

Of Studies – Francis Bacon

The Essayist : Sir Francis Bacon was an English statesman and philosopher who believed in the power of knowledge. Bacon wrote a series of essays in the late 1500s to the early 1600s. One of those essays was called "Of Studies." The essay discusses the benefits of studying. Its purpose is to persuade us to study as well as to instruct us on how to study if one is to make the best of what one reads.

The Purpose of Education : In this essay Bacon states his depiction of education and earning. He articulated that, "studies serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability." Bacon felt that some people gain knowledge for pure delight. People, who acquire knowledge for delight, do so because they enjoy it. For instance, those who play sports practice and learn about their sport because they want to, not because they have to. There are, however, some people who gain knowledge for mere ornament. These people only want to improve themselves in the eyes of others. These are the people who try to better themselves by bragging about their achievements and accomplishments in conversation with others.

Gaining knowledge: There are those who gain knowledge for ability. They want to show that they are able to do something. They learn for themselves in their free time. Ability is widely used in the area of business, those who are well educated rather than those who are not better run a company. Bacon strives to persuade us to study, and tells us how to study if we are to make the best of what we read. He does this by using many rhetorical devices and substantiations to prove his arguments. Bacon attempts to prove to us that "studies serve for delight, for ornament and for discourse" by showing us how education is used and can be used in our lives.

The need of Studies: Education is meant to be preparation for the real world. Bacon encourages studies, he warns that 1) too much studying leads to laziness; 2) if one uses one's knowledge too often in conversation with others, then one is showing off; and 3) to be guided solely by one's studies one becomes a scholar rather than a practical man. According to Bacon, dishonest men condemn education; stupid men admire education; but wise men use education as their real world experience dictates.

Effects of reading: Bacon returns to addressing the effects of reading, conversation, and writing: reading creates a well-rounded man; conversation makes a man think quickly; and writing, by which Bacon usually means argument essay writing, makes a man capable of thinking with logic and reason. History, Bacon argues, makes men wise; poetry, clever; mathematics, intellectually sharp; logic and rhetoric, skilled in argument.

Of Truth - Francis Bacon

The Essayist : Sir Francis Bacon was an English statesman and philosopher who believed in the power of knowledge. Bacon wrote a series of essays in the late 1500s to the early 1600s. One of those essays was called "Of Truth." The essay is Bacon's masterpiece that shows his keen observation of human beings with special regard to truth.

Definition of Truth: In the beginning of the essay, Bacon rightly observes that generally people do not care for truth as Pilate, the governor of the Roman Empire, while conducting the trial of Jesus Christ, cares little for truth. Advancing his essay, Bacon explores the reasons why the people do not like truth. First, truth is acquired through hard work and man is ever reluctant to work hard. Secondly, truth curtails man's freedom. More than that the real reason of man's disliking to truth is that man is attached to lies.

Men undergo various difficulties to learn the truth but once he does so it imposes a restriction on his thought and he wants to revert to lies. Bacon says that the love is a corrupt yet natural tendency in human beings. Like the Greek philosopher Lucian, Bacon wonders what makes a man love lies for it does not give delight as it does in poetry or does not allow profit as in business.

Greatness : Truth is like daylight but it throws only as much light on the fallacies of the world as a candle light. Truth is like a pearl which shows best in daylight but it cannot be like a diamond or carbuncle that can shine in the dark. That means truth is unable to show itself in the face of a lie just as a pearl cannot be seen in the dark. A mixture of lie with truth adds pleasure. Here Bacon speaks about imagination

Summing up : The essay is not ornamental as was the practice of the Elizabethan prose writers. Bacon is simple, natural and straightforward in his essay. There is a moderate use of Latinism in the essay. There is a peculiar feature of Bacon i.e. aphorism. We find many short, crispy, memorable and witty sayings in this essay.

Dream Children – A Reverie – Charles Lamb

Introduction : Written about a dream world, the essay Dream Children by Charles Lamb belongs to his famous work *Essays of Elia* (1823) published in London magazines. Referring to himself by the pseudonym Elia, Lamb has penned down the essays as personal accounts of his life devoid of any didactic or moral lessons. Enriched with humour, pathos and regret for the time long gone, Lamb's essays leave an everlasting impression on the minds and hearts of the readers.

The children of Lamb: Charles Lamb begins his essay Dream Children by describing to his young children Alice and John the tales of his childhood when he used to live with his great-grandmother, Mrs Field.

