. Its style will tend to be ornate, unnatural and thus operate against the perennial human desire to believe the word as fact. Its only humour is black humour. It retains a singular moral function, that of provoking unease*”. This definition and description tells us about what gothic literary tradition is about.

**21.3.3. Gothic fiction:** The term ‘gothic’ is later on extended to fiction also which is now labelled as gothic fiction. The word ‘gothic’ is mostly applied to a group of novels written between 1760s and 1820s. The well-known examples are Miss Clara Reeve’s “The Old English Baron”, William Beckford’s “Vathek”, Ann Radcliff’s “Mysteries of Udolpho”, Gregory Lewis’ “The Monk”, Charles Robert Maturin’s “The Final Revenge, The Wild Irish Bay, Melmoth the Wanderer”, William Godwin’s “Caleb Williams, St. Leon” and Mary Shelley’s “Frankenstein or the Modern Prometheus”.

- *Horace Walpole* is known as the pioneer in Gothic fiction. Tobias Smollett gave to the romance a method of dealing with the superstitious; Walpole gave machinery, characters, its castle and its Gothic name. His use of the supernatural showed the way to authors of following generations. ‘The Castle of Otranto’ (1764) has a romantic setting, a continuous spell of horror, colour of melancholy, awe and superstition which make it a horror story.
- *Miss Clara Reeve* wrote some Gothic romances and the most popular one is “The Old English Baron”. The novel shows how the son of a lord brought up in ignorance of his aristocratic descent recovered the rights of primogeniture. She is the first fiction writer to make use of dreams. Montague Summers criticises it as a ‘dull and didactic narrative told in a style of chilling mediocrity’.

- *William Beckford* was an eccentric rich man whose imagination was full of strange pictures of eastern countries. His “Vathek” was a fantasy. He writes in his preface, “Vathek is a story so horrid that I tremble while relating it, and have not a nerve in my frame but vibrates like an aspen”.
- *Mrs. Ann Radcliff* is called the ‘Shakespeare of Romantic writers’ and ‘the Great Enchantress’. Her wide range of imagination, romantic temperament, love for solitude and interest in the mysterious helped her write Gothic fiction. She wrote five romances out of which ‘The Mysteries of Udolpho’ is most popular. Samuel Coleridge described it as ‘the most interesting novel in English language’ and it is a book which is impossible to read and forget. However she rationalised the supernatural. We hear mysterious voices in the chamber of Udolpho but the authoress justifies that they are the wanton trick of a prisoner.
- *Matthew Gregory Lewismade* a spine chilling and blood curdling use of magic and necromancy and painted his grim and ghastly themes in dark. In his remarkable fiction “The Monk”, he planned his sensational theme on rape, incest, murder, magic and sensuality. He borrowed the grotesque climax from “Dr Faustus” creating the picture of a demon rescuing the villain-hero from execution.
- *Charles Robert Maturin* was an eccentric Irish clergy man, a voracious reader of the literature of terror. His ‘Melmoth, the Wanderer’ (1820) is his best attempt. Melmoth sold his soul to the devil in return for a life of hundred and fifty years, the bargain being transferable if anyone else could be persuaded to take it over. He performed many magical feats during the bond period. At last Melmoth became a victim of the devil. This fiction reminds us of the drama of Christopher Marlowe’s “Dr Faustus”. The novel is called the swan song of Gothic fiction.
- *William Godwin’s* Gothic fictional works create realistic physical horrors. There are no unearthly groans, phosphorescent flares to enhance the scene of mystery and horror. He presents images of excruciating pain, convulsive throbs and intervals of death like insupportable sickness which make his works more suggestive and realistic.
- *Mary Shelley*, the wife of Percy Shelley wrote ‘Frankenstein’, a philosophical romance which is also a tale of terror. She is more inspired by the philosophical ideology of Rousseau i.e. isolation, suffering and social injustice. Frankenstein, a Swiss student of natural philosophy constructs a human figure and learns how to bring it to life. To his dismay a murderous monster is created in the bargain. The story is written in the first person’s point of view. There is pathos in addition to horror in this romance.

**21.3.4. Wuthering Heights:** In this novel, Emily Bronte presented the amazing and terrific character of Heathcliff whose very passion was motivated by ruthless greed. When Catherine looked into Heathcliff’s wild, glittering eyes, she could only turn away in horror. The experiences of Lockwood in his room at Wuthering Heights, the touch of an icy hand, the shrill voice... are all examples of Gothic romance. The reporting of the sight of two spirits on the moors is also blood chilling.

**21.3.5. Summing-up:** There are many more writers of Gothic fiction in English literature. You may browse the web links given under the section of references and learn about them.

#### **21. 4. COMPREHENSION CHECK:**

Answer the following questions briefly in your own words:

1. Write a note on the works of Bronte sisters.
2. Why do you think that the Bronte sisters wrote in pseudonym?
3. Describe the two estates mentioned in the story of the novel.
4. What is a Gothic romance?
5. Mention some of the writers of Gothic fiction

#### **21.5. REFERENCES:**

For print reference:

1. “The Brontes’ web of childhood” – F. E. Ratchford
2. “The Genesis of Wuthering Heights” – Mary Visick
3. “The Bronte story” – Margaret Lane
4. “The Gothic revival” – Kenneth Clark

For further reading you can visit the following sites:

- 1.[www.virtualsalt.com/gothic.html](http://www.virtualsalt.com/gothic.html)
- 2.[www.poemhunter.com/emily-jane-bront/biography/](http://www.poemhunter.com/emily-jane-bront/biography/)
- 3.[www.biography.com/people/emily-brontë-9227381](http://www.biography.com/people/emily-brontë-9227381)

## LESSON- 22

# WUTHERING HEIGHTS

### OBJECTIVES:

In this lesson you are going to:

