

# ENGLISH

**Soban Singh Jeena University, Almora, Uttarakhand**

## **Introduction to English Prose**

**Course Code-UGENG-CC101**

Year-I

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Paper-I

Unit-IV



### **Content Writer:**

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**Course Introduction:**

In this Unit, we are going to study 19<sup>th</sup> century prose pieces by T. B. Macaulay, Charles Lamb, John Henry Newman, and William Hazlitt. We will read one essay by each of the essayist: T. B. Macaulay's "Oliver Goldsmith", Charles Lamb's "Poor Relations", John Henry Newman's "Literature", and William Hazlitt's "The Fight". Macaulay's essay is a biographical essay, sketching the life of Goldsmith, his plight, his struggles, and his works. Lamb's essay is full of pathos and humour. Newman's essay is didactic and discursive in nature. Hazlitt's humorous essay is based on an actual boxing bout.

**Course Outcome:**

After reading these four different kinds of essays, the readers will get a fair idea of each essay's nature and writing style. The students will learn about T. B. Macaulay, Charles Lamb, John Henry Newman, and William Hazlitt, their essays and their respective prose style. "Points to Ponder" and "Further Study" sections will help them in their in-depth study and further reading respectively.

## Unit IV: 19<sup>th</sup> Century English Prose

### 1.1 T. B. Macaulay (1800 –1859): An Introduction

Macaulay is one of the major prose writers in English. His essays are fascinating and notable for their literary gloss and clear description. Thomas Babington Macaulay-- English Whig politician, essayist, poet, and historian, is best known for his *History of England*, 5 vol. (1849–61). This book, which covers the period from 1688 to 1702, secured his position as one of the foremost Whig interpreters of English history. His father, Zachary Macaulay had been governor of Sierra Leone; an ardent philanthropist and an ally of William Wilberforce, who fought for the abolition of slavery, he was a man of severe evangelical piety. Macaulay's mother, a Quaker, was the daughter of a Bristol bookseller. Thomas was the eldest of their nine children and devoted to his family, his deepest affection being reserved for two of his sisters, Hannah and Margaret.

He went to Trinity College, Cambridge, where he held a fellowship until 1831 and where he gained a reputation for his energetic talk and genial camaraderie in a circle of brilliant young fellows. In 1825, his essay on John Milton got published in *The Edinburgh Review*, and it brought him quick fame and the chance to display his literary gifts on a wider stage; he was courted and admired by the most distinguished personages of the day.

Macaulay studied law and was called to the bar in 1826 but never practiced seriously. When his father's financial situation declined, he took the onus of his whole family by writing and teaching and obtained a minor government post. He aspired to take a political career, and in 1830 he entered Parliament as a member.

During the debates that preceded the Reform Act (1832), Macaulay “eloquently supported the cause of parliamentary reform and was regarded as a leading figure in an age of

great orators” (Encyclopaedia Britannica np). Serving in the Supreme Council of India between 1834 and 1838, “Macaulay was instrumental in creating the foundations of bilingual colonial India, by convincing the Governor-General to adopt English as the medium of instruction in higher education, from the sixth year of schooling onwards, rather than Sanskrit or Arabic then used in the institutions supported by the British East India Company” (New World Encyclopaedia np).

### **Important Works:**

i) *Lays of Ancient Rome* (1842)

ii) *Critical and Historical Essays* (1843)

iii) *The History of England from the Accession of James the Second* (first 2 vols. published in 1848)

iv) *Machiavelli* (1850)

v) “The Armada”, a ballad (1832)

### **1.2 “Oliver Goldsmith”: Summary**

In the essay “Oliver Goldsmith”, Macaulay has given a biographical account of Oliver Goldsmith. At the outset of the essay, Macaulay states, “Oliver Goldsmith was one of the most pleasing English writers of the eighteenth century” (Nayar 74). He was born in 1728 in Ireland. His maid servant taught him letters. In a village school, he had learnt reading, writing, and arithmetic. At the age of nine, he went to several grammar schools and acquired knowledge of ancient language. His stature was small and he became the common butt of ridicule for the boys and teachers.

At the age of 17, he went to Trinity College, Dublin, as a sizar (an undergraduate at Trinity College, Dublin and the University of Cambridge who receives an allowance for his college expenses or tuition, sometimes in return for doing a defined job). He neglected the studies of the place. He stood low at the examinations. He was severely reprimanded for pumping on a constable. He was caned by a brutal tutor for giving a ball to gay youths and damsels from the city while he was studying at Dublin. His father died.

