EG - 02

VARDHAMAN MAHAVEER OPEN UNIVERSITY, KOTA

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Prose & Fiction

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Block Introduction

Block - I

In this Block, we shall study the short stories as a literary forms and essays as a form of non-fictional prose. We have brought stories who are rooted in different cultures.Such as Kushwant Singh and Amitav Ghosh are Indians,Katherine Mansfield was born in New Zealand,but settled in Britain and O Ȟenery an American.

Francis Bacon wrote the first English essays in 1597, which were short and epigrammatic statements.Other selected Essayists like Steele, Addison, Hazlitt, Lamb, etc. portrayed social, political, literary and cultural aspectsof society through thier essays.

You are going to read some selected literary prose pieces and short stories. These selected pieces shall also acquaint you with the varieties of English worldover such as British, American, Indian, African; etc. Besides the text for intensive reading, each unit comprises a glossary of difficult words, summary of the text, model explanations, etc. The self-assessment questions and their answers are provided at the end of each unit to provide you a clear direction and to enable you to understand the different features of prose and fiction employed by the prose writers and story writers.

The editor and the contributors will be happy if the course material proves successful in making the teaching and learning of English literature enjoyable.

Suggestions for the improvement are welcome.

Unit – 1

Bacon : Of Studies

Structure

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1.6 Answers to Exercises
1.7 Books Suggested

1.0 Objectives

In this unit our aim is to give you some practice in reading and understanding prose. You will be required to answer questions set on the text provided for study by :

(a) giving you a thought provoking essay written by Francis Bacon,
(b) giving you a glossary of difficult words and phrases from the essay,
(c) discussing various literary devices used by Bacon in his prose writings,
(d) giving you questions to be answered.

In the section on Age and Author, we will give you ample information about prose writing and development of English prose in successive centuries. The prose writing in sixteenth century will be dealt with in detail. The special trends and practices adopted by the men of letters and creative writers in the sixteenth century will be explained in simple language.

A detailed summary would be given to bring forth hidden meanings in the text. This will also emphasise the reason for the universal appeal of Bacon's essays.

To make you understand the text in a better way, short and objective type questions are being given at appropriate places in this unit.

After reading and understanding various sections of this unit you will be able to :

(a) understand the text in its totality,
(b) develop the ability to read between the lines and understand the real motive of the author in writing this essay.
(c) appreciate and evaluate the given text.

1.1 Introduction

Poetry was considered more respectable than prose. Gradually prose also developed and acquired an equal status with poetry. The first name in the history of English prose is that of Alfred (848-901), who belonged to the Anglo-Saxon period. The oldest historical record in English and the best monument of early English prose is the Anglo-Saxon 'Chronicle'.

Next followed the Anglo-Norman period. A major work of this period is 'Ancren Riwle' (Rule of the Anchoresses). It is regarded as the most beautiful piece of old English prose ever written. English was not a major language in the world at that time. Major works in twelfth and thirteenth century consist of works of small value and slight quality. This period is of transition from French and Latin. English prose was considered as a medium for translation.

The modern English prose, according to George Saintsbury began from 1350. This period witnessed the great turning point which was partly due to the concentration of English patriotic sentiments saroused by the military conquests of Edward III. New English prose made a real start almost for the first time. Four writers of prose are noteworthy in this period – Chaucer the poet, Wyclif the controversialist, Trevisa the Chronicler, and the shadowy personage long known as Sir John Mandeville. All these were basically translators in a less or greater degree, and also were the founders of English prose writing.

Malory and Berners top the list of writers of English prose in the fifteenth century. It was a period of experiments where conscious efforts were made to develop a prose style following the path of Chaucer and Wyclif. Prose was written in several different branches of literature, history, law, politics, theology, philosophy, sermons, and letters etc. But it mostly depended on translations.

Europe witnessed the Renaissance in the field of creative writings in the fifteenth century. People developed interest in classical writings of ancient Greece and Rome. The influence of the new learning was not at first beneficial, on the whole writers were overladen with their new acquisitions and did not know what to do with them. Classical allusions became abundant. And, there was a danger for English to loose its separate identity, its spelling, diction, syntax, versification and style in the process of being overburdened with classicism, but the translations kept up English prose on the path of development.

This time period also witnessed the invention of printing from moveable fonts. It in fact proved to be a social and literary revolution. After the first book printed by William Caxton in 1477, the printing enlarged the bounds and influence of literature.

The Reformation led to a further increase in the number of writers and readers and to a certain facility in composition. The reformation produced models of magnificent prose in English scriptures and in such works as Foxe's *Ace Monuments*. The

famous voyages of Columbus Sebastian Cabot and Vasco de Gama, all between 1490 to 1500 turned the thoughts of men to larger views of the physical universe and brought into English life and letters the spirit of adventure that breathes through many of the best works of the spacious times of great Elizabeth.

In the development of literature, the revival of learning worked in two ways : it did much to emancipate thought from the bondage of medieval theology by restoring the generous spirit and ideals of pagan antiquity; and it presented writers with masterpieces of literature which they might take as models for their efforts. For these two reasons, the Renaissance is nightly taken as a chief source in the making of modern European literatures. England now began to share in these liberalising movements. Before the century was out, the new learning was firmly established at Oxford and Cambridge.

The Reformation which occurred in the middle of the Sixteenth century was the work of a preacher, Hugh Latimer (1485-1555), whose energy and good sense produced some of the most pungent English prose of the period. Then there is the religious literature of the time. William Tyndale's *English New Testament* (1525), the *Complete English Bible* of Miles Coverdale (1535) and Cromwell's *Great Bible* (1535) show the steady growth of popular interest in the scriptures. These works exerted considerable influence on the development of a standard English prose.

Poetry dominated the whole of the Renaissance. Prose, simple, restrained and clear, fit not to impassion but to instruct, not to father the imagination but to satisfy the reason, is very much exceptional in this age.

1.2 Age And Author

In this section we will try to familiarize you with the sixteenth century literary scenario of England. We will discuss the main trends and literary currents of the age to which Francis Bacon belonged.

We will discuss and make you aware about the author i.e. Bacon. We will look into the main events of the life of Francis Bacon and his rise as a literary genius. We will also acquaint you with the major qualities of Bacon and his important works. We will also discuss the temperament, philosophy and style of Bacon to make you understand Bacon in a better way.

At the end of this section we will provide you with questions. These objective type and short answer type questions have been designed to check your progress and understanding by yourself. Your self assessment will develop a confidence in you and you will be able to pursue the further study with confidence and understanding.

1.2.1 About the Age

The intellectual trends and opinions in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are more directly shown in the prose of the period than in its poetry.

Pamphleteering of all kinds, polemical religious argument, political educational and literary theorizing, flourished now as never before, with the result that the literary historian had to deal with a mass of miscellaneous prose most of which could hardly be called strictly "literature", yet which in addition to providing an occasional work of real literary merit, provided an interesting view of the state of English prose style and the various ways in which English prose was being exercised and developed.

Besides this large quantity of miscellaneous prose writings, there were devotional works, sermons, translations of many different kinds, histories, biographies, accounts of ceremony events and prose fiction.

We are talking here only about the writings in prose in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Two factors are seen at work in most of these varied prose writings. First, the breakthrough of colloquial speech, with its vigour and raciness, into the written word, and second, the attempt to mould a consciously artistic English prose style. These two factors are, surprisingly enough, often found in conjunction with colloquial vigor and over elaborate parallels or antithesis alternating in the same work.

No permanent resolution was achieved in the sixteenth or early seventeenth centuries in spite of the occasional prose triumphs of the age, though an impersonal devotional prose developed, descending from the devotional prose of Rolle and Hilton in the fourteenth century and a Biblical prose was wrought by the English translators of the Bible from Tyndale to the translators of the Authorized Version of 1611. It remains true that nearly all prose writers of the Elizabethan and immediately subsequent period wrote a highly idiosyncratic prose : there was, except for prayer and Biblical translations no common tradition of prose style of which individual writers could play their own variations, as eighteenth century writers had from Addison on; every prose writer had first to solve the problem of creating his own style.

We can see colloquial prose disciplining itself into effective writings, while wholly informal and unliterary, they have style – the style of fluent, educated speech, only slightly less discursive than actual speech would be. The prose on the whole is naive, unsuited for any heaviex burden than that of exchange of family news.

The Elizabethan settlement, completed with the establishment of thirty-nine articles in 1571, produced the church of England, Catholic in profession but national in character, repudiating the authority of the pope but episcopal in organization, a national Catholic Church stripped of the abuses of Rome but resisting the demands of Puritans for extreme simplicity and severity in worship, for the abolition of episcopacy and for granting spiritual authority to individuals who claimed it on the grounds of grace vouchsafed to them and of preaching

ability.

The settlement provided a wide roof under which different shades of opinion could shelter together as later divisions of 'high' and 'low' church were to testify; but it left out both Roman Catholics and the more extreme Puritans. The Puritans to whom preaching the word was a sacred obligation would have had a greater effect on English preaching if they had not eventually been forbidden to preach by the repressive legislation introduced in support of the establishment of Archbishop.

Fortunately, the Church of England produced early in its history a succession of learned and able ecclesiastics who brought preaching in England in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries to a new level of literary art. The puritan preachers who re-emerged under the Commonwealth and later strongly influenced the style of non conformist preaching are important in the history of the spoken sermons, but the great Anglican preachers are of more concern to the literary historians.

If religious and other controversies helped to stimulate the development of a polemical prose style, a more profound shaping of English prose was going on at the same time by means of the discipline of translation. Thomas North, Sir Thomas Hoby, Sir John Cheke, William Painter, Geoffrey Fenton, George Pettie, William Tyndale and Miles Coverdale were some of those prose writers and translators who strove hard to give Elizabeth unprose an identity of its own.