Mrs. Field: Lamb tells the children that Grandmother Field had been given the charge of the house since the owner liked to live in a more fashionable mansion. He tells that she was religious and very good lady, and was respected by everyone. She was such 'a good and religious woman' that huge number of people attended her funeral.

She also used to be considered the best dancer till a disease called cancer forced her to stoop. However, her spirits still remained upright. Lamb mentions that she slept 'in a lone chamber of the great lone house' on her own despite that the ghosts of two infants glided up and down the stairs near which she slept..

Uncle John L--- : Lamb tells that the children's uncle John L—— was liked particularly by grandmother Field from amongst all her grandchildren. He was more handsome and spirited than the rest. He was so spirited that when the rest would spend time at the mansion, he would ride a horse for long distance and would even join hunters. In a nostalgic tone, Lamb narrates to the children the humorous details of his time spent in his great grandmother's house; the love between the two brothers, Charles and John, their frequent wanderings and mischief in the grand house and their memories of the Orchid trees and the fish pond.

The death : The tone of the essay shifts from humorous to tragic when Lamb describes the death of his beloved brother and great-grandmother whom he loses at an early age of his life. Lamb's unfulfilled longings and desires are also evident in his work when he narrates to the children the events and incidents from his past life.

Ending : Finally, Charles Lamb comes to reality. The children disappear as they are only in dream. In the essay, the relationships of the narrator with the grandmother and his brother have been described very clearly. This description has served to clarify his characteristic features; develop the theme of family relationships as well as the theme of loss; and, to make the essay dramatic. This is the best example of a Personal essay.

A Dissertation Upon Roast Pig – Charles Lamb

Introduction : Written about a dream world, the essay Dream Children by Charles Lamb belongs to his famous work *Essays of Elia* (1823) published in London magazines. Referring to himself by the pseudonym Elia, Lamb has penned down the essays as personal accounts of his life devoid of any didactic or moral lessons. This is one of humorous essays of Lamb.

The story of Bo-bo: The narrator opens the essay by asserting that for a long period of early human history, people did not cook their meat but ate it raw. He claims that this was hinted at in the writings of Confucius, who mentioned an era known as the "cook's holiday," implying that the Chinese did not cook animals prior to his writings. In the same book, there is a story about Bo-bo and Ho-ti.

The stupid Bo-bo : Bo-bo was one day playing with fire, as he was wont to do, and accidentally burned down his family's cottage along with the nine pigs that were trapped in the blaze. While trying to devise an explanation for what happened, Bo-bo was tempted by the smell of the burnt pigs and went to taste them. He found these burnt pigs delicious and could not stop eating them. Ho-ti was not just upset with Bo-bo for burning down the cottage, but for being enough of a fool to eat the pigs. Bo-bo eventually convinced his father to try the pig, and the father loved it too, but they agreed to keep the burnt pigs a secret. Yet, more and more frequently, a cottage fire could be seen at Ho-ti's property, at all hours of the day and night.

The secret: When their secret was found out, Ho-ti and Bo-bo were placed on trial in their town. During this trial, the jurors asked to try the burnt pig in question, and finding it delicious, they decided to let the father and son off. The judge was outraged, but a few days later there was one of those mysterious fires at his house too. Soon enough, these fires were occurring all around town, and the burnt pig became a cherished food.

Praising the roasted pig : Done with this history, the narrator begins singing the praises of roast pig, speaking of the crackling skin and succulent fat. He draws a humorous link between the swine—so often considered a gluttonous, base animal—and the type of man who enjoys eating that swine.

Enjoyment: The narrator admits to enjoying all of the fine meats available, from strange fowl to oysters, and sharing them with friends. He then recalls how, as a child, having nothing to offer a beggar on the street, he brought that beggar a plum cake his auntie had baked.

Conclusion: The essay concludes with an anecdote about how ancient people used to sacrifice pigs by whipping them, raising a moral conundrum about enjoying the meat of that animal. But the narrator seems indifferent to the conundrum, and suggests a tasty sauce made of shallots to eat the pig with.

On Good Resolutions Robert Lynd

Introduction : Robert Lynd is one of the greatest of the essayists in English literature. His essays are called "familiar essay", because they are filled with his personal anecdotes, broad sympathies, gentle humour, elegant style and gifted fluency. His essay *On Good Resolutions* also reflects these qualities.

New Year Resolutions: Every New Year people take a lot of good resolutions and seldom put them into practice. If a man wants to reform his life with good resolutions, his neighbours and friends may discourage him by saying that "the road to Hell is paved with good intentions".

