# Jacques de Vaucanson Biography

## Jacques de Vaucanson

The following sections of this BookRags Literature Study Guide is offprint from Gale's For Students Series: Presenting Analysis, Context, and Criticism on Commonly Studied Works: Introduction, Author Biography, Plot Summary, Characters, Themes, Style, Historical Context, Critical Overview, Criticism and Critical Essays, Media Adaptations, Topics for Further Study, Compare & Contrast, What Do I Read Next?, For Further Study, and Sources.

(c)1998-2002; (c)2002 by Gale. Gale is an imprint of The Gale Group, Inc., a division of Thomson Learning, Inc. Gale and Design and Thomson Learning are trademarks used herein under license.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction: "Social Concerns", "Thematic Overview", "Techniques", "Literary Precedents", "Key Questions", "Related Titles", "Adaptations", "Related Web Sites". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults: "About the Author", "Overview", "Setting", "Literary Qualities", "Social Sensitivity", "Topics for Discussion", "Ideas for Reports and Papers". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

All other sections in this Literature Study Guide are owned and copyrighted by BookRags, Inc.



# Contents

Jacques de Vaucanson Biography.....1

Contents.....2

Biography.....3

# Biography

Jacques de Vaucanson was a prolific inventor who made many contributions to the Industrial Revolution. Born at Grenoble, France, in 1709, he showed an early interest in machinery. He was educated at the Jesuit College of Grenoble and then went to Paris, France, to study mechanics.

In Paris he became interested in building automata, life-like devices driven by clock-like mechanisms. Vaucanson's first automation, built in 1738, was "The Flute Player." The next, in 1739, was "The Tambourine Player." His most famous automaton was "The Duck," a robot bird that quacked, swam, flapped its wings, ate, drank, and even digested food. The Vaucanson Duck entertained audiences across Europe. In order to build his automata, Vaucanson designed various precision machine tools such as lathes and drills.

After being appointed inspector of silk factories in 1741, Vaucanson began designing improved weaving machines. He developed an automated loom in 1745 that used perforated cards to select the warp threads. This loom was later improved on by Joseph-Marie Jacquard and became one of the most important machines of the Industrial Revolution. During the 1770s Vaucanson built an unconventional iron-framed slide lathe that permitted a much higher degree of precision than the old wooden-bed ornamental

For all of his inventions, Vaucanson continued to design improved machine tools that became widely used. Late in his life, he collected many of his tools and inventions, plus those of others, and this collection was incorporated into the Conservatoire des Arts et Metiers in Paris in 1794. There, Vaucanson's slide lathe has been exhibited ever since, the oldest engineering lathe in existence. Also at the Conservatoire, Jacquard discovered the loom that he then redeveloped. Vaucanson died in Paris in 1782.