Goldsmith, after his twenty first years, took up odd jobs. He was a protean in choosing professions. He tried many things like trying to become a player, an usher in school, bookseller's hack, prepared medicines, got medical appointment in East India company. He could not stay in any of these professions for long period. But he could not succeed in anything. He became a tutor and tried law. Then he went to Leyden to study physics. He left the university in his twenty seventh years, without getting the degree.

His used to play flute very well. By playing flute, he sometimes earned money. He lived on the alms given at the gates of convents. In 1756, Goldsmith landed at Dover without a shilling (money), without a friend and without a calling. He had obtained doctor's degree from the University of Padua.

In the next, succeeding six years, after thirty years, he sent articles for reviews, magazines and newspapers. His style of writing was pure, easy, and energetic. His rich humor gives pleasure to the readers. His energetic styles made him popular in the field of writings. After becoming a popular writer, he got many intellectual friends; he became an intimate friend of Dr. Johnson, Reynolds and Burke. In 1762, he was one among nine members of a literary club.

Goldsmith left his village dwelling and settled in the region of Inns of Court. He did not pay the rent regularly, as he had to pay much, the land lady came with a sheriff. Johnson helped him to come out from the problems. And then he sold his writings for sixty pounds and paid the rent. It came too published as his first novel, *The Vicar of Wakefield*.

In 1764, Goldsmith published a poem named *The Traveler*. It was the first work that raised him to rank of a good poet. Goldsmith also tried his luck as a dramatist. He wrote *The Good Natured Man* but its plot was ill-constructed. *The Deserted Village* came out in 1773. He wrote his second play, *She Stoops to Conquer*. Goldsmith's comedies were not sentimental, rather anti-sentimental. He compiled for schools, *History of Rome*, *History of England*, *History of Greece and Natural History*, through this he earned much money. Though these writings were not written with accuracy and elaborate research.

Goldsmith soon became a great and prosperous man. He was shot to fame overnight. Though his readers called him a genius, his heart was soft and generous. He earned a lot of money but he spent lavishly in gambling. From his boyhood, he was a gambler. He obtained advances from booksellers by promising to composing works which he had never begun. But he could not send manuscripts to the publishers.

Goldsmith suffered from nervous fever, his spirit and health deteriorated. At the age of 46, he died in 1774. Dr. Johnson, who is childhood friend of Goldsmith, knows the character and habit of Goldsmith well, so he added his biography in his *Lives of Poets* as it ended with Lyttleton, who died in 1773.

### **1.3 Let's Sum It Up:**

Goldsmith is best known for his anti-sentimental comedy *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773) and his novel *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1766). He became a great and prosperous man. He became an overnight sensation. He earned good sort of money but he spent lavishly in gambling. From his boyhood, he was a gambler. He obtained advances from booksellers by promising to write works which he had never begun.

#### **1.4 References:**

Nayar, M. G., ed. *A Galaxy of English Essayists: From Bacon to Beerbohm*. Trinity Press, 1986.

“Thomas Babington Macaulay: Baron Macaulay”. Encyclopaedia Britannica.  
<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Thomas-Babington-Macaulay-Baron-Macaulay/Legacy>. Accessed on 10 Dec 2022.

“Thomas Babington Macaulay”. New World Encyclopaedia.  
[https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Thomas\\_Babington\\_Macaulay](https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Thomas_Babington_Macaulay).  
Accessed on 10 Dec 2022

#### **1.5 Model Questions:**

- i) How many different professions did Goldsmith take up, as described by Macaulay in his essay “Oliver Goldsmith”?
- ii) Describe the financial plight faced by Goldsmith, as you find in his essay “Oliver Goldsmith”.

#### **1.6 Points to Ponder:**

- i) Goldsmith died at the age of 46.
- ii) He was addicted to gambling.
- iii) After Goldsmith death in 1774, Dr. Johnson added Goldsmith’s biography in his *Lives of Poets*.

#### **1.7 Further Study:**

Cruikshank, Margaret. *The Development of Macaulay’s Essays*. Doctoral Dissertation. Loyola University Chicago, 1969.

Macaulay, T. B. *Lays of Ancient Rome: With Ivry, and The Armada*. Kessinger Publishing Co., 2005.

---. *The Miscellaneous Writings and Speeches of Lord Macaulay: Vol. 1*. Dodo Press, 2007.

Pinney, Thomas, ed. *The Letters of Thomas Babington Macaulay* (6 vols.). Cambridge UP, 2008.

Thomas, William, ed. *The Journals of Thomas Babington Macaulay* (5 vols.). Routledge, 2008.