- Have a brief introduction to the novel “Wuthering Heights”
- Understand the outline story of the novel
- Be introduced to the characters in the novel

### STRUCTURE OF THE LESSON:

#### **22.1. General Introduction to the novel**

- 22.1.1. Intro
- 22.1.2. Two families
- 22.1.3. The outsider
- 22.1.4. Three generations
- 22.1.5. Storm and Calm
- 22.1.6. Time line and Narrative Technique
- 22.1.7. Atmosphere
- 22.1.8. Conclusion
- 22.1.9. Summing-up

#### **22.2. Outline story of the novel “Wuthering Heights”**

- 22.2.1. Intro
- 22.2.2. Mr. Lockwood’s visit
- 22.2.3. The uncanny incident
- 22.2.4. Heathcliff’s excitement
- 22.2.5. Mr. Lockwood at the Thrushcross Grange
- 22.2.6. The Earnshaws and Heathcliff
- 22.2.7. A New Master to Wuthering Heights
- 22.2.8. Heathcliff’s disappointment
- 22.2.9. Return of refined Heathcliff
- 22.2.10. Isabella and Heathcliff
- 22.2.11. Death of Catherine and Isabella
- 22.2.12. Linton at the Thrushcross Grange
- 22.2.13. Cathy and Linton
- 22.2.14. Heathcliff-the master of two estates
- 22.2.15. Heathcliff’s death
- 22.2.16. Conclusion

#### **22.3. Character list**

#### **22.5. Comprehension check**

#### **22.6. Further references**

## 22.1. GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE NOVEL:

**22.1.1. Intro:** The Novel “Wuthering Heights” was published in 1847 under the pen name of ‘Ellis Bell’. In fact Emily took about two years of time to complete it. It was a tale of two families and an outsider covering three generations of people. ‘Wuthering Heights’ received a nominal success in the beginning but by the time it fetched name and fame to the author, unfortunately Emily was no more.

**22.1.2. Two families:** The story of the novel deals with two families of people belonging to two different estates. The first family dwelt in ‘Wuthering Heights’ an estate in moors and rocky plains. The other family lived in ‘Thrushcross Grange’ located in a pleasant valley. It was about four miles of distance between the two estates. ‘Wuthering Heights’ was the residence of the Earnshaws. They were rich, gentlemanly and friendly. The ‘Thrushcross Grange’ was occupied by the Lintons who were also noble minded and sensible.

**22.1.3. The outsider:** Heathcliff is the outsider and is a gipsy boy. He is picked on the streets of Liverpool by old Mr. Earnshaw who brings him home. Heathcliff is brought up at Wuthering Heights. The old Earnshaws treat him kindly but their son Hindley, jealous of Heathcliff, ill-treats him in the absence of his parents. However Catherine, the daughter of the Earnshaws falls passionately in love with him. Thus love starts and eventually ends in revenge.

**22.1.4. Three generations:** As said, there are three generations found in this novel. The Earnshaws, and their children-Hindley and Catherine and their grandchildren Hareton and young Cathy constitute the three generations. On the other hand, the Lintons, and their children-Edgar and Isabella and their grandchildren young Cathy (of course she is the daughter of Edgar and Catherine Earnshaw) and young Linton (son of Heathcliff and Isabella) form the three generations at the Thrushcross Grange estate. Heathcliff, the outsider remains the centre of action.

**22.1.5. Storm and Calm:** The novel deals with the principles of ‘storm and calm’. The estate of Wuthering Heights is the abode of storm. It stands on the rocky hills, plains and moors. The building of the estate is built with rock so that it can withstand any climate or change of weather. Hindley stands for jealousy, cruelty, pride, class consciousness and bossism. He cannot accept a black orphan like Heathcliff into his family. He feels jealous when his father treats Heathcliff with the milk of tenderness and love. Catherine too represents storm in another angle. She is a symbol of excessive love and passion. She loves Heathcliff deeply but suddenly she shifts the same emotion to Edgar and marries him. This turns the story into the direction of revenge.

The Thrushcross Grange is in the valley. It is pleasant and peaceful. It is the abode of calm. The building is full of wonderful carpets, pictures on the walls, pleasant colors and is filled

with lovable people. Edgar and Isabella are innocent, well-bred and respectful. The storm of the Wuthering Heights sweeps away the calm of the Thrushcross Grange leaving gloom, melancholy and despair at the end for both estates.

**22.1.6. Time line and narrative technique:** The events narrated in the novel cover a period of over thirty years (roughly from 1769 to 1802). The author employs two different narrators - Mr. Lockwood, a tenant at Thrushcross Grange and the house keeper Mrs. Nelly Dean. Emily ignores the time sequence and in her narration we can pick up the time line and connect the events and incidents with one another.

Lockwood, a young man from London (who in fact recovered from a disappointment in love) arrives at the Thrushcross Grange towards the end of 1801. He visits Wuthering Heights to meet his land lord but meets with some strange occurrences there (he finds the diary of Catherine also) and after his return home he is laid up for two months with cold. He is an ordinary man (fitting him to the role of a narrator for his credibility) and a curious one (listens to Nelly's narration). Nelly knowing all of the members of the two families and having been involved personally in their histories; amuses him with her story. By January 1802, Lockwood recovered enough health to pay another visit to Heathcliff. He is desirous of returning to London. He returns again in September 1802 and comes to know of the conclusion of the tale from Nelly Dean. After a visit to the graves of Edgar, Catherine and Heathcliff he departs.

