



THIRUTHANGAL NADAR COLLEGE

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A Self-Financing Co-educational College of Arts & Science

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NAME OF THE DEPARTMENT: ENGLISH

SUBJECT : BRITISH LITERATURE-I

TOPIC : OF REVENGE BY FRANCIS BACON

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“OF REVENGE” – FRANCIS BACON

Dr.K.C.LALITHAMBIKA

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- Francis Bacon had a passion for metaphors, analogies, and vivid imagery.
 - He was a rhetorical writer and his essays highlight his wisdom and incisive mind.
 - Each essay that Bacon wrote reveals his knowledge of Latin and draws on ancient Roman wisdom through axioms and proverbs.
 - Additionally, Bacon uses wit as a way of getting his point across to his audience and this indeed causes the reader to reflect on his or her own beliefs and values.

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- Bacon covers a wide range of intriguing topics in order to challenge the human mind to think deeply.
 - The philosopher not only provides a framework for the genre of the modern essay but also provides his readers a code to live by.
 - This essay is more or less a lesson in morality. It is a didactic essay and is an intelligent study of human nature.
 - As for style, this essay is a model of compactness. Bacon's terse and pithy manner of writing finds a perfect illustration here. Many of the sentences have that aphoristic quality for which Bacon is famous.

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- The revenge that a man takes for a wrong done to him by somebody represents an arbitrary kind of justice.
 - The redress of a wrong should be obtained through legal means, but revenge means setting the law at naught.
 - By taking revenge, a man can settle a score with his enemy. But if he refrains from taking revenge, he shows a moral superiority over his enemy.
 - To forgive an enemy is a sign of an exalted heart. It was Solomon who said that by ignoring a wrong that has been done to him, a man shows how noble he is.

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- A man does a wrong in order to make a financial gain or for the pleasure of it or in order to win a higher position or for some other similar reason.
 - There is, therefore, no point in feeling annoyed with a man just because he is selfish.
 - And if a man does a wrong merely because of his malicious nature, it is best to ignore him because he is like the thorn or briar which can only prick and scratch but serve no useful purpose.
 - A man can be forgiven for taking revenge for a wrong against which law provides no remedy.

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- But, in such a case, a man should be careful that his revengeful action is such as does not bring any legal consequences with it because otherwise he will still be at a disadvantage as compared with his enemy.
 - It is generous on the part of a man to reveal his identity to his victim when he takes revenge, because the pleasure lies not so much in the retaliatory action but in making the enemy repent his misdeed.

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- It is commendable to forgive an enemy for doing us a wrong, but it is unwise to forgive a treacherous or faithless friend.
 - However, Job was morally superior in declaring that, if we receive favours from our friends, we should also tolerate injuries or wrongs from them.
 - History tells us that public revenges have, by and large, proved fortunate. But private revenges are not generally so fortunate. Revengeful persons often live miserable lives.

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- Bacon argues that public act of revenge on the most part are fortunate as they set examples for others.
 - Bad leaders should be punished publically and in the worst way so that other learns a lesson from it and avoid doing such acts.
 - He supports his assertions by referring a “public revenge” from Roman history. For instance the assassination of Julius Caesar ,“Pertinax, and “Henry III of France”.

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- Bacon adds relevant quotations of ancient philosophers and makes his essay rich. The advice of not taking revenge, which Sir Francis Bacon gives to his readers, is not new, but his arguments and references makes it fresh.
 - Indeed, this essay is worth reading especially it is dedicated to those persons, who are living an unhappy life while having revenge in their minds.

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- Bacon makes a liberal use of quotations in his essays.
 - This essay, which is very brief, contains three quotations, one from Solomon, another from Cosmo de Medici, and the third from Job.
 - The ideas of this essay are such as go straight to the bosoms and hearts of readers. In fact, we find in this essay a confirmation of the ideas that most people already have in their minds.