## 2.1 Charles Lamb (1775-1834): An Introduction

Charles Lamb (1775-1834) was born in the city of London in 1775. His father, John Lamb, a Lincolnshire man, who was a clerk and servant companion to Mr. Salt, one of the benchers of the Inner Temple, was successful in obtaining for Charles, the youngest of three children, an invitation to Christ's Hospital, where the boy remained from his eighth to his fifteenth year. Here he was fortunate enough to have for a schoolfellow named S. T. Coleridge, his senior by more than two years. A close and tender life-long friendship began between them which had a singularly great influence on the whole of his career.

When the time came for leaving school, where he had learned some Greek and acquired considerable facility in Latin composition. For a short time he held a clerical post in the South Sea House under his elder brother John and in 1792 he became an accountant in an accountant's office in the East India House, where during the next thirty three years, his major works were written.

A dreadful calamity soon came upon him. There was insanity in the family. He was sent to a lunatic asylum for a few months in 1796 when he was twenty-one year old. A few months afterwards, his sister Mary came to a state of extreme nervous misery and was suddenly seized with acute mania, in which she stabbed her mother to the heart. His sister was confined soon after. After her health was restored, she could realize the fatal deed she committed. Lamb tried to remain calm and composed. After her release from the asylum, Charles undertook the responsibility for her safe keeping. But Charles got an intelligent or affectionate companionship with Mary Lamb. Charles's family situation rendered it impossible for his union with Alice Winterton, whom he appears to have truly loved, and to whom such touching reference was made long afterwards in his essay "Dream Children: a Reverie".

In 1796, Lamb's four sonnets got published in the volume of *Poems on Various Subjects*,

edited by Coleridge. In 1807 appeared *Tales* founded on the plays of Shakespeare, written by Charles and Mary Lamb. Lamb also contributed a footnote to *Shakespearean Studies* at this time with his fine essay "On the Tragedies of Shakespeare". In 1820, the starting of the *London Magazine* stimulated him to write a series of essays which became very much popular. In 1823, he took up the pseudonym Elia. The mental disease of his sister, which continued to increase with ever shortening intervals of relief, took a toll on his creative career. Then Lamb gave over-indulgence to the use of tobacco and alcohol. For the well-being of his sister, he shifted to a quiet place in the countryside. For this, he got estranged from the stimulating society of the large circle of literary friends. It intensified his listlessness and helplessness. He had an accidental fall as he was walking on the London road. For a few days, he struggled for his life but he painlessly passed away on December 27, 1834. Wordsworth has commemorated his friend Lamb's genius, virtues, and fraternal devotion in a simple and solemn verse.

In depth of thought and splendour of genius, Lamb was surpassed by many of his contemporaries, but as an essayist he is entitled to a place beside Montaigne, Sir Thomas Browne, Steele, and Addison. He unites many of the characteristics of each of these writers—refined wit, exquisite humour, a genuine and cordial vein of pleasantry, and heart-touching pathos.

Lamb's fancy as an essayist is distinguished by great delicacy and tenderness; and even his conceits are imbued with human feeling and passion. He had an extreme and almost exclusive partiality for our earlier prose writers, particularly for Fuller, Browne, and Burton, as well as for the dramatists of Shakespeare's time; and the care with which he studied them is apparent in all he ever wrote. It shines out conspicuously in his style, which has an antique air, and is redolent of the peculiarities of the 17th century. For his quaintness in style, he faced the charge of affectation, but his writings did not get affected. The habit of studying his

contemporary writers in preference to modern literature had made him to take up something of their style which came natural to him. The long practice of this style had made it not only easy for him but also familiar but habitual.

With profound thought and meaning, clothed in simple language, every sentence of his essays is pregnant. If he had their manner, he possessed their spirit likewise. To some of his essays and specimens we are considerably indebted for the revival of the dramatic writers of the Shakespearian age, for he preceded Gifford and others in wiping the dust of ages from the works of these authors. As a poet Lamb is not entitled to so high a place as that which can be claimed for the essayist and critic.

As a letter writer too, Lamb is can be ranked very high. *The Letters of Charles Lamb*, accompanied with a sketch of his life appeared in 2 vols., in 1837, and the memoir named *Final Memorials of Charles Lamb* was published in 1848. Supplementary to these is the *Memoir* by another personal friend B. W. Procter (Barry Cornwall) published in 1866.

### **Important Works:**

- i) "The Old Familiar Faces", a poem (1789)
- ii) *A Tale of Rosamund Gray* (1798)
- iii) *John Woodvil*, a poetic tragedy (1802)
- iv) *Tales from Shakespeare*, published by Lamb and his sister Mary (1807)
- v) *The Adventures of Ulysses*, a children's version of the *Odyssey* (1808)
- vi) *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets Who Lived About the Time of Shakespeare* (1808)
- vii) *Mrs. Leicester's School*, a collection of stories (1809)

viii) “On an Infant Dying As Soon As It Was Born”, a poem (1828)

ix) *Album Verses* (1830)

x) *The Last Essays of Elia* (1833)

## **2.2 “Poor relations”: Analysis**

Charles Lamb’s essay “Poor Relations” depicts the troubles of poor family members who are somehow deprived of their wealth. According to Lamb, “A Poor Relation—is the most irrelevant thing in nature” (Nayar 96). It talks about the law of primogeniture, where the eldest heir got everything and the rest of the siblings were robbed off their dues on account of such laws.