Again there is the eye witness narrator Mrs. Nelly (Allen) Dean. She has the advantage as a narrator over Lockwood. She is the confidante of a number of characters in the novel including Heathcliff. She tells Lockwood, "I have undergone sharp discipline, which has taught me wisdom, and then I have read more than you fancy..." Hence she is not to be taken as a mere rustic servant woman but a significant contributor to the narration. It is she who pieces together the story from her own experiences, from Heathcliff's story (chapter VI), from Isabella's letter (chapter XIII) and from her conversation with Zillah.

**22.1.7. Atmosphere:** The atmosphere of the novel is wild and elemental; it is described in the following words: "Catherine and Heathcliff in the violence of their characters seem almost a part of the wildness of nature. They love to roam the moors by day or night as children, and after their deaths, the reader feels that their spirits haunt the scenes which they knew during life. Apart from this pervading atmosphere of violence and gloom there are touches of tenderness and beauty which provide relief and contrast".

**22.1.8. Conclusion:** This novel is somewhat a revolutionary one in those days. It has everything new and fresh to attract the readers. "Curious it is to read *Wuthering Heights* and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (Anne Bronte's)" *George Henry Lewes*, a critic remarks - "and remember that the writers were two retiring, solitary and consumptive girls" viewing that gloom and sensing of death would have resulted in the novels.

**22.1.9. Summing-up:** You may find the revolutionary features of ‘Wuthering Heights’ while studying the outline story which is given hereunder. A list of suggested references is given for further reading at the end of the lesson.

## 22.2. OUTLINE STORY OF “WUTHERING HEIGHTS”

**22.2.1. Intro:** ‘Wuthering Heights’ is a large farm house in the West Ridding of Yorkshire in the northern moors. It is the ancestral home of the Earnshaws. The story begins with the arrival of Mr. Lockwood as a tenant of the Thrushcross Grange, a property rented from Mr. Heathcliff of Wuthering Heights.

**22.2.1.Mr. Lockwood’s visit:** In 1801, Mr. Lockwood made two visits to Wuthering Heights and during the first he met Heathcliff, an abrupt and unsocial man surrounded by a pack of snarling dogs. In the second visit, he meets two other members of the same household—a rough young fellow, Hareton and a pretty young girl, Cathy, the widow of Heathcliff’s son.

**22.2.2.The uncanny incident:** During the visit Mr. Lockwood found it difficult to reach Wuthering Heights. There was a heavy snow fall which covered the moor paths. Travel became impossible for him in that bleak country side. Heathcliff refused to let any servant accompany Mr. Lockwood to go back home. So Mr. Lockwood had to stay in an unused room for the night. He found some moth eaten books on the sill and also the names of Catherine Earnshaw, Catherine Heathcliff and Catherine Linton scratched all over the paint. He also saw a diary with some scraps of papers dated some twenty five years ago.

That night Mr. Lockwood was troubled by strange dreams. Thinking that a branch was rattling against the window, Mr. Lockwood broke the glass in his attempt to unhook the casement. He reached out to break off the fir- branch outside, his fingers touched a small icy-hand and a weeping voice begged: “let me in – let me in”. An unseen child’s face seemed to look through the window and in a voice told him that her name was Catherine Linton. Mr. Lockwood screamed and tried to withdraw his hand.

**22.2.4. Heathcliff’s excitement:** Heathcliff appeared immediately in a state of a great excitement and ordered Mr. Lockwood out of the room. Then he threw himself upon the bed and started begging the spirit in tears, “Come in! Come in! ...Cathy, do come. Oh, my heart’ darling; hear me this time”. Heathcliff heard no more of a voice in response, but only of the hiss of swirling snow.

**22.2.5. Mr. Lockwood at the Thrushcross Grange:** On his return to the Thrushcross Grange, Mr. Lockwood fell sick for some time. During recovery, the curiosity and concern of Mr. Lockwood about the strange inhabitants of Wuthering Heights were satisfied by

Ellen Dean, a servant at the Wuthering Heights at various times. Ellen popularly known as Nelly, was the housekeeper at the Thrushcross Grange but she had lived at Wuthering Heights during her childhood. Nelly narrated the story of the Earnshaws to Mr. Lockwood.

**22.2.6. The Earnshaws and Heathcliff:** The story of the Earnshaws began years ago. Old Earnshaw was living at Wuthering Heights with his wife and two children-Hindley and Catherine. Returning from a trip to Liverpool, the father brought back with him a starving and ragged gypsy boy. Old Earnshaw christened the boy as Heathcliff. Gradually the orphan boy began to usurp the affections of old Earnshaw whose health was slowly declining. He was also liked strongly by Catherine as well. Young Hindley, growing jealous of his father's affections for the outsider was sent to school.

**22.2.7. A new master to Wuthering Heights:** A short time later Old Earnshaw died. Hindley returned home for his father's funeral, much to everybody's surprise, along with his wife named Francis. He became the new master of Wuthering Heights. Hindley not only kept Heathcliff at a distance but also determined to avenge himself on Heathcliff by treating him as a servant only. At the same time he also attempted to put an end to Catherine's relation with Heathcliff. Yet Catherine continued to love Heathcliff.

**22.2.8. Heathcliff's disappointment:** One night Catherine and Heathcliff tramped over the moors as usual to the Thrushcross Grange. Catherine, attacked by a watch dog, was forced into the home of Lintons. She had to stay there for about five weeks until she recovered. During this brief visit she became intimate with the pleasant family of the Lintons. Mr. and Mrs. Lintons treated the pretty girl affectionately. Their children Edgar and Isabella too were kind and affectionate towards her. Afterwards, the Lintons also paid a visit to Wuthering Heights. The two families became intimate in course of time. Heathcliff felt jealous of it. He vowed revenge on Hindley in particular whom he hated since his entry into Wuthering Heights.