History and biography were also fields in which Elizabethan prose exercised itself. It was the best narrative prose with a flow and control which leaves its permanent mark in the literary annals. The balanced sentences, alliteration and other stylistic devices make the prose artful.

1.2.2 About the Author

Francis Bacon was born on January 22, 1561 in London. His family was very powerful and very close to Queen Elizabeth. His father Sir Nicholas Bacon was Lord Keeper of the Great Seal. His mother was the daughter of Sir Anthony Cooke and Sister-in-law of Sir William Cecil, the Lord of Burghley.

He was a protected child. His early childhood was spent at his father's country palace. He was devoted to studies in a grave manner even at the tender age of ten. He was sent to Trinity College, Cambridge with his elder brother at the age of thirteen. He came back after three years and was then admitted to Gray's Inn on June 27, 1576.

But only after a few months not liking the legal profession, he went alongwith

the English Ambassador to France and thus began his career in diplomacy. After his father's death, he came back to England and again joined Gray's Inn. In 1584, he entered the Parliament as representative of Malcombe Regis. He was again elected for parliament in 1586 and 1589, he advocated for a middle course between popular privilege and royal prerogative, moderation in secular reform with toleration in religion. This policy he supported in two pamphlets published in 1585 and 1589. In both of them he pleaded for greater elasticity in matters of doctrine and of discipline.

In 1591, Bacon attached himself to the Earl of Essex, who was very close to Queen Elizabeth. In 1593 Bacon entered the Parliament from Middlesex. He severely criticised the Government's policy of demand for a triple subsidy to help meet the expenses of the Spanish War. The Queen was annoyed and did not appoint him Attorney General in 1594. The Earl of Essex always tried to favour and make recommendations for Bacon, but the Queen paid no need to them. Somehow he was made Learned Counsel. Bacon played a major role in securing Essay's conviction, when he was being tried for treason. As a result of his conviction, Essex's was executed. Bacon incurred much ill feeling for this. In 1604, he published an Apology for this action.

The first edition of his Essays was published in 1597. It had ten essays. Its popularity was great, almost from the very day of issue.

In 1603, King James I ascended to the English throne. Bacon tried to win the new King's favour by every wit he could employ, he was ultimately successful and managed to get Knighthood in July, 1603. In 1604 he was confirmed as Learned Counsel and in 1607 became Solicitor General.

In 1605 Bacon published his Advancement of Learning and dedicated it to the King. This great philosophical work was later expanded and translated in Latin. In 1606, Bacon got married to Alice Branham, daughter of a London alderman. In 1607 and 1612 new editions of his Essays were published with several additions. Cogitata et Visa, In felicem memorium Elizabethae and De sapientia veterum and Wisdom of the Ancients were published between 1607 and 1609. In 1613 he was made Attorney General. In the Parliament of 1614, he sat for Cambridge University.

From 1612 onwards his counsels did not attract the King's attention and he was in the process of being marginalised. But Bacon soon made up for his decending position and became Lord Keeper in March 1617. In January 1618 he was promoted to Lord Chancellor and in July 1618 he was made Baron Verulam. A further honour was conferred upon him in January 1621 when he was created Viscount St. Albans.

The Parliament met after seven years and his enemies seized the opportunity to bring charges of bribery and corruption against Bacon. He was found

guilty and after considerable discussions the House of Lords passed sentence against him on May 3, 1621. The sentence was, however, not fully carried out, but he was barred to sit in the Parliament.

The remaining five years of his life were spent in work for more valuable to the world than anything he had accomplished in his high office. From the literary and philosophical point of view, this last period was, indeed, the most precious. Smitten by his disgrace he turned with much eagerness to intellectual pursuits that had been interrupted by his official duties.

His retirement from politics enabled him, indeed, to make his literary reputation more firm and enduring. He devoted himself with amazing energy to literature and science. During this period he produced histories, De Augments, New Atlantis and the final edition of Essays, which contained fifty eight essays.

In March 1626 while travelling near highgate in London, he performed an experiment, which was an anticipation of the modern process of refrigeration, but it caused his death. He decided to discover whether snow would delay the process of putrefaction, he stopped his carriage, purchased a hen, and with his own hands stuffed it with snow. As a result he caught a chill and fever. He was taken to the house of the Earl of Arundel, where he died on April 9, 1626. He was buried in St. Michael's Church at St. Albans. Bacon was intellectually great but morally weak. Pope called him as "the wisest, brightest, but the meanest of mankind." His marvellous versatility renders it difficult to present a critical estimate which embraces all the varied aspects of his personality as lawyer, politician, scientist, philosopher, historian, and essayist. He took all knowledge for his province.

The works of Fancis Bacon

- *The Advancement of Learning (1605)*
- *History of Henry VII (1622)*
- *Essays (1597, 1612 and 1625)*
- *The New Atlantis (1622 and 1626)*
- *Magna Instauratio (in six volumes)*
- *Novum Organum (in four volumes)*

1.2.3 Self Assessment Questions

You have studied about the development of prose writing in Elizabethan age and about the life and works of Francis Bacon. We have also discussed the literary writings during the age under discussion. You have also learnt about trends and practices adopted by writers of this period.

Now to make your understanding more clear, here is a revision of the things which you have read and understood. Answer the questions given in these

exercises to check your progress.

Exercise-1

Each question in this exercise has three alternatives, read the question and choose the right answer from these three alternatives.

1. Alfred belonged to :
   (a) Anglo-Saxon period
   (b) Victorian period
   (c) Elizabethan period
2. Ancren Riwle is a representative work of :
   (a) Anglo-Saxon period
   (b) Ancient prose
   (c) Anglo-Norman period
3. Sir John Mandeville was basically a
   (a) prose writer
   (b) essayist
   (c) translator
4. Fifteenth Century was a period of :
   (a) great prose writings
   (b) experiments
   (c) translations from Latin
5. People developed interest in classical writings of ancient Greece and Rome during
   (a) Renaissance
   (b) Elizabethan age
   (c) Classicalage
6. Devotional prose was written in
   (a) Fourteenth century
   (b) Fifteenth century
   (c) Sixteenth century
7. The Puritan preachers re-emerged under :
   (a) Elizabethan period
   (b) Church of England
   (c) Common Wealth
8. Francis Bacon was admitted to Gray's Inn in
   (a) 1576
   (b) 1586
   (c) 1589
9. Francis Bacon represented Cambridge University in the Parliament in:
   (a) 1612
   (b) 1603
   (c) 1614

10. The first edition of Bacon's 'Essay's was published in :
    (a) 1603
    (b) 1596
    (c) 1597

Exercise-2

Now try to answer the following questions in two to three sentences each.

1. What do you know about the early English prose?

   _____
   _____
   _____

2. Describe the Renaissance.

   _____
   _____
   _____

3. What effect did the Reformation have on the literary circles?

   _____
   _____
   _____

4. Comment on the revival of learning.

   _____
   _____
   _____

5. What type of writings were produced in early sixteenth century in England?

   _____
   _____
   _____

6. What do you know about the style of English prose of the sixteenth century?

   _____
   _____
   _____

7. What was Elizabethan settlement?

   _____
   _____
   _____

8. What do you know about the early life of Francis Bacon?

   _____
   _____
   _____

9. What did Bacon write after James the first became the King of England?

_____

_____

_____

10. When did Bacan excel as a writer?

_____

_____

_____

1.3 Reading Text

In this section we will give you practice to read and understand the essay Of Studies. We will adopt an analytical approach to the understanding of Bacon's of Studies.

1.3.1 Text

Given below is original text of Francis Bacon's essay **Of Studies**.

1. Studies serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability. Their chief use for delight, is in privateness and retiring; for ornaments, is in discourse; and for ability, is in the judgment and disposition of business; for expert men can execute, and perhaps judge of particulars, one by one; but the general counsels, and the plots and marshalling of affairs, come best from those that are learned. To spend too much time in studies, is sloth; to sue them too much for ornament, is affectation; to make judgment wholly by their rules, is the humour of a scholar.

2. They perfect nature, and are perfected by experience; for natural abilities are like natural plants, that need proyning by study; and studies themselves do give forth directions too much at large, except they be bounded in by experience. Crafty men contemn studies; simple men admire them; and wise men use them. For they teach not their own use; but that is a wisdom without them, and above them, won by observation.

3. Read not to contradict and confute, nor to believe and take for granted, nor to find talk and discourse, but to weigh and consider. Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested. That is, some books are to be read only in parts; others to be read, but not curiously; and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention. Some books also may be read by deputy, and extracts made of them by others; but that would be only in the less important arguments, and the meaner sort of books: else distilled books are, like common distilled waters, flashy things.

4. Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact

man and, therefore, if a man write little, he had need have a great memory; if he confer little, he had need have a present wit; and if he read little, he had need have much cunning, to seem to know that he doth not.

5. Histories make men wise, poets witty; the mathematics subtle; natural philosophy deep; moral, grave; logic and rhetoric, able to contend; *Abeunt studia in mores;* nay, there is no stand or impediment in the wit, but may be wrought out by fit studies, like a diseases of the body may have appropriate exercises : bowling is good for the stones and reins, shooting for the lungs and breast, gentle walking for the stomach, riding for the head, and the like; so, if a man's wits be wandering, let him study the mathematics; for in demonstrations, if his wit be called away never so little, he must begin again; if his wit be not apt to distinguish or find differences, let him study the schoolmen, for they are *cymini sectores*.

6. If he be not apt to beat over matters, and to call upon one thing to prove and illustrate another, let him study the lawyers' cases. So every defect of the mind may have a special receipt.

