



**Azad Mahavidyalaya, AUSA.**

**B.A. F.Y. Optional English E-Notes on**

**Understanding Prose (Essay) Paper No. II**

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**'Of Truth' by Francis Bacon**

"Of truth" is one of the famous essays written by Francis Bacon. In this essay Sir Bacon tries to tell the people about the advantages of the truth and the disadvantages of lies. It can be understood from the title that all the material and arguments Francis Bacon has produced are in favour of truth.

Truth and honesty are two things more similar to each other. Hence truth is associated with honesty. Here a question arises to mind that what is truth and its reality. Truth is very complex to be understood because truth in religion may be different from philosophy and philosophical truth may be different from moral, hence it keeps changing from sphere to sphere. Hence Bacon says that the only truth that does not change and is certain is the scientific truth.

Sir Bacon starts with an explanation of Pilate's school of thoughts in which we can see that Pilate was not interested in knowing what the truth actually means. Rather he has a spectacle frame of mind. It is most frequent with people to have a change in their opinions. They consider fixed believes as they are state of slave mind and people should have free will to change them.

Sir Francis Bacon explains in his essay that people like to live with lies rather than, truth because it has a pleasant effect on them. They love to live with false opinions, false judgments, and we can say that they like to live in falsehood. This does not mean that they consider lies to be better than truth, because we can see that these people respect honest and truthful people. This shows that they know deep in their souls that truth is better than lies. Bacon calls liars to be like snakes that move with their belly, not on foot. He further says that lies are the height of wickedness and hence it will cause judgment of God on all human beings on the Doom's Day.

Sir Bacon compares truth to the daylight which means that it will take us to brightness at the end. He then compares lies with candlelight which is pleasant compared to daylight but it takes us to darkness at the end. He says that truth is pleasant but when a lie is added to it. He further tells the readers that the value of truth can be understood by the people who often speak and live with the truth. He further explains that earth can be made a Paradise but only with the help of truth.

Sir Francis Bacon then describes the views of a church writer who thinks of poetry as the wine of the devil. He says that poetry tells beautiful lies but they are forgotten easily because they do not settle in the mind. He says that most of the damage is caused by the lies that sink into the

mind and settle there. Hence, he explains that truth is not only important in theory or philosophy but also in everyday life.

This essay by Sir Francis Bacon is rich in matter and manner. We can see that Sir Francis Bacon is trying to instil the love of truth in the reader's mind. He tries to remove the natural love of lies present in human beings. His style is simple, precise, and clear. Whether it is the choice of words or the sentence, it is the simplest essay possible.

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## **Bores by E.V. Lucas**

“It requires a sense of superiority, assurance and self-confidence to write about bores at all, except as one of them. But since your true bore is always unconscious of his borishness, and indeed usually thinks of himself as the most companionable of men, to write as one of them is to acquit oneself of the stigma.

None the less, at some time, I fear, everybody is a bore, because everybody now and again has a fixed idea to impart, and the fixed ideas of the few are the boredom of the many.

Also, even the least self-centred of men can now and then have a personal experience sufficiently odd to lose its true proportions and force him to inflict it over much over much on others.

But bores as a rule are bores always, for egotism is beyond question the bore's foundation stone; his belief being that what interests him and involves himself as a central figure must interest you.

Since he lives all the time, and all the time something is happening in which he is the central figure, he has always something new to discourse upon: himself, his house, his garden, himself, his wife, his children, himself, his car, his handicap, himself, his health, his ancestry, himself, the strange way in which, without inviting them to, all kinds of people confide in him and ask his advice, his humorous way with waiters, his immunity from influenza, his travels, the instinct which always leads him to the best restaurants, his clothes, his dentist, his freedom from shibboleths, he being one of those men who look upon the open air as the best church, his possible ignorance of the arts but certitude as to what he himself likes, his triumphs over the income-tax people. These are happy men; these world's axle trees.

(I have been referring to bores exclusively as men. Whether that is quite just, I am not sure; but I shall leave it there.)

Bores are happy largely because they have so much to tell and come so well out of it; but chiefly because they can find people to tell it to. The tragedy is, they can always find their listeners, me almost first. And why can they? Why can even notorious bores always be sure of an audience? The answer is, the ineradicable kindness of human nature. Few men are strong enough to say, ‘For Heaven's sake, go away, you weary me.’ Bores make cowards of us all, and we are left either to listen and endure or take refuge in craven flight. We see them in the distance and turn down side streets or hasten from the room. One man I know has a compact with a page-boy, whose duty it is, whenever my friend is attacked by a certain bore in the club, to hasten up and say he is wanted on the telephone. In ingenious device, but it must not be worked too often; because my dear friend, although he can stoop to deceit and subterfuge, would not for anything let the bore think that he was avoiding him; would not bring grief to that complacent candid face. For it is one of the bore's greatest assets that he has a simplicity that disarms. Astute, crafty men are seldom bores; very busy men are seldom bores.