The following summer Hindley's consumptive wife died after giving birth to a male child, Hareton. In his grief, Hindley became desperate, took to drink and grew more degenerate as months passed. In the meantime Catherine and Edgar became sweethearts. They exchanged love with each other. Catherine took Nelly into confidence and told her that she loved Heathcliff but she felt it would be degrading for her to marry a penniless orphan like him. Heathcliff overheard them, grew sullen at the affection of Catherine for Edgar and disappeared the same night. He was seen no more for almost three years.

**22.2.9. Return of the refined Heathcliff:** Catherine and Edgar were married and were living happily at the Thrushcross Grange with Nelly as their housekeeper. One day Heathcliff returned. He appeared as a man of improved manners, decency and refinement. He seemed to have earned a lot of money. Hindley, finding a good companion in Heathcliff for drinking and gambling, invited him to Wuthering Heights. He hoped to recoup his

dwindling fortune from Heathcliff's pockets. Heathcliff accepted this unforeseen invitation with a hope to find the opportunity to avenge himself on the oppressor.

**22.2.10. Isabella and Heathcliff:** In fact the return of Heathcliff caused discomfort in the marital life of Edgar and Catherine. Edgar grew jealous of Heathcliff and Catherine became irritable. However, Isabella, much to the dismay of her brother and Catherine, fell in love with Heathcliff. One night Edgar and Heathcliff came to blows. Soon afterwards, Heathcliff eloped with Isabella, obviously marrying her only to provoke Edgar and thus to avenge himself. When Heathcliff and Isabella returned Edgar refused to welcome his sister and forbade Heathcliff to enter his house. Meanwhile Catherine, an expectant mother underwent a serious attack of fever. Heathcliff and Isabella took up residence at Wuthering Heights.

**22.2.11. Death of Catherine and Isabella:** Time was passing grimly. Heathcliff found an opportunity to meet his still devoted Catherine. The shock of the quarrel between him and Edgar shook her resulting in the premature birth of a child. A few hours later Catherine died having avowed to Heathcliff that her spirit would never leave him. Life at Wuthering Heights became miserable to Isabella with Heathcliff. At last she decided to go to London for good. A few months later she too gave birth to a son, named Linton, whom the mother wanted to bring up in ignorance of his father's identity. Meanwhile, Hindley mortgaged everything to Heathcliff and was left in utter financial crisis. Having lost his property Hindley died. The once servant now became the master of Wuthering Heights. Hareton's life became topsy-turvy as he became dependent on Heathcliff. It is evident that Heathcliff's desire for vengeance became a passion.

**22.2.12. Linton at the Thrushcross Grange:** Isabella lived in London with her son peacefully till she died. It was twelve years after her departure from Wuthering Heights that her sickly son Linton was brought by Edgar to Thrushcross Grange. Heathcliff, having learnt that his son had arrived, demanded that the boy should be turned over to him. Edgar had to oblige and send the boy to his own father. Young Cathy once paid a visit to Wuthering Heights to meet Linton. She learnt that her father and her uncle Heathcliff were not on good terms. Edgar wished to keep his daughter in ignorance about the inmates of Wuthering Heights.

**22.2.13. Cathy and Linton:** Edgar fell ill in course of time. During his illness Heathcliff invited Cathy and arranged meetings between her and his son. He kept her as a prisoner for five days and forced her to accept her son to marry. He threatened that he would not allow her to go to see her father unless she married Linton. Edgar was almost on his death-bed. The marriage was performed. Cathy could not see her father before his death. After her father's death, Cathy was forced to return to Wuthering Heights to nurse her ailing husband. She was put to abuse through and through. In fact Heathcliff wanted his son to die

at the earliest (because he despised his wife) so that he could grab the whole property of the Lintons. He refused to call a doctor to attend to his son. Soon Linton too died.

**22.2.14. Heathcliff-the master of two estates:** The death of his enemies satisfied the vindictive mind of Heathcliff. He became the master of both Wuthering Heights and the Thrushcross Grange. He had only two dependent youth under his control-Hareton (the son of Hindley) and Cathy (the daughter of Catherine and Edgar) whom he treated as his servants. He became relaxed.

**22.2.15. Heathcliff's death:** Mr. Lockwood having recovered from illness went back to London in the spring without seeing Wuthering Heights or its people again. The next autumn, he felt a strong desire to revisit Wuthering Heights as he happened to be in the neighborhood of the estate. He found Cathy and Hareton in possession of Wuthering Heights. From Nelly he heard the story of Heathcliff's death three months ago. Heathcliff died after four days of deliberate starvation, a broken man disturbed by memories of his beautiful beloved Catherine Earnshaw. His death liberated Cathy and Hareton. Nelly came back to Wuthering Heights as a house keeper.

**22.2.16: Conclusion:** Mr. Lockwood returned from Wuthering Heights and was going back to the Grange. On the way, he happened to see the grave yard where he found three headstones set side by side. Catherine's was in the middle half hidden under vegetation, Edgar's was partly covered with moss and Heathcliff's was rather new. In the surrounding countryside a story was prevalent. People said that the spirits of Catherine and Heathcliff were wandering in the moors.