1.3.2 Glossary

1. delight : pleasure
   privateness : a state of aloofness
   discourse : conversation and discussion
   expert : experienced
   execute : to implement
   plots : plans
   marshalling : arrangement
   discourse : discussion
   sloth : laziness
   humour : eccentricity or particular bias of mind
   scholar : one who exclusively devotes himself to learning and who is normally not much acquainted with practical life.

2. natural abilities : inherited mental traits
   proyning : pruning or trimming by looping of superfluous growth of a small tree.
   too much at large : to vague
   bounded in : corrected, limited
   crafty : cunning
   admire : wonder at
   without : outside
   above them : this ability to apply theory to practice

	observation	:	practical experience of life
3.	confute	:	to prove false
	granted	:	to be accepted in entirity
	weigh	:	to evaluate
	tasted	:	read in parts
	swallowed	:	merely read through curiously
	digested	:	to be read very thoroughly
	curiously	:	in much detail
	would be	:	ought to be, with great care
	distilled books	:	summaries
	flashy	:	insipid
4.	full-man	:	well informed person
	ready man	:	quick witted person
	present wit	:	presence of mind
	that	:	what
	natural philosophy	:	physics, chemistry, mechanics etc.
5.	witty	:	imaginative
	logic	:	science of reasoning
	thetoric	:	the art of persuasive speaking
	contend	:	attempt to induce another to agree with one's opinion
	abeunt studia in mores	:	studies pass into the character
	stone	:	hinderance
	wit	:	mind
	wrought out	:	removed
	bowling	:	playing at bowls
	reins	:	kidneys
	shooting	:	archery
	wondering	:	unable to concentrate
	never so little	:	no matter how little
	schoolmen	:	philosophers and theologists of the middle ages, who were very keen on their hair-splitting logical distinctions on debates etc.
	Cymini Sectores	:	Antonius Plus was called Cymini sector, a carver or divider of cumin seed which is one of the least seeds, hence the phrase is equivalent to 'hair splitting' or persons gifted with excessive subtlety in debates.
6.	lawyers cases	:	lawyers have to depend on precedents relative to cases in hand.
	apt to beat over matters:		good at going over the ground of.

1.3.3 Summary

Studies are a source of pleasure. They have an ornamental value and also add to one's ability.

This essay deals with some of the uses of study and offers some sound ideas relating to this theme. The pleasure of study can best be enjoyed by a man leading a life of aloofness and retirement. The ornamental value of study lies in enabling a man to become a good talker. He who spends too much time in studies is temporarily lazy. He who makes too much use of reading for purposes of conversation, is trying to make a vain display of his learning. If a man's judgment is governed wholly by rules, he has learned from books, it shows his eccentricity.

Studies makes one develop one's abilities with ease Studies by themselves provide guidance, but without practical experience this is abstract. Men who are cunning, do not approve of the studies, but those who are simple, feel an admiration for studies. Men who are basically wise, make use of studies for their progress.

One should not read books only to contradict others. All things written in books should not be followed in life. One should ponder over what he reads and how he uses it.

Some books are to be read in parts only. Some may be read quickly and hastity. There are only a small number of books that are worth close and detailed study. In the case of some books, a man may engage somebody else to read them and then tell him what they contain and also give him extracts from them. But this method should be adopted in the case of the meaner sort of books only. No man can be satisfied with a mere summary or synopsis of a good book.

Reading develops the whole personality of a man. Conversation makes a man witty. Different kinds of books have different effects upon the reader. History man a man wise, Poetry makes a man imaginative, Mathematics develops subtelity in a man, Natural science enables a man to look, deep into the things, Logic and art of public speaking develop a person's communicative skills.

Various capabilities are developed by effective and useful reading. If a man's mind wonders too much, he should be made to study Mathematics to develop concentration; if a man is unable to make distinctions amongst things, he should study the literature produced in the Middle Ages.

Studies are a cure for mental deficiency. Just as bowling is good for kidneys, shooting for the lungs, walking for digestion and riding for the head, so also

mathematics is good for wondering wits. Every defect of a man's mind can be cured through studies.

1.3.4 Self Assessment Questions

You must have understood Bacon's ideas about studies. You must have understood the uses and disadvantages of study. You have also come to know about rules and modes of study.

Exercise – 3

Now answer the following questions by choosing the correct answer from the three alternatives given below each question.

1. Bacon's essay entitled Of Studies is a passage to be:

   (i) chewed and digested
   (ii) read with main points
   (iii) studied thoroughly

2. One who makes too much use of his readings for conversational purposes makes:

   (i) things haphazard
   (ii) vain display of his learnings
   (iii) proper use of books

3. One should take extracts from :

   (i) books of high value
   (ii) meaner sort of books
   (iii) remedial books

4. Books worth a closer and thorough reading :

   (i) are smaller in number
   (ii) are written by famous writers
   (iii) are text books

5. Logic and rhetoric develops :

   (i) man's debating powers
   (ii) man's thinking power
   (iii) man's power to interact

Exercise – 4

Now try to answer the following questions in sentences of your own :

1. What type of books are to be chewed and digested?

   _____
   _____
   _____

2. What do you think is the proper use of study?

_____
_____
_____

3. What is the use of the study of natural philosophy?

_____
_____
_____

4. How can a man acquire ability to perfection?

_____
_____
_____

5. For what we should not read books?

_____
_____
_____

1.4 Analysis

In this section we will discuss various aspects related to the essay. First of all we will presenta critical analysis and then discuss the theme, structure and style of Francis Bacon.

1.4.1 Critical Analysis

This essay deals with different kinds of books and their effect on the reader. The uses of studies are classified by Bacon under three heads – the use of studies for delight; the use of studies for ornament and the use of studies for ability. Bacon also gives us some excellent advice as to why or how one should read. He tells us that different studies have varied effects on the human mind.

Various mental defects can be remedied by various kinds of studies. The need of experience to supplement and perfect studies has duly been emphasised in the essay. Bacon would not be satisfied with more bookish knowledge. The wisdom won by experience is as necessary as the wisdom gained from books.

But it is not only the ideas that are so important in this essay. We find Bacon displaying his talent for using the maximum economy of words in order to express his ideas. The essay is a masterpiece of brevity and terseness. Some of his sentences read like proverbs.

Bacon's essays abound in very appropriate and original similes. We have one such simile here when Bacon says that "distilled books are, like common distilled waters, flashy things".

We could say, without any exaggeration, that it is one of the finest essays in English prose. It gives us a number of sound maxims and a number of sentences that we can use as quotations when occasion demands. Some of the sentences, indeed, cling to our memory without any mental effort on our part to memorise them. This is one of the best known essays from the pen of Bacon.

1.4.2 Theme

The Elizabethan Age is the most creative period in English Literature. The foreign wars were over and the Englishmen had for the first time the leisure to devote their energies to interests other than war upon their neighbours.

Fortunately, just at this time, the great wave of the Renaissance, the new birth of letters, having spent itself in Italy and crossing over France and Spain reached the shores of England.

With Francis Bacon begans philosophical reflections upon life, in the style of Plutarch's "Morals" and the "Essays" of Mointaigne. Bacon's mind was catholic in its range, but the subjects of moral thought that interest him are comparatively few and generalized.

The method used by Bacon is to reduce reflection to the lowest terms to try to discover the fundamental principles of conduct, the influence and the actions of men. His essays reflects his experiences of learning. His observations do not clear his likes or dislikes. They are austere, brief to the point of crudeness.

In the essay Of Studies, a life-long student, Bacon describes his craft. He was no plodder upon books though he read much and that with great judgment. The subject of this essay was the one that revolved longest in the edition of his "Essays".

1.4.3 Structure

One peculiarity of this essay which deserves notice is the frequency with which Bacon repeats himself. Thus essay has each sentence carefully selected and strung together, Bacon has gems of thought and language, but he does not scatter them about with uncalculating profusion of a Shakespeare, non 'like wealthy men who care not how they give, but rather like those who are spending their story with care'.

Bacon is not an optimist. He has no sentiment to lead the reader astray.. He writes with brevity and compactness. To the careless reader much of what

he has written will seem common-place enough. But to the serious reader, his thoughts are universal. The sentences are compact and simple.

1.4.4 Style

The passage is compressed, bold, full of condensed thought and utterly devoid of ornamentation. The sentences run smooth. Force and precision are its main characteristics. The sustained passage has easy eloquence, and sentences here and there are of singular and unaffected beauty and not thrust in but flowing continuously with the rest. Bacon writes with an air of modesty. His passages bear the mark of a grand and confident self-esteem sometimes directly assertive, sometimes condescending, sometimes scornful, sometimes disguised under a transparent affectation of modesty.

There is one special characteristic of Bacon's manner which does not admit of being illustrated except at a prohibitive length, his long magnificent roll of sentence after sentence. Each falling into its place, each adding new weight to what has gone before it, and all together uniting to complete the entire effect.

His style has simplicity, strength, brevity, clearness and precision. Simplicity cannot be said to be a characteristics in its strict sense, of his style. His passage is simple in the sense of being free from all affection, free from any studied elegance in the choice of words and in the structure of sentences. He avoids with equal care both pedantry and vulgarity, though he has no scruple in using homely illustrations, where such illustrations would be more telling.

That the quality of strength in Bacon's style is intellectual rather than emotional.

1.4.5 Self Assessment Questions

In this section you have understood the structure, style and theme 'Of Studies'. You have also gone through the hidden meaning and motive of Bacon in writing this essay.