Of all bores the most repellent specimen is the one who comes close up; the buttonholing bore. This is the kind described by a friend of mine with a vivid sense of phrase as 'the man who spreads birdlime all over you'. A bore who keeps a reasonable way off can be dealt with; but when they lean on you, you are done. It is worst when they fix your eyes, only a foot away, and tell you a funny story that isn't funny. Nothing is so humiliating as to have to counterfeit laughter at the bidding of a bore; but we do it. The incurable weakness and benignancy of human nature once again!

Then there is the bore who begins a funny story, and although you tell him you have heard it, doesn't stop. What should be done with him? Another of the worst types of bore is the man who says, 'Where should we be without our sense of humour?' He is even capable of saying, 'Nothing but my unflinching sense of humour saved me.' There is also the man who says, "'Live and let live" as my poor dear father used to say.'

There was once an eccentric peer- I forget both his name and the place where I read about him- who had contracted, all unconsciously, the habit of thinking out loud; and in this world of artifice, where society is cemented and sustained very largely by a compromise between what we think and what we say, his thoughts were very often at a variance with his words. One of the stories in the memoirs in which I found him describes how he met an acquaintance in St. James' Street, and, after muttering quite audibly to himself for a few minutes as they walked side by side, "Confound it, what a nuisance meeting this fellow. I've always disliked him. But now that we have met I suppose I must ask him to dinner," he stopped and said with every appearance of cordiality, "You'll dine with us this evening, won't you?"

Well, as a sheet of armour-plate against bores, I don't think we could do much better than cultivate the habit of thinking truthfully aloud. Unless we can do this or train ourselves to be downright offensive, there is no remedy against bores, except total evasion. No bore ever says, after no matter how many hints, 'I'll avoid that man in future; I know I bore him.'

So, they will always flourish. But if a certain famous weekly humorous paper were to cease publication (distasteful and incredible thought!) there would automatically be a decrease in bore topics, because then no one could any longer repeat those sayings of his children which are 'good enough for Punch.'

## **My Birthplace - Nirad C. Chaudhuri**

Nirad C. Chaudhuri is one of the most prolific writers of Indian-English prose. He is indeed a top class Indo-Anglican writer. He has written a number of essays on various subjects. He is a peerless as a craftsman. He has contributed 14 books in English and Bengali. He came into fame as a prominent writer with the publication of his 'An Autobiography of an Unknown Indian.'

Chaudhuri's 'My Birth Place' is a fantastic prose piece. It is the first chapter of his most famous book named 'An Autobiography of an Unknown Indian.' In this piece the author has described the scenario of his birthplace Kishoreganj. This place has an indelible impression on the author's mind. The descriptions of the Brahmaputra River during the rainy season are extremely readable.

'My Birth-Place' deals with Kishoreganj, the birth place of the author. This is a country town. The author describes it as a municipal and sub-divisional head quarter. This place consists of tin and mud huts or sheds. There are some official buildings like courts, schools, offices, shops and residential dwelling. These are raised by the British administration. The author deplors that Kishoreganj has nothing of the English country town about it. The huts of this country town are very flimsy and creaked at almost every wind. Thus, the author has presented a beautiful and lively picture of his birthplace.

Chaudhuri gives a fine picturesque description of his birthplace. This place is situated on the river Brahmaputra. This river was the lifeline of the town. It was just like the Nile of Egypt. It had pools every two or three miles apart. The town people drank its water, bathed in it and worshiped it. The animals like the cows and elephants were also washed in it. During the Monsoon the river became full with water. Now the author proceeds to describe the sights of the village when boat traffic started in the village river. This description is quite charming and fascinating. The details of the river, the rains and the boats show his spirit of minute observation.

Thus 'My Birth-Place' is a fantastic piece of work. Here Chaudhuri stands as a courageous, cheerful, enthusiastic and humorous writer. He impresses the readers much. His prose style has precision fused with erudition. It has clarity. In short, this piece of work is a fine piece of work by a matchless author.

## **In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens by Alice Walker**

### **Introduction**

Walker identifies these women as her creative ancestors, who have left a heritage for her to Alice Walker's essay "In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens" first appeared in *Ms* magazine in May 1974. The essay later became the title work in Walker's 1983 collection of the same name. The matching titles reveal the centrality of the essay's ideas as the guiding principles for the entire collection. Indeed, the author fills the essay (and the collection more broadly) with reflections about the struggle and creative perseverance black women must face and embody.

"In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens" combines several literary genres in its discussion of the experience of Black American women. Walker's meditations cover a broad period of American history: She pans back to the eighteenth-century enslaved poet Phillis Wheatley, walks through the post-Reconstruction period and into the 1920s, then culminates in her own era. Throughout, Walker aims to celebrate the creativity of Black women who overcame their circumstances with strength and ingenuity.

### **Plot Summary**

"In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens" opens with a quote from poet Jean Toomer in which he describes his attempts to express words of hope to a Black prostitute in the 1920s South. He explains how he spoke to her about building up her "inner life" through art and how, as he did, she fell asleep.

Walker notes that this woman, like so many others, had a deep, unconscious spirituality. Yet, because of her status, gender, and race—her pain and oppression—she was blind to it and could no longer perceive it.