### 22.3. CHARACTERS LIST:

The following are the characters we come across in the novel:

#### ➤ People at Wuthering Heights-The Earnshaws:

- Mr. Earnshaw: Owner of Wuthering Heights, father of Catherine and Hindley, a kind gentleman, dotes on the unfortunate Heathcliff.
- Hindley Earnshaw: son of old Earnshaw, proud and jealous; hates Heathcliff from the beginning, loses father's affection; ill-treats Heathcliff
- Frances: Hindley's wife, sickly woman, dies after a son was born
- Hareton: Hindley and Frances' son, becomes the master of Wuthering Heights after Heathcliff's death
- Catherine Earnshaw: daughter of old Earnshaw, marries Edgar although she loves Heathcliff
- Heathcliff: fostered son of old Heathcliff, he is the villain-hero of the novel

- Linton: son of Heathcliff and Isabella, sickly; dies after marrying the daughter of Edgar and Catherine
  - Joseph: a faithful servant to Heathcliff
- **People at the Thrushcross Grange-The Lintons:**
- Mr. and Mrs. Linton: kind people, parents of Edgar and Isabella, die shortly after the visit of Catherine at Thrushcross Grange
  - Edgar: son of old Linton, marries Catherine Earnshaw, thus becomes a victim of Heathcliff's revenge
  - Isabella: daughter of old Linton, marries Heathcliff hastily and repents later, estranges herself from her husband and lives away in London till she dies
  - Cathy Linton: daughter of Edgar and Catherine
  - Nelly Dean: the faithful house keeper, one of the narrators of the story
- Mr. Lockwood: a tenant at the Thrushcross Grange , one of the narrators of the story

#### 22.4. COMPREHENSION CHECK:

Answer the following questions briefly in your own words:

1. Compare and contrast the estates of Wuthering Heights and the Thrushcross Grange
2. Who are the narrators of the story in the novel?
3. What is the uncanny incident that Mr. Lockwood encounters at Wuthering Heights?
4. Why did Heathcliff leave Wuthering Heights?
5. Discuss how Heathcliff took revenge on Hindley.
6. Do you think the revenge of Heathcliff is justifiable? Explain

#### 22.5. REFERENCES:

For printed reference:

1. "The Genesis of Wuthering Heights" – Mary Visick
2. "The Structure of Wuthering Heights" – CPS Sanger
3. "Emily Bronte: Wuthering Heights, in an Introduction to the English Novel" – Arnold Kettle

For further reading you may visit the following sites:

1. [www.wuthering-heights.co.uk/summary.php](http://www.wuthering-heights.co.uk/summary.php)
2. [www.sparknotes.com](http://www.sparknotes.com) › ... › [Literature Study Guides](#) › [Wuthering Heights](#)
3. [www.bookrags.com/studyguide-wutheringheights/](http://www.bookrags.com/studyguide-wutheringheights/)
4. [www.penguin.com/static/pdf/teachersguides/wuthering.pdf](http://www.penguin.com/static/pdf/teachersguides/wuthering.pdf)

## LESSON- 23

# THEME OF LOVE AND REVENGE

### OBJECTIVES:

In this lesson you are going to:

- Know about 'love and revenge' as themes of the novel
- Learn the narrative technique in the novel
- Examine 'Wuthering Heights' as a Gothic novel

### STRUCTURE OF THE LESSON:

#### **23.1. Theme of love and revenge**

- 23.1.1. Intro
- 23.1.2. Love in the Victorian novels
- 23.1.3. A different love story
- 23.1.4. Heathcliff's disappointment in love
- 23.1.5. Cuckoo imagery
- 23.1.6. Love and Revenge closely interwoven
- 23.1.7. Conclusion
- 23.1.8. Summing-up

#### **23.2. Narrative Technique in 'Wuthering Heights'**

- 23.2.1. Intro
- 23.2.2. Emily's purpose
- 23.2.3. The end is the beginning
- 23.2.4. Time scale
- 23.2.5. Mr. Lockwood as a narrator
- 23.2.6. Mr. Lockwood as a keen observer
- 23.2.7. Nelly Dean as a narrator
- 23.2.8. Contrast between Nelly and Mr. Lockwood as narrators
- 23.2.9. Summing-up

#### **23.3. "Wuthering Heights" as a Gothic novel**

- 23.3.1. Intro
- 23.3.2. Features of Gothic romance
- 23.3.3. Gothic element in 'Wuthering Heights'
- 23.3.4. Summing-up

#### **23.4. Comprehension check**

#### **23.5. Further references**

### 23.1.THEME OF LOVE AND REVENGE:

**23.1.1. Intro:** The novel “Wuthering Heights” is a story of love and revenge. It is a love story of Heathcliff and Catherine Earnshaw and also a story of revenge of Heathcliff on his enemies. The love between Heathcliff and Catherine is not ideal but is passionate. It is extraordinary in its intensity. They regard themselves as inseparable parts of each other. Time cannot vitiate or mitigate the intensity of their love.

**23.1.2. Love in the Victorian novels:** Heathcliff and Catherine love each other with equal force. In a Victorian novel, love generally leads to domestic bliss. It ends with wedding bells. But ‘Wuthering Heights’ is a different love story. Emily is not concerned with Victorian life and society but human life in general. Her attention is drawn towards certain basic facts about human life. However, the novel ends with the prospect of marriage but it is not the marriage between Heathcliff and Catherine but between a pair of comparatively minor characters.

**23.1.3. A different love story:** The heroine Catherine is not married to Heathcliff but to a different man who dies in the middle of the story. Emily’s treatment of love in her novel is different from that of other Victorian novels. The central love situation is the love of Heathcliff and Catherine. As said above, this love is unique and intense. Heathcliff’s love for his beloved is as strong after her death as it was during her life. He believes in the continuity of existence in some form even after death. Hence, Catherine, though separated from him physically her spirit haunts him until he dies. Ultimately their spirits get united though they were unable to be so during life.

**23.1.4. Heathcliff’s disappointment in love:** Catherine turns her attention to Edgar Linton much to the dismay of Heathcliff. Heathcliff grows sullen at her rejection on the ground of his being penniless. He cannot swallow it easily because this insult wounds his heart stronger than the physical torture he met at the hands of Hindley. Hence he disappears. Nobody knows what he did for three years. But he bounces back only to pay back in the same coin.