Exercise-5

Now try to answer the following questions :

1. How did Bacon classify the books?

_____

_____

_____

2. What are special qualities of this essay?

_____

_____

_____

3. Comment on the theme of this essay.

_____

_____

_____

4. Discuss the peculiarity of structure of this essay.

_____

_____

_____

5. Discuss the main qualities of Bacon's style.

_____

_____

_____

1.5 Let's Sum Up

In this unit you have learnt about

- Ideas described in Bacon's essay entitled Of Studies.
- Literary atmosphere of Elizabethan Age.
- Prose writings in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries.
- The word pictures created by Bacon.
- The different meaning of words as used by Bacon.
- Analysing Critically a paragraph of prose.

1.6 Answers To The Exercises

Exercise - 1

1. (a) Anglo-Saxon period
2. (c) Anglo-Norman period
3. (c) translator
4. (a) experiments
5. (a) Renaissance
6. (a) Fourteenth Century
7. (b) Church of England
8. (a) 1576
9. (c) 1614
10. (c) 1597

Exercise-2

1. English prose proved its existence in the Anglo Saxon period. It gradually developed.
2. Europe witnessed Renaissance in the field of creative writings in the fifteenth century. People developed interest in classical writings of ancient Greece and Rome during this period.
3. The Reformation produced models of magnificent prose in English.
4. Revival of learning did much to emancipate thought from the bondage of medieval theology by restoring the generous spirit and ideals of pagan antiquity and alongwith it also presented masterpieces of literature which could be taken as models.
5. Translations of the Testament. The Great Bible, devotional works, sermons, histories, biographies and prose fiction were produced during this period.
6. These writings had a style of fluent, and educated speech. The prose was naive, unsuited for any heavier burden.
7. The Elizabethan settlement, completed with the establishment of thirty one articles in 1571, produced the Church of England.
8. Bacon was a protected child in his early childhood. He had great inclination for studies. At the age of thirteen he joined Trinity College and three years after that he joined Gray's Inn to become a lawyer.
9. Bacon wrote Advancement of Learning in 1605 and dedicated it to the King.
10. Bacon excelled as a writer in the last phase of his life, when he left all his political and legal assignments and totally devoted himself to higher pursuits of learning.

Exercise-3

1. (i) chewed and digested
2. (ii) vain display of his learning
3. (ii) meaner sort of books
4. (i) are smaller in number
5. (i) man's debating powers

Exercise-4

1. The books which have knowledgeable contents should be read thoroughly and understood properly.
2. We study for personal enjoyment and for cultivation of social charm through the cultivation of the power of exposition in speech and to develop ability for judgment of facts and circumstances.

3. It enables the reader to understand things in a better way and reach to the depth of subject matter.

4. It can be acquired when knowledge gained from books is supplemented with practical experience.

5. One should not read books to contradict others.

Exercise-5

1. Bacon classified books under three major categories. Some books are for personal enjoyment, others are to be read to develop conversational qualities and some others are to develop power of judgment.

2. Some of these qualities are maximum economy of words, straight forward presentation, brevity, terseness and use of sentences as proverbs.

3. Bacon tries to discover fundamental principles of conduct influence and actions of men.

4. Each sentence is carefully selected and strung together. The essay shows brevity and compactness.

5. The essay of Bacon is compressed, full of condensed thought and utterly devoid of ornamentation. The sentences in the paragraph run smooth.

1.7 Books Suggested

1. Daiches, David, *A Critical History of English Literature* Allied, New Delhi, 1984.

2. Gibson, S., *Bacon's Essay* Longmans, New Delhi, 1976.

3. Sampson, George, *A Concise Cambridge History of English Literature* CUP, London, 1972.

4. Selby, F.G., *Essays at Bacon* Macmillan, New Delhi, 1977.

UNIT - 2

Bacon : Of Youth and Age

Structure

2.0 Objectives
2.1 Introduction
2.2 About the Author
2.3 Reading the Text
  2.3.1 The Essay : Of Youth and Age (Text)
  2.3.2 Glossary
  2.3.3 Summary
2.4 Some Model Explanations
2.5 Let us Sum Up
2.6 Suggested Readings
2.7 Questions
2.8 Answers

2.0 Objectives

This unit aim to generating interest in you regarding the essays of Francis Bacon. The highly personal essays of today maybe more readable but are not inspired by the high purpose which motivated Bacon and his contemporaries. An effort has been made to realize this objective by presenting a discussion on one of the essays entitled 'Of Youth and Age' written by Bacon.

2.1 Introduction

While the age of Shakespeare found its chief imaginative outlet in drama, it can not be said that it was not was also active in the field of prose. England now felt the stimulus of the Renaissance on the intellectuals as well as on the artists and the result was the production of a great many prose works dealing with various subjects in which thoughtful people were then interested. Most of these belong to the special history of such subjects rather than to the general history of literature. But a few writers claim a place in our record, and among them Bacon, the principal prose master of his time holds an important place.

Francis Bacon is the first English essayist. His essays are filled with stupendous learning and thought. They have to be read slowly and thoughtfully, not because the style is obscure but because they are extremely condensed and the thought is profound. The essay 'Of Youth and Age' is one of the best essays of Bacon in which he compares the two ages, youth and (old) age. The essay deals with the advantages and disadvantages of both the ages. Bacon says that both the ages should be taken into totality, and compounding the characteristics of both the ages, i.e. youth and old age can help in getting success.

2.2 About the Author

The second son of a famous lawyer and statesman, Francis Bacon was born on 22

January 1561. As a boy his wit and precocity attracted the attention of the queen, who used to call him her 'young lord keeper' – his father then being the keeper of the Great Seal of England. He was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, and in preparation for a Career of statesmanship was sent to Paris in suite of the English ambassador. After his father's death in 1579, he chose law as his profession and was called to the Bar in 1589. By this time he had also made his mark as an orator in the House of Commons. After the accession of James I he rose rapidly in favour and fortune. He was knighted in 1603; became Attorney General in 1631, Privy Counciller in 1616; Lord Keeper in 1617; Lord Chancellor and Baron Verulam in 1618; Viscount St. Albans in 1621. He wrote voluminously on many subjects and his greatest work—*Advancement of Learning and Novum Organum* in which he sets forth, and illustrates the inductive or Baconian method of studying nature – place him in the front rank of the world's epoch-makers. His principal contribution to general literature is his little collection of "Essays" or Counsels Civil and Moral" first published in 1597, and in much enlarged editions in 1612 and 1625.

2.3 Reading the Text

Now read the essay and try to comprehend it:

2.3-1 Of Youth and Age (Text)

A man that is young in years may be held in hours, if he have lost no time. But that happeneth rarely. Generally, youth is like the first cogitations, not so wise as the second. For there is a youth in thoughts as a well as in ages. And yet the invention of young men is more lively than that of the old; and imaginations stream into their minds better, and as it were more divinely. Nature that have much heat, and great and violent desires and perturbations, are not ripe for action till they have passed the meridian of their years: as it was with Julius Caesar, and Septimius Severus. Of the latter of whom it is said, *Juventutem egit erroribus, imo furoribus, plenam*. And yet he was the ablest emperor, almost of all the list. But reposed natures may do well in youth. As it is seen in Augustus Caesar, Cosmus, Duke of Florence, Gaston de Foix, and others. On the other side, heat and vivacity in age is an excellent composition for business. Young men are fitter to invent than to judge; fitter for execution than for counsel; and fitter for new projects than for settled business. For the experience of age, in things that fall within the compass of it, directeth them; but in new things, abuseth them. The errors of aged men amount but to this, that more might have been done, or actions embrace, more than they can hold; stir more than they can quiet; fly to the end, without consideration of the means and degrees; pursue some few principles which they have chanced upon absurdly; care not to innovate, which draws unknown inconveniences; use extreme remedies at first; and, that which doubleth all errors, will not acknowledge or retract them; like an unready horse, that will neither stop nor turn. Men of age object too much, consult too long, adventure too little, repent too soon, and seldom drive business home to the full period, but content themselves with a mediocrity of success. Certainly, it is good to compound employments of both; for that will be good for the present, because the virtues of either age may correct the defects of both; and good for succession, that young men may be learners, while men in age are actors; and lastly, good for extern

accidents, because authority followeth old men, and favour and popularity youth. But for the moral part, perhaps youth will have the prominence, as age hath for the politic. A certain rabbin, upon the text, *Your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams,* inferreth that young men are admitted nearer to God than old because vision is a clearer revelation than a dream. And certainly, the more a man drinketh of the world, the more it intoxicateth; and age doth profit rather in the powers of understanding, than in the virtues of the will and affections. There be some have an over-early ripeness in their years, which fadeth betimes. These are, first such as have brittle wits, the edge whereof is soon turned; such as was Hermogenes the rhetorician, whose books are exceeding subtile, who afterwards waxed stupid. A second sort is of those that have some natural dispositions which have better grace in youth than in age; such as is a fluent and luxuriant speech, which becomes youth well, but not age: so Tully saith of Hortensius, *Idem manebat, neque idem docebat*. The third is of such as take too high a strain at the first, and are magnanimous more than tract of years can uphold. As was Scipio Africanus, of whom Livy saith in effect Ultima primis cedebant. [Lord Verulam—The Essays of Francis Bacon.]