Through the voice of Elia (pen name of Lamb), the protagonist who is a rich heir, the writer makes fun of the poor relatives who arrive at family dinners with their heads hung in shame due to their poverty. They are self-conscious and nervous about their appearance and manners. Elia finds them insignificant. While the host does not want them, they are also unsure if they deserve to be in that place. However, their situation is forced by their inability to procure a better meal. Often, they show up when the rich are entertaining other rich friends. Out of courtesy, the rich are obligated to ask them to share the meal even though it is scarce for so many people.

The poor relatives try to be shy and decline the offer of food or drink at first but end up taking the biggest slices of everything or drink a large quantity of wine. They are anxious and yet behave in such a way as if they are somehow through bloodline. The people serving them are also confused by their actions while the guests are intrigued. But the misery does not end

here. These relatives then narrate some of the most embarrassing memories that are both humiliating and ill-timed.

Elia then talks about female relatives who are even more out of place than their male counterparts. For them, it is even more difficult to hide their deficiencies and shabby appearances. They are too conscious of their clothes which are worn out. One of them, Elia remembers a relative who had University education but had to take up the family business after his father's death. His fall from the life of education to trade was sad and drastic.

Contrary to the tone of comedy and ridicule, the story ends on a note of regard for people in such tough situations. Elia remembers one of his poor uncles who had been insulted by his well-to-do sister on account of his penury. However, when he died, he left enough money for his funeral. More importantly, he never owed any man in his life which says a lot about a man's character and abilities than wealth and material possessions. In the end, no one can take their wealth in their graves!

### **2.3 Let's Sum It Up:**

The essay ends on a note of regard for people in such tough situations. Lamb remembers one of his poor uncles who had been insulted by his rich sister on account of his poverty. However, when he died, he left enough money for his funeral. More importantly, he never owed any man in his life which says a lot about a man's character and abilities than wealth and material possessions.

## 2.4 References:

Nayar, M. G., ed. *A Galaxy of English Essayists: From Bacon to Beerbohm*. Trinity Press, 1986.

## 2.5 Model Questions:

- i) What kind of humorous elements do you find in Lamb's essay "Poor Relations"?
- ii) Write a note on pathos of poor relatives that Lamb describes in his essay "Poor Relations".

## 2.6 Points to Ponder:

\*Lamb talks about female relatives who are even more out of place than their male counterparts.

\*\* Lamb used the pen-name Elia.

\*\*\* Lamb's sister Mary was mentally unstable and she stabbed her mother in an insane state. Mary was sent to mental asylum for a few months. Lamb looked after her well-being.

\*\*\*\* Lamb and his sister Mary collaboratively wrote *Tales from Shakespeare* (1807) in simplified form, mainly for little school children. It was based on the plays of Shakespeare.

## 2.7 Further Study:

Cradock, Thomas. *Charles Lamb*. Simkin, Marshall, & Co., 1867.

Fitzgerald, Percy. *Charles Lamb, his Friends, his Parents, and his Books*. Forgotten Books, 2018.

Fitzgerald, Percy. *Life, Letters, and Writings of Charles Lamb: 1870-76* (6 vols.). Cosimo Inc., 2008.

Hazlitt, Carew. *Mary and Charles Lamb: Poems, Letters, and Remains*, Chatto and Windus, 2006.

### **3.1 John Henry Newman (1801-1890): An Introduction**

Cardinal Newman was the pioneer of the Oxford Movement or Tractarian Movement or High Church Movement. He was born in the city of London in 1801. He was the eldest among three brothers and three sisters. His father John Newman was a banker. At the age of seven he was sent to great Ealing School. During his last year at school Newman was converted. Almost at the same time his father's Bank was crashed and he also had undergone a conversion in 1814. During this time Newman fell under the influence of a definite creed and received into his intellect impression of dogma. He was influenced by the writings of Thomas Newton and Joseph Milner. He also read some devotional literature by William Law and William Beveridge.

Newman was educated at Trinity College, Oxford. There he was close friend of E. B. Pusey and Hurrell Froude. In 1825, he became curate of St. Clements Church, where he was engaged for two years and wrote many articles. In 1826 he returned as tutor of oriel where he met, Richard Froude and both of them formed a high deal of the tutorial office clerical and pastoral. He was also a preacher at while hall.