If love is intense, revenge will also be intense and extraordinary. Heathcliff’s revenge is not confined to his enemies only. It goes beyond and takes the children of his enemies also in the sweep. He is not satisfied with seeking revenge and ruining the life of Hindley but paves a way to the doom of his son also. Heathcliff regards even Edgar as his enemy because he married his beloved Catherine.

**23.1.5. Cuckoo imagery:** Nelly Dean calls the story of Heathcliff, “a cuckoo history”. We know that *the cuckoo lays its egg in the nest of another bird, and the young cuckoo eventually ejects the other young birds and absorbs the whole attention of the parent birds and takes over the nest.* In the story of Wuthering Heights, Heathcliff resembles a cuckoo that enters the Earnshaw family and becomes an usurper. We are given no picture of the Earnshaw family before Heathcliff arrives at Wuthering Heights. Except old Earnshaw none treats him with love in the beginning. Nelly leaves him on the landing to sleep, Catherine spits at him. At this stage the life of the cuckoo begins. Heathcliff’s revenge is also a cuckoo’s action. He disrupts the two households, appropriates their heritages, and lays claim to both heirs and properties.

Towards the end the usurped rights are restored to the Earnshaws (young Hareton) and the Lintons (young Cathy) through a marriage (that too after the death of the cuckoo)

**23.1.6. Love and Revenge-closely interwoven:** The themes of love and revenge develop side by side in this novel. Heathcliff and Catherine are inseparable companions in their childhood. They are found moving and working together. After her father's death, Catherine becomes a neglected child. Her brother Hindley is wholly engrossed in the love of his wife. He finds no time to spare for his sister. Hence she is driven to the company of Heathcliff. Thus an unusually intense feeling of love is generated between them.

Hindley's ill treatment of Heathcliff causes dismay to Catherine. Hindley puts Heathcliff to perform menial jobs and even thrashes him for no reason. Unable to bear the inhuman cruelties, Heathcliff swears to wreak vengeance on Hindley. However on finding Catherine engaged to Edgar, Heathcliff leaves Wuthering Heights. His return after three years is significant. He bounces back with all required qualities (those Catherine expects him to possess)-wealth, appearance and manners of a gentleman 'his manner is even dignified'.

Heathcliff schemes for the degeneration of Hindley. By then Hindley's wife is dead and he has taken to drink and gambling. Heathcliff exploits Hindley's circumstances to avenge himself on him. He lends Hindley money to continue his disastrous habits. Finally he takes possession of Hindley's property and makes him a helpless dependent at his mercy. Heathcliff also ruins the life of Hareton (Hindley's son) by discontinuing his studies and by making him a brute fit only to serve as a vulgar labor.

Heathcliff hates Edgar and also considers him as an enemy because the latter married Catherine. But conditions do not let him harm Edgar directly. Finding Isabella's passionate love for him, Heathcliff encourages her to elope with him. The infatuation of Isabella does not last long. She is disappointed with Heathcliff and leaves for London for good. Heathcliff could find his son Linton after twelve years. The passage of time does not have any change in Heathcliff's attitude towards his enemies. He forces a marriage between his sickly son and young Cathy (daughter of Edgar) much against her father's wish. Heathcliff succeeds in his effort which causes the ailing Hindley to die. Thus Heathcliff gets every person and every situation into his control.

**23.1.7. Conclusion:** Heathcliff is not revengeful and destructive by nature. He is a parentless and homeless destitute. He is capable of intense love. However his frustration in love placed him in a position of humiliation. It made him into a cruel, heartless and revengeful brute and a demon. Want of love and sympathy made him a destructive force. However Emily elevates the story to a higher level. Though the love of Heathcliff and Catherine cannot be materialized in life, they get united after death and find a spiritual union.

**23.1.8. Summing-up:** We find love and revenge interwoven deftly by which the novelist arrests our interest and makes us read the narration till the end.

## 23.2. Narrative Technique in “Wuthering Heights”

**23.2.1. Intro-Eye witness narration:** Emily Bronte’s only novel ‘Wuthering Heights’ is complex because of the narrative technique she employed. In the novel we find two narrators: Mr. Lockwood and Nelly Dean. Emily wants her ‘Wuthering Heights’ presented in the form of eyewitness narrations by two people (an outsider and a trust worthy housekeeper) who have some sort of significance in the novel. Each narrator stands an eye witness to the action that has taken place in his/her presence. This intricate technique helps to maintain a continuous narrative even though there is a huge time-shift in the novel.

In this novel there are about thirty four chapters to cover the entire action. Mr. Lockwood’s narrative begins the story of the novel. In fact he recounts this story in diary form several years after the dramatic events take place. Emily employs a flash back technique. In his narration Mr. Lockwood gives us glimpses of the setting, atmosphere, mystery and passion (chapter one to four). At the Thrushcross Grange Mr. Lockwood questions people about Wuthering Heights. Then he becomes a listener to Nelly’s story. Again he comes back at the end to finish off the action. It is not the narrator’s voice but the voice of Mr. Lockwood or Nelly that is found in this novel. Their story is interspersed with other people’s stories (narration) as well: We read Catherine’s diary; Isabella tells of her experiences with Heathcliff in a long letter.

**23.2.2. Emily’s Purpose:** At the beginning Emily would have thought of finding a suitable narrative to introduce the readers to the household of the Heights or the Grange. She wants her readers to understand characters and the ambience of the action directly. The purpose of Bronte’s narrative is to make her readers judge its events from within. Mr. Lockwood is shown as the normal outsider who introduces the readers to the realities of this hostile and bewildering environment. The narrative is not ‘omniscient narrative’ and so the author cannot use her own voice. We, like Mr. Lockwood, find ourselves as the direct recipients of Nelly’s narrative. Immediately we plunge into the world of Wuthering Heights.