Women such as the prostitute Toomer described were, in a strange way, "saints." It was these "crazy, loony, pitiful women" who also had vivid dreams and visions that allowed them to escape their bleak realities. This creativity, this imagination, was—and is still—lost to systemic circumstances that erase potential.

Toomer noticed this all on his walk through the South. He saw women "enter loveless marriages," have children, and even "become prostitutes" without joy and fulfillment. Though their creativity and spirituality often went unexpressed and, sometimes, suppressed, these mothers and grandmothers became "Creators" even amid "spiritual waste." They could have been great writers or artists, but they never had the chance. Still, their artistic power could not be eliminated, so they sang, told stories, and found and used the creative channels open to them.

Walker then paraphrases a poem by Okot p'Bitek, in which the poet mourns the loss of a mother. Even as she mourns, she conjures a sense of healing. Oppression and death, she explains, are not the end of the story for Black mothers and grandmothers: They did not perish "in the wilderness" but instead left their descendants searching for their past, their identity.

Walker then turns her attention to Virginia Woolf and Phillis Wheatley. Woolf wrote a book called *A Room of One's Own*—the title of which refers to the space women need to pursue their creativity. Comparatively, Wheatley operated under the restrictions of slavery, where she tried “to use her gift for poetry in a world that made her a slave.” According to Walker, her efforts saw little success, yet she approached her craft with endurance even amid ill health and suffering. Walker does not appreciate Wheatley’s poetry, though she admires her dedication.

Black women, Walker continues, have been called many things, including “the *mule* of the world.” They have often found their gifts—especially love, faithfulness, and ingenuity—“knocked down our throat.” Yet they persisted in their creativity, and it became their strength. Walker tells the story of her mother, who faced years of back-breaking work raising a large family. Yet, her creative spirit showed through in her stories and, especially, her gardens. Between working in...

### **Themes in Creativity theme**

In the essay “In Search of Our Mothers’ Gardens,” Alice Walker presents the power of creativity. No matter how horrible one’s circumstances—no matter how much one suffers—their creativity shines through. It breaks out through any available channel, bringing joy and strength with it.

Walker is concerned with the creativity of Black women through the centuries. They have historically been one of the groups with the most limited opportunity for creative expression. Many of the normal channels were blocked to Black women. Walker mourns the loss of outstanding novelists, poets, painters, and sculptors and pities the “agony of the lives of women” who wanted to express themselves in these ways but could not. Even the poet Phillis Wheatley’s creativity faced this restriction—she was enslaved, compromising her creative spirit and limiting her attempts to express herself in a language and culture that was not her own.

Yet, creativity finds a way. Black women, even amid slavery and suffering, sexual abuse and loveless relationships, have exercised their creativity. They have raised their voices in song and told their stories to any audience who would listen. They have stitched “inspired” quilts, like the one in the Smithsonian Institution that depicts the Crucifixion. Made from “worthless rags,” the quilts speak to their “powerful imagination and deep spirituality.”

explore and an invitation to discover and engage in her own creative work. Her mother is her primary inspiration, and she tells the story of her mother’s garden. Amid exhausting, never-ending work, Walker’s mother created gardens of incredible beauty and brilliant design, and “her fame as a grower of flowers spread over three counties.” Her creative spirit rose to the surface and overflowed, providing joy to many and displaying the strength of a woman who refused to allow her spirit to fall silent.

### **Oppression and Persistence**

As Alice Walker writes, Black women have historically faced significant oppression in America. Walker presents this in vivid detail, writing: They “have been handed the burdens that everyone else...refused to carry.” This can—and often does—wear down the spirit.

Walker speaks of a prostitute so exhausted that she falls asleep as a poet tries to encourage her with hopeful words about her own worth. She explains how Black women became “sex objects” of loveless marriages and mothers of numerous children, exploited and downtrodden to the point that they “stumbled blindly through their lives: creatures so abused and mutilated in body, so dimmed and confused by pain, that they considered themselves unworthy even of hope.” Walker even paints a vivid portrait of the suffering of her own mother, a woman overworked and vastly underappreciated, who labored in the fields beside her husband and fought for her children's education.

To say life was not easy for centuries of Black women is an understatement. They struggled and suffered, but they also persisted. Many refused to give up on life, no matter how difficult. They found ways to express themselves, to demonstrate that the human spirit was not dead in them. These women kept living, singing, telling their stories, stitching their quilts, growing their flowers, and finding ways to express their creative personalities and leave a heritage for their children and grandchildren.

Walker is clearly inspired by these women and by her own mother, whose gardens were her work of art. These mothers and grandmothers opened the way for their descendants to lead different lives, to escape at least some of the oppression and discrimination they faced, to be educated, and to reach out to the world in new ways. As Walker says in the poem she writes for her mother: “They knew what we / Must know / Without knowing a page / Of it / Themselves.” Generations of persistence in the face of the worst hardships have provided the daughters and granddaughters of today and tomorrow with a priceless heritage.