Types of Resolutions: Robert Lynd lists three kinds of resolutions. They are fairly easy, difficult and most difficult. Most people take the most difficult resolutions which Lynd calls the Himalayan resolutions such as getting up early in the morning to do exercises or winning the trophy for the school football team. These good resolutions are like day dreams and cannot be fulfilled. Common man cannot change his habit of getting up late.

Morality: Robert Lynd says that good resolutions are very delightful form of morality and we must encourage people to take more and more good resolutions because this world is lack of moral qualities. Good resolutions are golden anticipations of the day's work, fresh and untarnished and full of song.

Silly Resolutions: Some people take resolutions which are so silly and very easy to put into practice in one's life. These resolutions are contemptible and to be rejected. For example going to bed before

midnight, getting up before noon, giving up tobacco etc. are some of the good resolutions. But even these resolutions are put into practice only from tomorrow or next New Year or next month. No need to postpone them to the next New Year day. Lynd says that good resolutions are the intelligent anticipation of events always postponed. They are the April of virtue with no September following.

Resolutions to be maintained: First time practicing any resolution, it gives people thrill and joy because of its novelty. For example if one decides to get up early morning, the first day he will get great joy and thrill because of the freshness and silent beauty of the morning. But if it becomes a rule every day, only the habit is left. In this context, Lynd quotes the story of the prodigal son in the Bible and says that when the prodigal son came back home a grand reception was given to him by his father and even killed a fatted calf. But the following day he was not given such grand dinner. Similarly if we do any good thing, for the first day or two we will get thrill and joy and after that it becomes a dull habit.

Impossible Resolutions: Some other resolutions cannot be put into practice even for a day. For example learning grammar of a new language or doing exercise with the help of mechanical apparatus. Robert Lynd says that human being is a slave of old habits and he needs a mighty will on the heroic scale to change his old habits. It means he must sacrifice or throw away some of his old habits and pleasures. He wants to be reformed and perfect in his character.

Conclusion: According to Robert Lynd, the characteristics of good resolutions should be related to man's strong belief. This is why common man always takes good resolutions, but not able to complete it. Lack of will power is the cause of his failure. Again next New Year he will take a number of good resolutions and forgets them soon. Lynd concludes the essay by saying that people should have strong willpower to practice the Resolutions.

On Doing Nothing- J.B. Priestley

Introduction: *On Doing Nothing* is an essay by J.B. Priestley debating over the idea of work and relaxation. He talks of the idea of unwinding oneself and the benefits people would enjoy from doing nothing. He, thus, stresses on the idea of doing nothing and spending time in leisurely activities which is as necessary and beneficial to human life as work. The life of man is fraught with work and people are involved in that rat race directly or indirectly. Such a life is necessary and can also make us prosperous. But it isn't the be all and the end all of all matters. There, thus exists a world outside work-the world of leisurely activities and past times. People have to spend sometimes consciously in such matters. Nature is beautiful and it, not only soothes the mind, but also a teacher and a nourisher. Nature only regains our mental health and achieves a position where we can work better and more efficiently.

Value of leisure : However, the irony is that not many people realize this value. They spend most of their lives at break-neck speed and pass away without even looking at nature. The author does not conform to such an idea of life. However, the author does not instruct us against work. Work is important and necessary and absolute, no work would only mean laziness couple with aimlessness. He only wants us to blend our work with the perfect mixture of rest and pastimes. Balancing work and leisure helps people to perform better. Thus, people should make conscious efforts to enjoy nature and relax. It is only then, that, their lives become a complete circle.

Union with Nature: This is the reason why he enjoys his outing with his artist friend at Yorkshire Falls. Such communion with nature helps him to retain his sanity intact. On the other hand, he denounces the likes of Mr. Gordon Selfridge (British merchant) who curse the waste of time. Such people work only for profit motives and in reality miss out a considerable portion of life. The tragedy, however, is that many people don't even realize the value of past times.

The importance of the past (history) : This makes the author suggest instances in the history, who would uphold the author's notion of life and its' value. Thus, William Wordsworth would only be happy to vouch for such a kind of life. Priestley goes on to say that a devil is usually busiest being

and majority of the world's fuss is created by overwork and impatience. A break from the usual, monotonous and humdrum affairs of life only helps people to avoid such irritation.

Conclusion : In short, the author tries to hold before the readers a way of life and its' intrinsic value. There is more to life than just working ceaselessly. *Work and leisure*, if blended properly not only helps us to go a long way, but also in a better and more fruitful way.