During his visit of Rome, he met Nicholas Wiseman (who was a Cardinal of the Catholic Church and he also became the first Archbishop of Westminster upon the re-establishment of the Catholic hierarchy in England and Wales in 1850). He wrote most of the short poems during this tour. He described Rome as "the most wonderful place on Earth" but the Roman Catholic Church as polytheistic, degrading, and idolatrous. Returning from Italy to England, he wrote lyrical prayer for guidance. This was the beginning of Oxford movement and with his sermons he entered deep into the conflict. His sermons at St. Mary's (Parochial Sermons 1924 -42) and twenty four contributions to "Tracts for the times" (1934 -41), reveal clear drift away from the Church of England towards Roman Catholicism. He became editor of the British critic and also gave lectures in a side chapel of St. Mary's. Newman continued as a High Anglican

controversialist until 1841, when he published Tract 90 which suggested that they were not against Catholicism's authorized creed, but only against popular errors. After ending of Tracts publication, Newman also resigned from the post of editor of British of critic. After suffering from his broken relationship with family and friends, he was converted into Roman catholic and left Oxford and went to Rome where he ordained priest by cardinal. After two years in Italy, Newman returned to England as an oratorian (a member of a Roman Catholic oratory). *Loss and Gain* and *Discourses Addressed to Mixed congregations* were published in 1848. In 1851 "*Lectures on the present position of Catholics in England*" was published which consisted of nine lectures. He was appointed as rector of the new Roman Catholic University in Dublin, where he published the famous series of educational lectures that would become "*The Idea of a University*" (1852) which explained his philosophy on education. Newman's second novel "*Collista*" was published in 1854 which is religious toil a criticism hero of the third century. Newman's marvelous autobiography was written ten years after to vindicate this career. Charles Kingsley, a clergyman of the Church of England, made a sordid assault on Newman's intellectual honesty. In answer to Kingsley, Newman published "*Apologia Pro Vita Sua*" (Lat., meaning "A Defence of One's Own Life", 1864), a religious autobiography of abiding interest. It explained the convictions which had led him into the Catholic Church. It is one of the finest pieces of restrained classical prose in the nineteenth century. Newman explained that English Catholic priests are at least as truthful as English Catholic laymen. He published a revision of the series of pamphlets in book form in 1865. His apocalyptic poem "*The Dream of Gerontius*" was published in 1866 and was followed by his "*Verses on Various Occasions*" and by "*An Essay in Aid Ova*".

Newman died in Birmingham City in 1890 and was buried (beside the burial site his closest friend, Ambrose St. John) at Rednal, the rest house of the Oratory. He was beatified by



Pope Benedict XVI in 2010, and canonized by Pope Francis in 2019. John Henry Newman has often been called the “absent Father of Vatican II” because “his writings on conscience, religious liberty, Scripture, the vocation of lay people, the relation of Church and State, and other topics were extremely influential in the shaping of the Council’s documents” (Franciscan media np).

**Important Works:**

- i) *Lyra Apostolica* (poems mostly by Newman and Keble, collected in 1836)
- ii) *On the Prophetical Office of the Church* (1837)
- iii) *Oxford University Sermons* (1843)
- iv) *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (1845)
- v) *Loss and Gain*, a novel (1848)
- vi) *Discourses to Mixed Congregations* (1849)
- vii) *Difficulties of Anglicans* (1850)
- viii) *The Idea of a University* (1852 and 1858)
- ix) *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* (Lat., “Defense of One’s Life”), religious autobiography (1864)
- x) *On the Inspiration of Scripture* (1884)

### 3.2 “Literature”: Analysis

In the chapter “Literature” (from his book *The Idea of a University*, 1852), John Henry Newman puts before the readers the questions: What is literature and why should we read the Classics? In our technologically advanced world, much of our thinking has been driven to the practical and empirical sciences. On the other hand, literature has lost its credibility and has often been ignored or dismissed. In the 19th century Newman made a strong case in favor of the study of literature.

Newman was a deep thinker and an accomplished writer. The description of a classic author that he once mentioned in a lecture at the School of Philosophy and Letters describes him well: “A great author, Gentlemen, is not one who merely has a *copia verborum*, whether in prose or verse, and can, as it were, turn on at his will any number of splendid phrases and swelling sentences; but he is one who has something to say and knows how to say it” (Nayar 120). Newman had a lot to say on things; he had read widely and thought much about history, theology, and education.

In this lecture Newman explains in what Literature consists, and rebuts the arguments of the critics: 1) that fine writing is a matter of conceits and verbosity, 2) that one of the proofs of a Classic is its untranslatability, and 3) that Holy Scripture can easily be translated.