2.3-2 Glossary

rarely	:	not often
youth	:	young age
invention	:	creation
lively	:	cheerful
apt	:	appropriate
imagination	:	the ability of mind to form ideas or images in mind
stream	:	small narrow river
divinely	:	belonging to God
violent	:	fierce
perturbation	:	disturbance
ripe	:	matured
meridian	:	mid period
reposed	:	peaceful
vivacity	:	animation
excellent	:	very good
composition	:	mixture
judge	:	to form an opinion about
execution	:	put into action
counsel	:	advise
project	:	plan

settled	:	established
compass	:	circle
directeth	:	give direction
abuseth	:	treat wrongly
ruin	:	destroy
manage actions	:	management of activities
embrace	:	accept
stir	:	move
quiet	:	stable
consideration	:	idea
means	:	resources
degrees	:	quantity
pursue	:	follow
chance	:	happen
absurdity	:	unreasonable
innovate	:	introduce new methods, ideas
draws	:	creates
inconveniences	:	difficulties
extreme	:	to the highest degree
remedies	:	solution
acknowledge	:	accept
retract	:	abandon
unready	:	unwilling
object	:	oppose
consult	:	take advice
adventure	:	an unusual daring, exciting experience
repent	:	regret
content	:	satisfy
mediocrity	:	of only average or fairly low quality
compound	:	mix
employments	:	activities
virtue	:	quality
succession	:	lineage
extern	:	outward

accident	:	mishappening
authority	:	influence
favour	:	approval or liking
popularity	:	the state of being liked and supported by many people.
pre-eminence	:	superiority
politic	:	sensible and wise in the circumstances
rabbin	:	teacher of Jewish laws
conclude	:	bring to an end, arrive at an opinion by reasoning
revelation	:	revelation of something unknown
drinketh of world	:	knows about the world.
intoxicateth	:	to excite or cause to feel very happy
profit	:	benifit
affection	:	love
ripeness	:	maturity
fadeth	:	passes away
betimes	:	by the passing of time
brittle	:	which breaks easily
edge	:	end
rhetorician	:	an expert in powerful and persuasive public speaking
exceed	:	surpass
subtile	:	sensitive
waxed	:	grew, increased
sort	:	a category of people or things with a common feature or features
dispositions	:	temper
grace	:	glory
fluent	:	continuous
luxuriant	:	giving pleasure to senses / growing thickly and strongly
florid	:	over elaborate
strain	:	tension
magnanimous	:	noble
tract	:	region
uphold	:	support

1. Juventutem, etc. He spent a youth that was crowded with mistakes.

2. Cosmus, Duke of Florence: Cosmos dei Medici (1389-1464) who for thirty years was master of the Florentine Republic: the title Duke was adopted by his descendants but not by him.

3. Gaston de Foix (1331-91) – represented by Froiss art as the beau ideal of knighthood.

4. Hermogenes, a rhetorician of Tarsus in the days of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius. When he was fifteen, he became professor of Greek eloquence at Rome and wrote a book on Oratory. It is said he lost his memory and then his mind at the age of twenty five .

5. Hortensius – A Roman orator, friend and rival of Cicero (i.e. Tully) whom Bacon quotes as saying of him, "He did not change though his teaching did."

6. Scipio Africanus – The Roman general who conquered Carthage. Livy's remark means that he was more honourable in youth than towards the end of his life.

2.3.3 Summary

The essay 'Of Youth and Old Age' is one of the most popular essays of Lord Bacon. In this essay Bacon presents a comparative study of the nature of youth age and old age. He says that both the stages of life have their own merits and demerits. Bacon is of the view that the compounding of the characteristics of young age and old age can help in getting success especially in business.

Bacon first describes the drawbacks of youth. He says that although a young man may attain more experience than many old men, it is rare. Generally young people have certain shortcomings in them. He says that youth is liable to foolish thoughts. The errors of youth often prove fatal. It is because of certain characteristic weaknesses of youth such as attempting too much thinking only about the end, ignoring the means, holding on to imperfect principles, reckless innovations, extreme remedies and reluctance to acknowledge errors. Describing the merits of youth Bacon says that youth has lively invention and imagination. Though youth is not so well fit to judge or deliberate, it is fitter to invent and execute. A man that is young in years may be old in hours, if he has lost no time. Young men have a moral freshness, which the old lack in. They are full of adventures and would not tolerate partial success. They are better capable of taking immediate decisions. Thus young people have many advantages over old people.

Describing the drawbacks of old age Bacon says "Men of age object too much, consult too long, adventure too little, repent too soon and seldom drive business home to the full period, but content themselves with a mediocrity of success." While describing the merits of old age he says that old men are more experienced than the young men and they are guided in their action by their experience. But they are less imaginative, they argue too

much, consult too long, are less adventurous, repent too soon and seldom push an affair right through the end. Even a little success satisfies them.

According to Bacon the wise course is the course of golden mean. He advises that the merits of both young and old men should be employed in business which requires immediate efficiency, efficiency in future, external success. This requires combination of the moral freshness of youth and the political sagacity of old age. When both old men and young men are employed, young men will learn from their elders and will themselves grow older and thus have the advantages of old age also.

In this essay Bacon brings to light an important fact about young people. He gives examples from ancient history to illustrate this view. He points out that youth sometimes fails to fulfill its early promise. There are some, who have an early maturity, but their powers also fail early and then they do not justify their promise. This happened with Hermogenes, the rhetorician, who lost-all his mental powers by the time he was twenty-five year old. Secondly, there are persons who have some natural qualities, which are more becoming in youth than in age like Hortensius. He had a florid, passionate style. In oratory this style suited him better as a young man than when he was old. He remained the same even in his old age. Then there are those who begin with very high standards but are unable through a long period of years to maintain themselves at the height of greatness, which they have reached. This was the case with Scipio Africanus, the conqueror of Hanibal at Zama in 201 B.C. Scipio's early career in Spain and Africa was very brilliant. At the time of his great victory in Zama he was only thirty-five years of age. His later career in Asia Minor was not so brilliant.

2.4 Some Model Explanations

(a) A man that is young in years may be old in hours, if he has lost no time. But that happenth rarely. Generally youth is like the first cogitations, not so wise as the second. For there is a youth in thoughts as well as in ages. And yet the invention of young man is more lively than that of the old, and imaginations stream into their minds better, and as it were more divinely.

Exp. In these lines Bacon says that a man who does not waste time may gain a lot of experience even in young age. A man who utilizes all his time becomes more experienced than his age. But such men are found rarely. Bacon compares age with thoughts and finds that young age is like the first preliminary thoughts which cannot be so wise as the second thoughts i.e. the matured thoughts which we find in old age. Meditation improves our ideas. The reason behind it is that young age is as much mental as physical. Young men are not able to think wisely. And yet, the new thoughts and views of young men are more lifelike than those of old people. The imaginative ideas flow in the minds of the young men an they are driven by divine inspiration. They flow fast and young people act fast.

(b) Young men are fitter to invent than to judge; fitter for execution than for counsel and fitter for new projects than for settled business. For the

experience of age, in things that fall within the compass of it directeth them; but in new things, abuseth them.

Exp. In these lines Bacon says that certain things are not within the range of young men. They are only apt to invent because they are less experienced. They are capable of executing a thing because they have more vigour and vitality. But they are unable to give advice because their thoughts are not always so matured. They are fit for new projects because they have enthusiasm and a craze for new things. But they are not meant for settled business because there is no use of their imaginative power and craze for action. The experience of age guides the young people properly. Young men are more imaginative and active but they lack in ripeness. They may commit blunders in executing a work, which may ruin the whole thing.

(c) A certain Rabin, upon the text, your men shall see visions and your old men shall see dreams inferreth that young men are admitted nearer to God than old because vision is a clearer revelation than a dream. And certainly, the more a man drinketh of the world, the more it intoxicateth; and age both profit rather in the powers of understanding, than in the virtues of the will and affections.

Exp. Bacon says that a certain Rabin (an expert on Jewish Laws) said that young men see visions while old men only dream. That is to say that young men are nearer to God than the old. A vision is a clearer expression than a dream. A dream is a sleeping imagination while a vision is an awaking description. A man who lives more in the world, knows more secrets of the world. Old age profits a man in the power of understanding. An old man is experienced rather than passionate. Bacon says that the effect of age and experience on a man is that it increases his power of understanding. A young man has greater power of will, which enables him to execute a job better. Their thoughts and feelings are purer. They have a moral freshness, which the older people lack in. This is youth's advantage over age which benefits their ability to act.

2.5 Let's Sum Up

In this unit we have thrown light on Bacon, a great literary figure and his contribution to the field of English prose. Besides the text of "Of Youth and Age," the unit consists of difficult word meanings and summary.

2.6 Suggested Readings

C.H. Lockitt ed. : ***The Art of the Essayist***, Orient Longman Ltd., New Delhi.

2.7 Questions

(a) Answer the following questions in two-three lines each:

i) Why do the errors of young men often prove fatal?

_____

_____

_____

ii) What are the general merits and demerits of the old age?

_____

_____

_____

iii) "Certainly, it is good to compound employments of both…" Why?

_____

_____

_____

iv) Who are those young men who fail to fulfill their promise?

_____

_____

_____

(b) Answer to the following question should not exceed 300 words.

i) What are the basic qualities of youth? Compare the qualities of youth with old age.

_____

_____

_____

2.8 Answers

a) (i) The errors of young men often prove fatal because they undertake more than they can carry through. They want to achieve their aims hurriedly without considering their means. They are rash and use extreme remedies at the very beginning and are unwilling to acknowledge their errors.

ii) The old men are more experienced than the young men and their actions are guided by their experiences. Old men argue too much, consult too long, are not adventurous, repent too soon and are less imaginative. They are satisfied with little success.

iii) Bacon says it is good to compound the qualities of both youth and old age because this combination will be good for the present, future and exernal affairs. Old men take decisions in matters which they understand whereas young men are rash so the young men may learn what to do from old men.

iv) The young men who fail to fulfill their promise are the ones whose wits are weak. Those young men also fail who begin with a high standard and are unable through a long period of years to maintain themselves at the height of greatness, which they have reached.

b) (i) Bacon has described certain basic qualities of youth. First of all he says that youth is like first thoughts which are not so good as second thoughts. Young age is a mental as a well as a physical state. Young men are more imaginative. Ideas flow in the minds of young men as they are inspired by divine inspiration. Young men are fit to invent than to judge. They undertake

new projects than the settled business. Young men in the management of actions accept more burdens than they can carry through. They act inconsiderately. They try to achieve their aims hurriedly. Young men do not acknowledge their mistakes. Thus they are like a badly trained horse which neither stops nor turns. Bacon compares the different qualities of youth and old age. Youth is the first cogitation while the old age is the second one, therefore more wise. Young men are fit to invent, to execute whereas old men are apt to judge and to advise. Old men are not for adventure, on the other hand, young men are adventurous. Old men have the influence while young men have the popularity. Young men give preference to moral principles while old men care little for moral principles and are more clever and prudent. Young men are nearer to God than old.