SELECTED SNOBBERIES- ALDOUS HUXLEY

Introduction: Aldous Leonard Huxley (1894–1963) was an English writer, novelist, philosopher. He was the author of nearly fifty books. Huxley was best known for his novels, especially *Brave New World*, set in a dystopian future. Huxley tells about three uses of essays. The first is the personal and auto-biographical. The second is the objective, the factual. The third is the abstract-universal

The snobbish men: All men are snobs about something. For everything in their life, they feel they are superiors. But, they cannot feel proud of any of their diseases. For example, that there are any leprosy-snobs. Yet, some rich people are boasting about their diseases too. Being a sick person makes the rich people every much important. It is a source of snobbish self-importance. Many young people whom Huxley met had tuberculosis. But they behaved like Keats or Marie Bashkirtseff. They were consumption -snobs, who thought that it would be romantic to fade away in the flower of youth. Their final days would be pathetic.

Disease –snobs: In the case of those commoner disease-snobs, whose claim is that they suffer from one of the diseases of the rich to create sympathy. Some people who don't have any work always go for doctor- shopping, from an old doctor to fashionable doctor, in search of cures from problematical (imaginary) diseases. Disease-snobbery is only one out of a great multitude of snobberies.

Booze-snobbery: There are changes in boasting off things since the ancient times. What were good snobberies a hundred years ago is now out of fashion. From America, English people have learnt the booze-snobbery (alcohol drinking). The bad influences of this snobbery are rapidly spreading all over the world. Even in France, known for delicious wine, who never had booze party now follow American booze-snobbery known as cocktail party, especially among the rich people. Booze-snobbery has now made it socially permissible. Even women seem to be drunk in private parties.

Modernity-snobbery: Many people want to boast off about their love for modernity. The reasons for this are simple that many wish to buy the latest things, throwing off the old ones. It adds money to the producer. People try to substitute motor-car, boot, and suit of clothes. The modernity-snob is this industrialist's best friend. The newspapers do their best in advertising the new arrivals. Advertisement also gets money for developing modernity-snobbery.

Art- snobs: Most of us are also art-snobs. There are two varieties of art-snobbery- the platonic and the unplatonic. Platonic art-snobs merely 'take an interest' in art. Unplatonic art-snobs go further and actually buy art. Platonic art snobbery is a branch of culture- snobbery. Unplatonic art snobbery is a hybrid or mule (donkey like). It is possession snobbery. It is also a collection of wealth symbols. For an art collection can represent money more effectively than a whole fleet of motor-cars.

The effect of snobbery: Most art-snobs collect only the works of the dead. But some art-snobs are also modernity-snobs. The value of snobbery in general, is dangerous to society. A society with plenty of snobberies is like a dog with plenty of fleas. The society -snob must be perpetually lion-hunting.

Buddhist view: The Buddhists considered every desire in this world of illusion as bad. In that case, all snobberies are bad only. If the snobberies do something good, then it is better.

For example, most professional intellectuals will approve of culture-snobbery, as it only appreciates art. But, a manufacturer of motor cars, on the other hand, will rank the snobbery of possessions above culture-snobbery. He will do his best to attract people to buy his car.

Conclusion: To be an essayist, a writer must have the gift of style and this Huxley undoubtedly had in an abundant measure too. Huxley had a vast knowledge also, which was gained from much travel, immense reading, and constant meeting with intelligent people. His essays are relevant to the situation of any times.

Shooting an Elephant – George Orwell

Introduction : *Shooting an Elephant* (1936) by George Orwell is a narrative essay about Orwell's time as a police officer for the British Raj in colonial Burma. George Orwell works as the sub-divisional police officer of a town in the British colony of Burma. Because he is a military occupier, he is hated by much of the village. Though the Burmese never stage a full revolt, they express their hatred by being unkind to Orwell at every opportunity.

Orwell as an Imperialist: This situation provokes two conflicting responses in Orwell: on the one hand, his role makes him despise the British Empire's systematic mistreatment of its subjects. On the other hand, however, he dislikes the locals because of how they torment him. Orwell is caught between considering the British Raj an "unbreakable tyranny" and believing that killing a troublesome villager would be "the greatest joy in the world."