Mr. Lockwood’s and Nelly’s narratives provide the necessary objectivity and the smaller more condensed narratives like Catherine’s diary give us direct glimpses into the imaginary lives of the main protagonists. These narratives together form the core of the story and are joined in subtle ways with each other. The background, the setting, the climate, the houses and the animals all take on a life of their own, images of past and present are flashed together.

**23.2.3. The End is its Beginning:** *Another important aspect of this narrative is that the novel begins at a point where the action is almost completed.* The questions which Mr. Lockwood asks Nelly Dean require a full circumstantial narrative. The kind of curiosity showed by Mr. Lockwood demands a complete picture of the past. The dramatic impact of the incidents experienced by Mr. Lockwood forces him to know about the past of the story. Past and present interact on one another forming a single close knit drama .

**23.2.4. Time scale:** The year 1801 is the story’s starting and finishing point up to the time of Mr. Lockwood’s arrival at Wuthering Heights, as is September 1802 the start and finish of the

events dealt with in the final chapters. Nelly's story is studded with dates which allow us to work out the precise dates of major events, the ages of the characters and often even the day of the week when an event occurs.

As the novel contains a history of two families whose fates are intertwined over three generations, there should be an exact timescale adhered to. The lives of Catherine and Heathcliff provide the time frame for the novel. The other events; the births, lives and deaths of other characters are related to us in conjunction with developments in the lives of the two main characters.

**23.2.5. Mr. Lockwood as a Narrator:** Mr. Lockwood is the outsider who does not know that the world is bewildering and hostile. He is a city gentleman who has stumbled upon a primitive uncivilized world which he doesn't know at all. But it fascinates him. The story begins in September 1801, when Mr. Lockwood is introduced to us as a tenant of Thrushcross Grange which is rented for a year. After his initial meetings with his landlord, Mr. Heathcliff, he is laid up for two months.

During this time of recovery, Mr. Lockwood questions Nelly about Wuthering Heights. Nelly elaborates to him upon the strange stormy world of Wuthering Heights and the pleasant calm world of the Thrushcross Grange. By January 1802, Mr. Lockwood has recovered and returns to the Heights to tell Heathcliff of his intention to return to London for six months. Then he comes back in September 1802, when he hears the conclusion of Nelly's narrative and the final events of the novel take place.

**23.2.6. Mr. Lockwood as a keen observer:** Throughout the narration we find Mr. Lockwood as an intelligent and perceptive story teller with his minute observations. When Mr. Lockwood first visits Wuthering Heights, he notices the chained gate and he says "Both doors and lattices were open" at the end of the novel. Changes in character are also hinted at by Mr. Lockwood. For example young Cathy is described as "the little witch", and towards the end he reports that she has "a voice as sweet as a silver bell". Hareton is described as a boor and a clown who finally is found as "a young man respectably dressed" with "handsome features". Hence Mr. Lockwood though is supposed to play the role of a detached outsider, shows himself as a keen observer.

**23.2.7. Nelly Dean as a Narrator:** Nelly Dean's narrative is more elaborate and detailed. She seems to have an extraordinary capacity of remembering events of the remote past. She describes those past events as if she had witnessed them an hour ago. For her every past moment is clear and fresh. Nelly's narrative has no water-tight compartments such as the past and the present. They are one and the same for her. Much of Nelly's narrative is unfolded in the words of the actual characters. Nelly's cock-sureness in relating her narrative seems to arise out of an astonishing clear memory. Nelly is the eye witness to most of the action. She is deeply engaged in it. The intimate affairs of the Grange and the Heights have made up her whole memory. As a professional housekeeper she is not supposed to take interest in the events. But since she has attached herself to the home, taking the inmates of it as an integral part of her life, she narrates the story with emotion and passion. Her description is subjective unlike Mr. Lockwood's. She has known the Earnshaws and the Lintons pretty well and

listened to much of their dialogue. As a narrator reporting the past from the present, she has the power of hindsight.

**23.2.8. Contrast between Nelly and Mr. Lockwood as narrators:** In fact this marks the contrast between Nelly and Lockwood as narrators. Nelly is involved in the action. She plays a strong role in the love triangle between Heathcliff, Catherine and Edgar. She takes Edgar's side and also Heathcliff's side. She arranges the last meeting between Heathcliff and Catherine and leaves the window open for him. She adopts a similar stand in the case of Cathy and Linton. There is a meddling nature in her character which makes her inconsistent and hypocritical. Yet we have to take her as a vigorous, lively narrator with a formidable memory. As a narrator, Nelly's style differs from that of Lockwood. Much of her narrative consists of verbatim dialogue and as such is the language of the characters in *Wuthering Heights*. When she herself is speaking as a narrator, her language is lively, colloquial and imaginative. She refers to Heathcliff's life "*It's a cuckoo's, sir - I know all about it, except where he was born, and who his parents were, and how he got his money at first*". The phrase-tag "at first" suggests that Nelly knows how he got his money later. Nelly is shown as a conventional, religious and sentimental woman. The inclusion of so much dialogue provides a direct communication between the reader and the characters.

**23.3.9. Summing-up:** You see that both Nelly and Lockwood act as facilitators providing a mechanism through which the reader can enter a world of *Wuthering Heights* and understand the complexity of action.

### 23.3. "Wuthering Heights" as a Gothic Novel:

**23.3.1. Intro:** The English Gothic novel marks its beginning with Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1765). Later on this genre became recognizable and adoptable. To most modern readers, however, *The Castle of Otranto* is dull reading; except for the villain Manfred and use of the supernatural manifestations. However for the superficial readers, the novel is electrifyingly original and thrillingly suspenseful. The genre takes its name from *Otranto's* medieval—or Gothic—setting; early Gothic novelists tended to set their novels in remote times like the Medieval Ages (refer to Gothic fiction in lesson 22).