UNIT - 3

Joseph Addison : Meditations in Westminister Abbey

Structure

3.0 Objectives
3.1 Introduction
3.2 Summary of the Essay
3.3 The Essay : Meditations in Westminister Abbey (Text)
3.4 Let's Sum Up
3.5 Books Suggested
3.6 Questions
3.7 Answers

3.0 Objectives

The purpose of this unit is to give you practice in understanding a brief composition that undertakes to discuss a matter, express a point of view, or persuade us to accept a thesis on any subject whatever. It is an essay that discusses. Addison's thoughts that strike his mind when the visits the Westminister Abbey.Its subject is non-technical and appealing

3.1 Introduction

(A) About the Author (Joseph Addison)

Addison was a new literary type – the man who rose to political power and fame by his pen. He was poor and unrecognized, but rose suddenly to fame by a poem called *The Addison's political dome Cato – 1719.* As a literary effort the poem is feeble; but the subject – Marl borough's victory at Blenheim – appealed to the Whigs, who were afraid of the fact that the war was becoming unpopular. In a short time Addison was a prop of the Whig cause. He was appointed as Secretary of State in 1717. He wrote one poor drama, *Cato* (1719), which because of its political allusions callused something of a sensation.

1. **His Essays :** Addison's claim to literary greatness rests almost entirely upon his essays, which appeared chiefly in *The Tatler* and *The Spectator,* which were founded by his friend Steele.

   In April 1709 Steele published the first number of The Tatler, a paper which was to appear thrice in a weeky. Addison, who read and liked the first number, offered his services as a contributor, and his first essay appeared in Number 18. Henceforth he took a large share in the management of the paper. In January 1711 The Tatler came to an end, and in March of the same year The Spectator was started. This paper, which was edited almost on the same lines as its predecessor, ran till December 1712. In 1713 they

The Guardian which continued for only 175 numbers. For Addison wrote 42 essays, for The Spectator 274, and for The Guardian 53-a total of nearly 400 essays.

2. **Features of this Essays:** *(a) Their uniform length*. They were composed to fill a prescribed space in the paper, and Addison kept wonderfully close to the specified limits.

   (b) *Their miscellaneous subjects:* All types of articles – political, religious, allegories, dissertations, 'editorials' – were written. In particular, the series dealing with Sir Roger de Coverley gave tone and coherence to the long array of papers.

   (c) *Their general literary level* is astonishingly high. Addison wrote hardly any bad essay; he wrote many a good ones, and the vast majority are of splendid workmanship- well finished scholarly, and sane. One's admiration deepens when one reflects that they were written with unfailing regularity and often in the midst of engrossing political and personal matters.

   (d) Addison's essays are marked with a fine clear style, agreeable humour, and tireless industry.

   (e) The *moral and social purpose* of his essays should not be overlooked. As a matter of fact, Addison set out to "enliven morality with wit, and to temper wit with morality." He did much to break down the prevailing license in the literary world.

3. **Sir Roger de Coverley :** For the modern reader the best part of his essays lies in the set of papers dealing with this old knight. Steele first hit upon the idea of having a running narrative based upon the adventures of this amusing personage, and Addison developed it. In the course of the series of essays Sir Roger comes to London, joins the Spectator Club, and has several diverting experiences.

   The literary importance of this essay series lies first in the fact that it is an approach to the regular novel. In a way each essay is a chapter of the novel; the characters of the members of the Club form the basis of the usual novel-characters ; and the manners of the time, touched upon with a light but accurate skill, form an agreeable background to the story. If the plot had been developed only a little farther, we should have had that modern favourite – the serial story.

B. ABOUT THE ESSAY :

In this essay, the writer, Joseph Addison, talks about his sense of humour, which is of a serious kind, meaning thereby that he preferred a serious humour. Whenever he was in a serious mood owned often walk up to Westminster Abbey, a gloomy, grave place, where exists an atmosphere of sadness and silence.

In this essay Addison reflects upon the graves and the inscriptions and writings as remembrances on them, in the abbey. He believes that " Death levels All", and thus the human desire to pretend as imposters with kinds of inscription are of no use. After death there is no distinction on the basis of upper or lower classes. It is all man created distinctions which carry senseless meanings and tends to distinguish man from man. According to Addison death levels all, whatever caste or creed. In the graves it is simply a promiscuous heap of matter and nothing. This essay is a critical analysis of Addison on the human instinct to differentiate for no justified reasons.

3.2 Summary Of Text

Addison visits the Westminster Abbey and amuses himself with the tomb-stones and inscriptions of the dead whenever he is in a serious mood. He notices that only the dates of birth and death are recorded without anything about the achievement of some men. He is reminded of persons mentioned in heroic poems who have high sounding names given to them for no other reason than that they were knocked on their head. He thinks that incomplete records on the tombstone are a sort of satire upon the departed persons.

During of this visit to the abbey, Addison entertained himself with the digging of a grave. He sees pieces of bones mixed up with a kind of fresh moldering earth. The dead bones and skulls of innumerable people lie under the pavement of that ancient cathedral. He considers how artificial distinction of caste and colour are leveled up in the graveyard. Men and women, friends and enemies, priests and soldiers are blended together in the same common mass.

After surveying the tombs, Addison examines the inscriptions very closely and finds many extravagant epitaphs. Some epitaphs are excessively modest. Some inscriptions are written in Greek and Hebrew. Again, there are some tombs which have no monuments. There are some tombs which are erected to the memory of persons whose bodies are buried elsewhere.

Addison is however, delighted with several modern epitaphs. These have been written with refinement and do honour to the dead. Addison thinks that all inscriptions should be submitted to the perusal of learned men before being put execution. Epitaphs should be true to the dead. They should represent the characters of the persons concerned faithfully, Sir cloudlessly Shovel's monument gives Addison great offence. Sir Shovel is represented as a beau instead of a brave, rough English admiral that he was. The Dutch appear to him better than the English in this respect.

Addison derives lesson of mortality from the graves. He is filled with melancholy, thought and solemn recollection. He feels greatly enriched by his visit. Every emotion of envy dies in him. He sees the vanity of grieving for those we are soon to follow. He reflects with sorrow and astonishment on the little competitions, factions and debates of mankind. When he sees the dates on the tombs of some that died yesterday and some six hundred years ago he thinks of that great day when we all shall be contemporaries, and make our appearances together.

3.3 Joseph Addison : Meditations In Westminister Abbey

1. When I am in a serious mood humour, I very often walk by myself in Westminster Abbey, where the gloominess of the lace, the use to which it is applied, with the solemnity of the building, and the condition of the people who lie in it, are apt to fill the mind with a kind of melancholy, or rather thoughtfulness, that is not disagreeable. I yesterday passed a whole afternoon in the churchyard, the cloisters, and the church, amusing myself with the tombstones and inscriptions that I met with in those several regions of the dead. Most of them recorded nothing else of the buried person, but that he was born upon one day, and died upon another; the whole history of his life being comprehended in those two circumstances that are common to all mankind. I could not but look upon these registers of existence, whether of brass or marble, as a kind of satire upon the departed persons; who had left no other memorial of them, but that they were born and that they died. The put me in mind of several persons mentioned in the battles of heroic poems, who have sounding names given hem, for no other reason but that they may be killed and are celebrated for nothing but being knocked on the head.

   The life of these men is finely described in holy writ by "the path of an arrow," which is immediately closed up and lost.

2. Upon my going into the church, I entertained myself with the digging of a grave; and saw in every shovelful of it that was thrown up, the fragment of a bone or skull intermixed with a kind of fresh mouldering earth, that some time or other had a place in the composition, of a human body. Upon this I began to consider with myself what innumerable multitudes of people lay confused together under the pavement of the ancient cathedral; how men and women, friends and enemies, priests and soldiers, monks and prebendaries, were crumbled amongst one another, and blended together in the same common mass; how beauty, strength and youth, with old age, weakness, and deformity, lay undistinguished in the same promiscuous heap of matter.

   After having thus surveyed this great magazine of mortality, as it were, in the lump; I examined it more particularly by the accounts which I found on several of the monuments which are raised in every quarter of that ancient fabric. Some of them were covered with such extravagant epitaphs, that, if it were possible for the dead person to be acquainted with them, he would blush at the praises which his friends have bestowed upon him. There are others so excessively modest, that they deliver the character of the person departed in Greek or Hebrew, and by that means are not understood once in a twelvemonth. In the poetical quarter, I found there were poets who had no monuments, and monuments which had no poets. I observed, indeed, that the present war had filled the church with many of these uninhabited monuments, which had been erected to the memory of persons whose bodies were perhaps buried in the plains of Blenheim, or in the bosom of the ocean.