The event: The narrative centers around the event of a day when all of these conflicted emotions manifest themselves and Orwell faces them and understands them. One day, an incident takes place that shows Orwell "the real nature of imperialism." A domesticated elephant has escaped from its chains and gone wild, threatening villagers and property. The only person capable of controlling the elephant—its "mahout"—went looking for the elephant in the wrong direction, and is now twelve hours away. Orwell goes to the neighborhood where the elephant was last spotted. The neighborhood's inhabitants give such conflicting reports that Orwell nearly concludes that the whole story was a hoax. Suddenly, he hears uproar nearby and rounds a corner to find a "coolie"—a laborer—lying dead in the mud, crushed and skinned alive by the rogue elephant. Orwell orders a subordinate to bring him a gun strong enough to shoot an elephant.

The decision of shooting : Orwell's subordinate returns with the gun and locals reveal that the elephant is in a nearby field. Orwell walks to the field, and a large group from the neighborhood follows him. The townspeople have seen the gun and are excited to see the elephant shot. Orwell feels uncomfortable—he had not planned to shoot the elephant.

Orwell's hesitation: The group comes upon the elephant in the field, eating grass happily. Seeing the peaceful creature makes Orwell realize that he should not shoot it—besides, shooting a full-grown elephant is like destroying expensive infrastructure. After coming to this conclusion, Orwell looks at the assembled crowd—now numbering in the thousands—and realizes that they expect him to shoot the elephant, as if part of a theatrical performance. The colonizers are "puppets," bound to fulfill their subjects' expectations. Orwell has to shoot the elephant, or else he will be laughed at by the villagers—an outcome he finds intolerable.

The firing at the elephant: The best course of action, Orwell decides, would be to approach the elephant and see how it responds, but to do this would be dangerous and might set Orwell up to be humiliated in front of the villagers. In order to avoid this unacceptable embarrassment, Orwell must kill the beast. He aims the gun where he thinks the elephant's brain is. Orwell fires, and the crowd cheers up in excitement. The elephant sinks to its knees and begins to die. Orwell fires again, and the elephant's appearance worsens, but it does not collapse. After a third shot, the elephant trumpets and falls, rattling the ground where it lands.

Orwell feels sorry: The fallen elephant continues to breathe. Orwell fires more, but the bullets have no effect. The elephant is obviously in agony. Orwell is distraught to see the elephant "powerless to

move and yet powerless to die.” and he uses a smaller rifle to fire more bullets into its throat. When this does nothing, Orwell leaves the scene, unable to watch the beast suffer. He later hears that it took the elephant half an hour to die. Villagers strip the meat off of its bones shortly thereafter.

Conclusion: Orwell’s choice to kill the elephant was controversial. The elephant’s owner was angry, but, as an Indian, had no legal claim. Older British agreed with Orwell’s choice, but younger colonists thought it was inappropriate to kill an elephant just because it killed a coolie, since they think elephants are more valuable than coolies. Orwell notes that he is lucky the elephant killed a man, because it gave his own actions legal justification. Finally, Orwell wonders if any of his comrades understood that he killed the elephant “solely to avoid looking a fool.”

Spectator’s Club – Richard Steele

The Periodical Essays: The Spectator (1711-1712 and 1714) was a weekly magazine written by Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, which followed an earlier weekly magazine, also written by Addison and Steele, called The Tatler. Both the periodicals were the most popular and influential literary periodicals in England in the eighteenth century..

Fictional Characters: Steele created the Spectator Club and presented the character of Sir Roger De Coverly, a fifty-six-year-old bachelor and country gentleman, as its central spokesman. Other members of this fictional group included a merchant, Sir Andrew Freeport, a lawyer, a soldier, a clergyman, and a socialite, Will Honeycomb, who contributed gossip and interesting examples of social behavior to Mr. Spectator.

The members of the club: The first number of The Spectator (essay) begins with Addison’s general introduction of Mr. Spectator to his readers.

Character of Sir Roger De Coverley : Though he is fifty-six years old, he is a bachelor because he was disappointed in love in his youth. In his youth, he fell in love with a perverse widow. Instead of responding to his love, he was humiliated and frustrated by the widow. Before this tragic affair, Sir Roger was a ‘fine gentleman’. But after being disappointed in love he stopped leading a normal life. After this tragic affair, he seriously grieved over his frustration for a year and half. He at last controlled himself. But since his miss-fortunate love affair he had been quite different. He never took care of his dress. Now he refused to dress like the gentleman of the day or according to the latest fashion after his disappointment in love. It is also reported that after being disappointment in love, Sir Roger was sexually involved with beggar and gypsy women; but his friends thought that it was nothing but friendly joke. Thus, Sir Roger became a changed man after his disappointment in love, after being rejected by the perverse widow; he began to wear dress in and out of fashion. Here is a humorous dig at the rapidity with which sartorial fashions change.