Newman thinks that the classics are simple, majestic, and natural. He also observes that human literature cannot easily be translated out of the particular language; but at the same time, it is not at all the rule that Scripture can easily be translated. He contends that writing is essentially a personal or subjective output, not something that emanates from production or as a natural process. It is not a mere medium of symbols as is the case with mathematics. “Literature is the personal use or exercise of language” (Nayar 111). And this is proved from the fact each

author writes in a different way, and a true genius masters language for his own purpose. Language is the very shadow of an author, it is unique, not someone else's shadow.

He goes further: "Thought and speech are inseparable from each other. Matter and expression are parts of one: style is a thinking out into language. This is what I have been laying down, and this is literature; not things, not the verbal symbols of things; not on the other hand mere words; but thoughts expressed in language" (Nayar 111). Men, unlike animals, exercise *logos* (Gk., meaning both reason and speech). A classical author has both reason and speech; he thinks and writes his thoughts. He is not like a traveler unable to write who engages a professional letter writer. Excellent writers such as Shakespeare or Walter Scott did not aim at diction for its own sake; instead they poured forth beautiful words because they had beautiful thoughts.

A Classical author pours forth his thoughts with words and images; rather than wordiness, his writing conveys a "fullness of heart." "...the elocution of a great intellect is great. His language expresses, not only his great thoughts, but his great self. Certainly he might use fewer words than he uses; but he fertilizes his simplest ideas, and germinates into a multitude of details, and prolongs the march of his sentences, and sweeps round to the full diapason of his harmony..." (Nayar 114).

Newman argued that if lofty sentiment was allowed for a poet like Shakespeare, it should be allowed even more in an orator such as Cicero in whom he found nothing more redundant than in passages of Shakespeare. He thinks that Cicero expressed lofty sentiments in lofty sentences. Cicero, as a Roman senator and statesman, accomplished with words what Scipio or Pompey had done with deeds. Cicero was able to bring to our imaginations like no other the magnanimity of the Romans. "Neither Livy, nor Tacitus, nor Terence, nor Seneca, nor Pliny, nor

Quintilian, is an adequate spokesman for the Imperial City. They write Latin; Cicero writes Roman” (Nayar 115).

So far we have considered, according to Newman, how literature conveys the innermost thoughts of men, and pointed to the fact that great writers have a lot to say to men. Classical writers put their hands on a specific subject and bring it forth with strength, vivid images, apt comparisons, and nuanced distinctions. They possess great literary skill as their thoughts and words are inseparable. Thus it is imperative for the young readers to read the Classics. At the same time the society should re-think about the importance of the classics and should decide to put great literature in its libraries and at its universities.

### **3.3 Let’s Sum It Up:**

Classic literature conveys the inner thoughts of men. Possessing great literary skill, the Classic writers explain their subject with acumen, vivid images, apt comparisons, and nuanced distinctions. So, Newman proposes the youth to read the Classics and asks the society to re-think the importance these give to libraries of the universities.

### **3.4 References:**

Nayar, M. G., ed. *A Galaxy of English Essayists: From Bacon to Beerbohm*. Trinity Press, 1986.

“Saint of the Day”. 24 Sep 2022. <https://www.franciscanmedia.org/saint-of-the-day/saint-john-henry-newman/> accessed on 10 Dec 2022.

### **3.5 Points to Ponder:**

- i) Newman’s diction is remarkable for strength, elegance, flexibility and aptness.
- ii) The present text “Literature” is taken from his *The Idea of a University* (in the 1858 version).

iii) Newman's *The Idea of a University* is like most of his books, an occasional work.

Actually it consists of two portions, the discourses on the "*Scope and Nature of University Education*" (1852) and "*Lecture and Essay on University subjects*" (1858), a collection of lecture and articles.

iv) Three years after Newman's death, a Newman Club for Catholic students was formed at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia.

v) Newman's most important work is "*Apologia Pro Vita Sua*" (Lat., meaning "A Defence of One's Life", 1864) which is a religious autobiography

### **3.6 Model Questions:**

i) What importance does Newman give to the Classic literature as you find in his essay "Lecture"?

ii) What does Newman mean when he says that literature expresses personal truth?

iii) How does Newman show that the excellence of a literary work does not depend on the ease with which it can be translated into other languages?

### **3.7 Further Study:**

Newman, Cardinal John Henry. *The Idea of a University*. University of Notre Dame Press, 1992.

"Critical Essays on John Henry Newman", ed. Ed Block, Jr., *English Literary Studies*, No. 55.

University of Victoria Press, 1992. 138 pp.