3. I could not but be very much delighted with several modern epitaphs which are

written with great elegance of expression and justness of thought, and therefore do honour to the living as well as to the dead. As a foreigner is very apt to conceive an idea of the ignorance or politeness of a nation from the turn of their public monuments and inscriptions, they should be submitted to the perusal of men of learning and genius, before they are put in execution. Sir Cloudesley Shove's monument has very often given me great offence: instead of the brave rough English Admiral ,which was the distinguishing character of that plain gallant man, he is represented on his tomb by the figure of a beau, dressed in a long periwig, and reposing himself upon velvet cushions under a canopy of state. The inscription is answerable to the monument; for instead of celebrating the many remarkable actions he had performed in the service of his country, it acquaints us only with the manner of his death, in which it was impossible for him to reap any honour. The Dutch, whom we are apt to despise for want of genius, sow an infinitively greater taste of antiquity and politeness in their buildings and works of this nature, than what we meet with in those of our own country. The monuments of their admirals, which have been erected at the public expense, represent them like themselves; and are adorned with rostral crowns and naval ornaments, with beautiful festoons of seaweed, shells, and coral.

4. But to return to our subject. I have left the repository of our English kings for the contemplation of another day, when I shall find my mind disposed for so serious an amusement. I know that entertainments of this nature are apt to raise dark and dismal thoughts in timorous minds and gloomy imaginations; but for my own part, though I am always serious, I do not know what it is to be melancholy; and can therefore take a view of nature in her deep and solemn scenes, with the same pleasure as in her most gay and delightful ones. By this means I can improve myself with those objects which others consider with terror. When I look upon the tombs of the great, every emotion of envy dies in me; when I read the epitaphs of the beautiful, every inordinate desire goes out; when I meet with grief of parents upon a tombstone, my heart melts with compassion; when I see the tomb of the parents themselves, I consider the vanity of grieving for those whom we must quickly follow: when I see kings lying by those who deposed them, when I consider rival wits placed side by side, or the holy men that divided the world with their contests and disputes, I reflect with sorrow and astonishment on the little competitions, factions, and debates of making. When I read the several dates of the tombs. of some that died yesterday, and some six hundred years ago, I consider that great day when we shall all of us be contemporaries, and make our appearance together.

Glossary

Humour	:	mood form
Gloominess	:	dejection, sadness
apt	:	fit, suitable
memorial	:	in remembrance of
innumerable multitudes	:	uncountable and many
heap of matter	:	dead bones of left overs

melancholy : sad

Pallida mors, etc.: despite the growing dislike of pedantry, these essays still, we note, carry their Lating motto. This well-known verse of Horace means: "Pale death beats with impartial foot at the hovels of the poor and the castles of kings. O happy Sestius,, the brief span of life forbids us to entertain a long hope. Even now, night, and storied ghosts and the cheerless house of Pluto will press upon thee."

Sir Cloudesley Shovel: (1650-1707) an admiral of the time of Queen Anne. As a young man he is said to have swum under the enemy's fire with dispatches in his mouth. He perished in a shipwreck.

3.4 Let's Sum Up

Addison's was that he was an accomplished scholar, a man of pure eloquence and, a consummate painter of life and manners. It was due, above all, to the great satirist who alone knew how to use ridicule without abusing it, who without inflicting a wound, effected a great social reform and who reconciled wit with virtue after a long and disastrous separation, during which wit had been led astray by profligacy and virtue by fanaticism. This is a remarkable contribution of Addison to life and literature. He was a great social critic and reformer who brought about a revolutionary change in the quality of life in contemporary England through his contributions.

After reading this essay, now you are aware of the contexts and meanings of the words that have been used in the essay. You are requested to use the dictionary at every stage, to understand the surface meaning of the pregnant lines of the essay. Now answer the questions that are given below and check your answer with those that are given at the end.

3.5 Books Suggested

C.H. Lockitt : *The Art of the Essayist*

Edward Albert : *A short History of English Literature*

M.H. Abrams : *A Glossary of Literary Terms*

3.6 Questions

Please answer the following questions:

1. What was the great source of entertainment for Addison when he was in a serious mood?

   _____

   _____

   _____

2. What does the essay Meditations in Westminster Abbey discuss about?

   _____

   _____

   _____

3. What are the circumstances that Addison finds common to all mankind?

   _____

   _____

4. What did Addison find when he dug the grave?

5. Why does the writer criticize the modern epitaphs?

6. What is the common idea that the essayist wants to convey?

7. Write a paragraph on the identity of Addison as a great essayist?

8. Summarise the essay.

9. Write a note on Addison's view's about the inscriptions on the tomb-stones in the Westminster Abbey.

10. "The life of these men is finely described in the Holy writ by the path of an arrow which is immediately closed up and lost". Explain.

11. Describe the thoughts that comes to Addison's mind when he visits the Westminster Abbey?

12. Write five sentences about Joseph Addison. Also mention the dates of his age?

13. What is a Satire?

14. Constnut five sentences each on the following:

(i) Simple Sentences

(ii) Interrogative Sentences

(iii) Exclamatory Sentences

15. Write the meanings of the following terms / words:

i. Humour
ii. Disagreeable
iii. Gloominess
iv. Solemnity
v. Cloisters
vi. obscurity

16. Write some memorable quotations from the Essay Meditations In Westminster Abbey.

3.7 Answers

1. In his serious humour, Addison preferred walking all alone in the Westminster Abbey, a gloomy place known for its solemnity and melancholic atmosphere.

2. The essay deals with Addison's views on human mistakes created at a point where it is almost stupidity and immoral. He talks about artificial notions, set in the mind of the people of high and lower classes. Addison through his essays rebukes man to create any kind of distinctions because he believes that "Death Levels All".

3. Those two circumstances were, the inscriptions that mentioned the date of the dead man in two ways: the dates that he was born one day, and died upon another day.

4. He saw in every shovelful of it that was thrown up, the leftovers of bones or skull intermixed which was once upon a time a human body. At this he began to think that how men and women, friends and enemies, priests and soldiers, monks and probendaries, were intermixed in the mud. It is now considered a heap of matter without any consideration for beauty, weakness, strength, old age or young age meaning that Death levels all.

5. The modern epitaphs were written with great elegance of expression and justness of thought and therefore do honour to the living as well as to the dead.

6. He wishes to convey that we should not distinguish one another for silly man made differences. Death levels all and it does not consider any kind of richness or poverty.

7. Addison may be said to have almost created and wholly perfected English prose as an instrument for the expression of social thought. He took features of his style from almost all his predecessors. He assumed the character of an essayist moralist, philosopher and critic, and he blended them altogether in his new capacity of a journalist. His essay represents the delightful plasticity, the delightful nuances of mood and fancy.

   Addison took great care in selecting words from a rich stock and was careful not to tire his readers by repetitions. He laboriously polished his phrases.

   Addison aimed deliberately at the beauty of execution and employed the pedestrian form. His essay 'Meditations In the Westminster Abbey' is more natural and ornated.

8. Addison visited the Westminster Abbey in a serious humour. In this essay, which is one of his well known essays, he describes the thoughts that came to his mind in the Abbey. The main thoughts of the essay may be stated thus: Death levels all distinctions. Inscriptions which record nothing else except births and deaths are a sort of satire upon the departed soul. Epitaphs should represent the dead faithfully. Mr. W.E. Williams makes the following comment

about Addison's style, "It is miraculous and elaborate. His paragraphing is a model of precision, the balance and antithesis of sentences are as carefully contrive as a stone mason's or a carpenter's. His diction again is as formal as the costume of his day; never replacing into a full-blooded colloquialism never robust in its humour."

9. Addison once visited the Westminster Abbey. He read the inscriptions on the tombstones in the Abbey. He did not like most of them. He found that most of the inscriptions said nothing else about the dead person except the dates of their birth and death. Addison regards this as useless. The two events are common to all mankind. He said that such inscriptions were a satire upon the departed souls. They showed as if they did nothing worth remembering in the world except that they were born on a particular day and died on another.

   Upon certain tombs he found extravagant epitaphs. Addison thought that they were so extravagant that even the persons concerned would blush to read them if they were to come to life. Some epitaphs were excessively modest and inadequate. Many of them were written in Greek or Hebrew which none could read. Thus the epitaphs were rendered useless.

   He found many monuments and tombs which did not contain the remains of the dead. They had died elsewhere. It had not been possible to bring their remains here. So these monuments were just memorials. There were some graves which had no tomb-stones on them.

   Some inscriptions misrepresented the dead. It was so in the case of Sir Cloudsley Shovel. Sir Cloudsley Shovel was a great English Admiral. In his life he had been rough, brave and simple. He was a great patriot. The inscription did not show these qualities of Sir Shovel. Instead he was represented as a beau with a long periwig and reposing upon a velvet cushion under a canopy. The inscription mentioned the manner of his death. Nothing in the inscription did honour to Sir Shovel. Addison says that the inscriptions should represent the true character of the dead persons.

   Addison saw some modern inscriptions. These were written with great elegance of expression and justness of thought. These did honour to the dead.

   Addison says that a foreigner is likely to form an opinion about the character of the people of the country by reading these inscriptions. He suggests that all inscriptions should be subjected to the perusal of men of learning before they are carved on the tomb-stones. He appreciates the Dutch for writing good inscriptions on the tomb-stones.

10. Addison says that the lives of many of the so called great men are untraceable after their death. They leave nothing in the world worth remembering. The path traversed by an arrow is untraceable immediately after it leaves. No track is left after it passes though the air. In the same way some men leave no trace of their life after death. It appears that they were born and they immediately died. We do not remember them for they do nothing worth remembering.

11. The essay 'Mediations in Westminster Abbey' describes Addison's impressions and thoughts. One day Addison was in a thoughtful mood. He was quite serious. In such a mood he visited the Westminster Abbey. He examined the various tombs there. He did not like the inscriptions on most of them. He found that most of the memorials only mentioned the year of birth and death. He says that from this one is made to think that the man did nothing in his life worth remembering.