**23.3.2. Features of a Gothic romance:** The following are considered as the features of a Gothic romance:

- ✓ a castle normally ruined with dark corridors and winding stairs, haunted or not (the castle is also a main character) or ruined buildings which appear sinister and melancholic;
- ✓ dungeons, underground passages or dreadful basements and attics,
- ✓ shadows, beams of moonlight apparently in dark places, a flickering candle as the source of light failing or sudden electric failure
- ✓ vast landscapes, rugged mountains, thick forests and extreme weather,
- ✓ omens and ancestral curses,
- ✓ magic, supernatural manifestations, or the suggestion of the supernatural,
- ✓ a lusty anti-hero (villain), a curious heroine with a tendency to faint;

- ✓ a hero lives in dark whose true identity is revealed at the end;
- ✓ terrifying events or the threat of such happenings.

The Gothic creates feelings of gloom, mystery, and suspense and tends to the sensational, like incest, diabolism, necrophilia, and unforeseen terrors. It crosses time boundaries, daylight and the dark, life and death, consciousness and unconsciousness. There may be transgression of social code of conduct, taboos, solitary imprisonment and emotional collapse. Most of us immediately recognize the Gothic when we encounter it in novels, poetry, plays, movies, and TV series. For some of us, Gothic may be an enjoyable dread or horror.

Now elements of the Gothic have crept into mainstream writing. They are found in Sir Walter Scott's novels, Charlotte Brontë's "*Jane Eyre*", and Emily Brontë's "*Wuthering Heights*" and in poetry like Samuel Coleridge's "*Christabel*," and John Keats's "*The Eve of St. Agnes*." This tendency is noticeable in the works of a host of modern American and British writers.

**23.3.3. Gothic element in "Wuthering Heights":** In a true Gothic fashion, boundaries are trespassed; specifically love crossing the boundary between life and death and Heathcliff's transgression of social class and family ties. Brontë portrays the tyrannies of the patriarchal family (of Heathcliff on Linton and Hareton and young Cathy). Brontë has incorporated the Gothic tradition of imprisonment (young Cathy's by Heathcliff) and escape (Isabella's), the persecuted heroine (young Cathy again), is wooed by a dangerous (Heathcliff) and a good suitor (Edgar). There is also a mysterious foundling (Heathcliff) who loves, gets disappointed in love and finally seeks revenge.

The weather-struck Wuthering Heights is the traditional castle. Like the conventional Gothic hero-villain, Heathcliff is a mysterious figure who destroys the beautiful woman he pursues and who usurps inheritances. There is the indirect suggestion of necrophilia in Heathcliff's viewings of Catherine's corpse and his plans to be buried next to her. There is also a hint of incest in the relation of Catherine and Heathcliff as the latter was christened and reared by old Earnshaw as his own son (hint of Heathcliff's being Catherine's illegitimate half-brother).

In Gothic fiction violence is a core element. It can be physical or psychological or both combined together. There is plenty of such violence in "Wuthering Heights". Most of the violence is psychological. Heathcliff wreaks vengeance by striking his enemies psychologically. Besides cruelty, there is also a mysterious atmosphere generally created by the supernatural and ghosts. Mr. Lockwood's dream and the appearance of Catherine's ghost as a child to Mr. Lockwood with the touch of an icy hand strike bells of horror on his mind. The subsequent ravings of Heathcliff are a part of that horror. The report of people about the wanderings of the spirits of Catherine and Heathcliff on the moors adds more mystery and horror to the novel.

The vast moors, the snow fall, the snarling pack of dogs, mysterious appearance of Heathcliff and the rugged demeanor of Hareton all add to the Gothic nature of the novel. Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* has recreated the wild, isolated, somber Yorkshire moors as an imaginary world.

**23.3.4. Summing-up:** We can consider Emily's "Wuthering Heights" as a Gothic novel. You are also supplied with some web links hereunder to use for further studies.

#### **23.4. COMPREHENSION CHECK:**

Answer the following questions briefly in your own words:

1. How did Emily bring into her story 'the cuckoo image'?
2. How did Heathcliff take revenge on Hindley?
3. Do you agree that Heathcliff deserves the name 'usurper'? Justify your answer
4. What type of narrative did Emily employ for her novel?
5. What is the main difference between the story telling of Mr. Lockwood and Nelly?
6. What is the striking feature of a Gothic novel?

#### **23.5. FURTHER REFERENCES:**

You may read the following references in print form:

1. "A Wuthering Heights Handbook" – R. Lettis and WE Morris
2. "The Art of Emily Bronte" – Anne Smith
3. "Twentieth Century Interpretations of Wuthering Heights" – Thomas A. Volger (Ed)

You may browse the following web links for reference:

1. [www.enotes.com/.../love-revenge-two-main-themes-wuthering-heights-](http://www.enotes.com/.../love-revenge-two-main-themes-wuthering-heights-)
2. [www.megaessays.com/viewpaper/42218.html](http://www.megaessays.com/viewpaper/42218.html)
3. [www.cliffsnotes.com](http://www.cliffsnotes.com) > [Literature Notes](#) > [Wuthering Heights](#)
4. [www.studymode.com/.../Narrative-Technique-Of-Wuthering-Heights-](http://www.studymode.com/.../Narrative-Technique-Of-Wuthering-Heights-)
5. [www.glyph.wikispaces.com/Wuthering+Heights+as+Gothic+Fiction](http://www.glyph.wikispaces.com/Wuthering+Heights+as+Gothic+Fiction)
6. [www.teacherweb.com/.../Romanticism-of-Wuthering-Heights-and-the-Gothic-](http://www.teacherweb.com/.../Romanticism-of-Wuthering-Heights-and-the-Gothic-)