#### 4.1 William Hazlitt (1778–1830): An Introduction

William Hazlitt (1778-- 1830), British Romantic essayist is best known for his humanistic essays. His writing is noted for the brilliant intellect it reveals though most of the times it lacks artistry.

Hazlitt's childhood was spent in Ireland and North America, where his father, a Unitarian preacher, supported the American rebels. The family returned to England when William was nine, settling in Shropshire. At puberty Hazlitt "became somewhat sullen and unapproachable, tendencies that persisted throughout his life" (Encyclopaedia Britannica np). He read intensively. Having some difficulty in expressing himself either in conversation or in writing, he turned to painting and in 1802 traveled to Paris to work in the Louvre. But the war between England and France compelled his return the following year. His friends, who included Charles Lamb, William Wordsworth, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, encouraged his ambitions as a painter; yet in 1805 he turned to metaphysics and the study of philosophy that had attracted him earlier, publishing his first book, *On the Principles of Human Action*. In 1808 he married Sarah Stoddart, and the couple went to live at Winterslow on Salisbury Plain, which was to become Hazlitt's favourite retreat for thinking and writing.

Although he successfully completed several literary projects, by the end of 1811 Hazlitt was penniless. He then gave a course of lectures in philosophy in London and began reporting for the *Morning Chronicle*, quickly establishing himself as critic, journalist, and essayist. His collected dramatic criticism appeared as *A View of the English Stage* in 1818. He also contributed to a number of journals, among them Leigh Hunt's *Examiner*. This association led to the publication of *The Round Table*, 2 vol. (1817), containing 52 essays of which 40 were by Hazlitt. In 1817 Hazlitt published his *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays* which met with immediate approval in most quarters. He had, however, become involved in a number of

quarrels, often with his friends, resulting from the forcible expression of his views in the journals. At the same time, he made new friends and admirers (among them P. B. Shelley and John Keats) and consolidated his reputation as a lecturer, delivering courses *On the English Poets* (1818) and *On the English Comic Writers* (1819), as well as publishing a collection of political essays. His volume entitled *Lectures on the Dramatic Literature of the Age of Elizabeth* was prepared during 1819, but thereafter he devoted himself to essays for various journals, notably John Scott's *London Magazine*.

Hazlitt lived apart from his wife after the end of 1819, and they were divorced in 1822. He fell in love with the daughter of his London landlord, but the affair ended disastrously, and Hazlitt described his suffering in the strange *Liber Amoris; or, The New Pygmalion* (1823). Even so, many of his best essays were written during this difficult period and were collected in his two most famous anthologies: *Table Talk* (1821) and *The Plain Speaker* (1826). Others were afterward edited by his son, William, as *Sketches and Essays* (1829), *Literary Remains* (1836), and *Winterslow* (1850) and by his biographer, P. P. Howe, as *New Writings* (1925–27). Hazlitt's other works during this period of prolific output included *Sketches of the Principal Picture Galleries in England* (1824), with its celebrated essay on the Dulwich gallery.

In 1824 Hazlitt married a widow named Bridgewater. But the new wife was resented by his son, whom Hazlitt adored, and the couple separated after three years. Part of this married life was spent abroad, an experience recorded in *Notes of a Journey in France and Italy* (1826). In France he began an ambitious but not very successful *Life of Napoleon*, 4 vol. (1828–30), and in 1825 he published some of his most effective writings in the collection *The Spirit of the Age*. His last book, *Conversations of James Northcote* (1830), recorded his long friendship with the eccentric painter of the title.

## **Important Works:**

- i) *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays* (1817)
- ii) *A View of the English Stage* (1818)
- iii) *Table-Talk: Essays on Men and Manners* (1821)
- iv) *Liber Amoris; or, The New Pygmalion* (1823)
- v) *Sketches of the Principal Picture Galleries in England* (1824)
- vi) *The Spirit of the Age* (1825)
- vii) *The Plain Speaker* (1826)
- viii) *Notes of a Journey in France and Italy* (1826).
- ix) *Sketches and Essays* (1829)
- x) *Literary Remains* (1836)

## **4.2 "The Fight": Summary and Analysis**

"The Fight" is perhaps Hazlitt's most famous essay. It is one of the most famous pieces of writing not only about boxing, but about any sport. The fight described in the essay actually took place on Hungerford Common on December 11, 1821 between Bill Neate, a Hungerford butcher, and Tom Hickman, often called the "Gaslight" Man. It must be remembered that prize-fighting, though tremendously popular in Regency England, was illegal at this time, so the location of fights was always something of a mystery or a rumor for the pilgrims journeying to see them. Twenty-two thousand people attended that particular match (such a crowd should not have



eluded the attention of the police). There was also gambling going among the spectators on the match between Gas and Neate. This was Hazlitt's first prizefight, yet he speaks like a seasoned spectator and gives the reader an insider view of the world of the Fancy, the habitués, aficionados, denizens, and patrons of the world of prizefighting. His description of the actual bout is as good as anything Pierce Egan, the premiere boxing journalist of the day, could have written.

Under the rules of prizefighting at that time, hair pulling, butting, tripping, and holding were all legal tactics. A round used to end when one of the combatants was knocked down or fell down. Each fighter then returned to his corner and given 30 seconds to "come to scratch," a line drawn in the middle of the ring, to signify they were willing and able to continue the match. A fight ended when one of the combatants was unable to continue. Gloves were not used at the match. The expression "New Eloise" that Hazlitt mentions at the end of the essay is taken from the novel *Julie or the New Eloise* by Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

The essay "The Fight" describes Hazlitt traveling out to a country town where there is going to be a boxing match in the middle of a field. He was writing about an experience he had had, his trip to the country, the people he met, the conversations he had. So, the account took a personal turn. This was just not the style of the day, but the fact that people loved this essay so much speak volumes that the public was ready for this more personal style.

Hazlitt informs his readers that the present business of him and his friends was to get beds and a supper at an inn; but this was not an easy task. The public-houses were full, and where you saw a light at a private house, and people poking their heads out of the casement to see what was going on, they instantly put them in and shut the window, the moment you seemed advancing with a suspicious overture for accommodation. Our guard and coachman thundered away at the outer gate of the "Crown" for some time without effect as there was a huge noise

within. When the doors were unbarred, and we got admittance, we found a party assembled in the kitchen round a good hospitable fire, some sleeping, others drinking, others talking on politics and on the fight. A tall English yeoman was making such a prodigious noise about rent and taxes, and the price of corn now and formerly, that he had prevented us from being heard at the gate. The first thing Hazlitt heard him say was to a shuffling fellow who wanted to be off a bet for a shilling glass of brandy and water. Hazlitt also gives humorous description about his friends Jem Belcher, the Game Chicken, Cribb, and Tom Belcher. He compares some of their actions with characters from Homer's epic the *Iliad*.

The day of the match was fine, the sky was blue, the mists were retiring from the marshy ground, the path was tolerably dry, the sitting-up all night had not done us much harm – at least the cause was good. At length, a mile to the left of Hungerford, on a gentle eminence, Hazlitt saw the ring surrounded by covered carts, gigs, and carriages, of which hundreds had passed us on the road.

After the first round, everyone was thinking that Gas-man would win. Gas-man was full of pride. But after many a round of attacks and counter-attacks, Bill Neate had won the fight and he was very pleased about it. Gas-man's "eyes were filled with blood, the nose streamed with blood, the mouth gaped blood. He was not like an actual man, but like a preternatural, spectral appearance, or like one of the figures in Dante's *Inferno*" (Nayar 1320. Hazlitt ends the essay by saying, "The carrier-pigeons now mounted into the air, and one of them flew with the news of her husband's victory to the bosom of Mrs Neate. Alas, for Mrs Hickman!" (Hazlitt 133).

### **4.3 Let's Sum It Up:**

The boxing fight described in the essay took place on Hungerford Common on December 11, 1821 between Bill Neate, a Hungerford butcher, and Tom Hickman, the “Gaslight” Man. It must be remembered that prize-fighting, though tremendously popular in Regency England, was illegal at this time, so the location of fights was always something of a mystery, a rumour. After many a round, Bill Neate had won the fight over Tom Hickman and he was very pleased about it.

### **4.4 References:**

Nayar, M. G., ed. *A Galaxy of English Essayists: From Bacon to Beerbohm*. Trinity Press, 1986.

“William Hazlitt”. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/William-Hazlitt>. Accessed on 10 Dec 2022.

### **4.5 Points to Ponder:**

i) Norman Mailer in his book *The Fight* (1975) talks about the 1974 championship bout between Muhammad Ali and George Foreman in Zaire. He structurally mimicked Hazlitt’s essay, clearly as an act of homage.

ii) Hazlitt’s style is familiar as he chooses words used in common parlance and uses them with precision to create an effect of conversational ease.

iii) Hazlitt deals with a variety of subjects like politics, poetry, drama, painting, sports, and games in most of his essays.

### **4.6 Model Questions:**

i) Give an account of the boxing contest between Gas-Man and Bill Neate.

ii) How far does Hazlitt succeed in communicating his own zeal about the boxing bout to the readers?

iii) How does Hazlitt describe the expectations of the spectators about the outcome prior to the fight?

#### **4.7 Further Study:**

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