    Some tombs had extravagant epitaphs. Some epitaphs were very inadequate. Some were written in Greek and Hebrew. So very few persons could read and understand them.

    There were some monuments and tombs which were just memorials. The persons had died elsewhere. Some tombs had no memorials. Some monuments did not suitably represent the dead person. For example, Addison did not like the Sir Cloudesley Shovel's monument. Shovel was a great English Admiral. He was a brave, simple man who scarified his life for an ideal. But he is represented as a fashionable young man. Addison praises the Dutch for showing better taste in their monuments.

    Addison praises some modern inscriptions. They describe the persons correctly. They do honour to the persons concerned and the writer. Addison says that foreigners form an opinion about us by reading these inscriptions. So these should be carefully checked and Men of learning should be consulted in this matter.

    Addison's visit to the Westminster Abbey was very rewarding. He realized the transitoriness of life when he saw tombs of the great. He realized that we should not be envious of the so called great men.

    We should not be proud of our wealth power and beauty. All persons great or small, poor or rich must die one day. We should not quarrel over petty things. Friends and enemies, priests and soldiers all are blended together in the common mass in the end.

12. Joseph Addison was born on May1, 1672. He studied at Queen's College, Oxford. He was also associated with Magdalen College. Very soon, he acquired an immense scholastic reputation. Johnson praised him for his Latin Poem. He was married to the Countess of Warwick, but it was not a happy marriage. In 1718 his health began to fall. He died in 1719 at the early age of forty-seven.

    Addison is famous for the sweetness of his style. "Never." Said Macaulary. "had the English language been written with such sweetness, grace and falicity as by Addison". Whatever he wrote, appealed to the common reader. His essays are not scholarly, they Addison's essay are familiar, easy and simple.

13. Satire is literary device of diminishing a subject by making it ridiculous and evoking towards it attitudes of amusement, contempt, indignation or scorn.

14. I Simple Sentences:

(i) Ram plays football.

(ii) Sita sings a song.

(iii) Ravi dances in the hall.

(iv) The Sun sets in the West.

(v) The boys go to School.

II Interrogative Sentences:

(i) What is your name?

(ii) Where do you live?

(iii) How old are you?

(iv) Which girl is going there?

(v) Whom did you tell the story?

III Exclamatory Sentences:

(i) Hurray! We have won the match.

(ii) Wowe! What a great deal.

(iii) Alas! He is dead.

(iv) Ah! What a great story?

(v) How delicious the food is!

15. Please refer to the dictionary.

16. (1) Most of them recorded nothing else of the buried person but that he was born one day and died upon another.

(2) The life of these men is finely described in Holy Writ by the path of an arrow, which is immediately closed up and lost.

(3) In the poetical quarter, I found there were poets who had no monuments and monuments which had no poets.

(4) When I look upon the tombs of the great, every emotions of envy dies in me.

(5) When I read the several dates of the tombs – of some that died yesterday, and some six hundred years ago, I consider that great day when we shall all of us be contemporaries, and make our appearance together.

UNIT - 4

Joseph Addison : Rural Manners

Structure

4.0 Objectives
4.1 Introduction
4.2 About the Author
4.3 Reading the Text
  4.3.1 The Essay : Rural Manners (Text)
  4.3.2 Annotations
  4.3.3 Summary
4.4 Some Model Explanations
4.5 Let‘s Sum Up
4.6 Suggested Readings
4.7 Questions
4.8 Answers

4.0 Objectives

The purpose of this unit is to enable you to comprehend the difference, as stated by Addison in the essay **Rural Manners,** between the manners prevailing in London and those in the countryside. The countryside is generally very much behindhand in this respect. Many of the elaborate courtesies and formalities that have passed out of fashion in the city are still current in the countryside. In the past the distinguishing sign of a gentleman’s conversation was that he was very careful to avoid any expression which had either a vulgar or an obscene association. Now-a-days the fashion in the town is to speak with a degree of freedom on such matters which would have put even a clown to shame. Fortunately, this fashion of talking loosely has not yet percolated to the countryside. In matters of dress, the country folk have always been backward as compared to those living in the city. Fashions which are out of vogue in the town are prevalent in the countryside for as much as half a century.

4.1 Introduction

The essay throws light on the conception of good manners current in Addison’s times. It also tells us of the way in which life in the town makes an impact on country life. In the age which had just elapsed, good manners consisted in a display of over-formal politeness, which can only be called excess of good breeding. The country which is at least quarter of a century behind the town in matters of fashion still conforms to the earlier notion of politeness. In fact matters of ceremonial precedence are carried to an extreme in the countryside, where they become a positive nuisance; for example it takes so much time to sit and wait the guests according to the strict requirements of protocol that by that time the dinner becomes cold. The country, says Addison, has so far been safe from one perversion of polite conversation in the town of which Addison seems to be full of horror that is, talking in a licentious manner.

4.2 About the Author

By now you know Addison as an essayist. Here we intend to tell you the merits of Addison's character which made him a popular figure of his time. Thereafter, we shall describe the faults which lessened his popularity as a person. Addison was a lively conversationalist; his conversation in the circle of his intimate friends was more enjoyable than his writings. Pope and Swift were compelled to acknowledge the superior gifts of Addison. His fault as a person was that he would always like to be surrounded by his known admirers. All these men were far inferior to him in ability and some of them had serious faults. No doubt Addison could see through the faults of his friends yet it was impossible to escape entirely the vitiating influence of such constant adulation.

4.3 Reading the Text

4.3.1 Now read the Essay: Rural Manners (Text)

The first and most obvious reflections which arise in a man, who changes the city for the country, are upon the different manners of the people whom he meets with in those two different scenes of life. By manners I do not mean morals, but behaviour and good breeding, as they shew themselves in the town and in the country.

And here in the first place, I must observe a very great revolution that has happened in this article of good breeding. Several obliging deferences, condescensions, and submissions, with many outward forms and ceremonies that accompany them, were first of all brought up in the politer part of mankind, who lived in courts and cities, and distinguished themselves from the rustic part of the species (who acted on all occasions bluntly and naturally) by such a mutual complaisance and intercourse of civilities. These forms of conversation by degrees multiplied and grew troublesome; the modish world found too great a constraint in them, and have, therefore thrown most of them aside. Conversation, like the Roman religion, was so encumbered with show and ceremony, that it stood in the need of a reformation to retrench its superfluities, and restore it to its natural good sense and beauty. At present, therefore, an unconstrained courage, and a certain openness of behaviour, are the height of good breeding. The fashionable world is grown free and easy; our manners sit more loose upon us. Nothing is so modish as an agreeable negligence. In a word, good-breeding shews itself most, where to an ordinary eye it appears the least.

If after this we look on the people of the mode in the country, we find in them the manners of the last age. They have no sooner fetched themselves up to the fashion of the polite world, but the town has dropped them and are nearer to the first state of nature, than to those refinements which formerly reigned in the court, and still prevail in the country. One may now know a man that never conversed in the world by his excess of good breeding. A polite country esquire shall make you as many bows in half an hour, as would serve a courtier for a week. There is infinitely more to do

about place and precedency in a meeting of justices' wives, than in any assembly of duchesses.

This rural politeness is very troublesome to a man of my temper, who generally takes the chair that is next me, and walk first or last, in the front or in the rear, as chance directs. I have known my friend Sir Roger's dinner almost cold before the company could adjust the ceremonial, and be prevailed upon to sit down; and have heartily pitied my old friend when I have seen him forced to pick and cull his guests as they sat at the several parts of his table, that he might drink their healths according to their respective ranks and qualities. Honest will Wimble, whom I should have thought had been altogether uninfected with ceremony, gives me abundance of trouble in this particular. Though he has been fishing all the morning, he will not help himself at dinner until I am served. When we are going out of hall, he runs behind me; and last night, as we were walking in the fields, stopped short at a stile till I came up to it, and upon my making signs to him to get over, told me, with a serious smile, that sure I believed they had no manners in the country.

There has happened another revolution in the point of good breeding, which relates to the conversation among men of mode, and which I cannot but look upon as very extraordinary. I was certainly one of the first distinctions of a well-bred man, to express everything that had the most remote appearance of being obscene, in modest terms and distant phrases; whilst the clown, who had no such delicacy of conception or expression, clothed his ideas in those plain homely terms that are the most obvious and natural. This kind of good manners was perhaps carried to an excess, so as to make conversation too stiff, formal and precise; for which reason as hypocrisy in one age is generally succeeded by atheism in another conversation is in a great measure relapsed into the first extreme; so that at present several of our men of the town, and particularly those who have been polished in France, make use of the most coarse uncivilized words in our language, and utter themselves often in such a manner as a clown would blush to hear.

This infamous piece of good-breeding, which reigns among the coxcombs of the town, has not yet made its way into the country; and as it is impossible for such an irrational way of conversation to last long among a people that makes any profession of religion, or show of modesty, if the country gentleman gets into it, they will certainly be left in the lurch. Their good- breeding will come too late to them, and they will be thought a parcel of clowns, while they fancy themselves talking together like men of wit and pleasure.

As the two points of good-breeding, which I have hitherto insisted upon, regard behaviour and conversation, there is a third which turns upon dress. In this too the country are very much behindhand. The rural beaus are not yet got out of the fashion that took place at the time of the Revolution, but ride about the country in red coats and laced hats; while the women in many parts are still trying to outvie one another in the height of their head dresses.

But a friend of mine, who is now upon the western circuit, having promised to give me an account of the several modes and fashions that prevail in the different parts of the nation through which he passes, I shall defer the enlarging upon this last topic till I have received a letter from him, which I expect every post.

4.3.2 Annotations

This article	:	This point or aspect
Complaisance	:	Exchange of polite attentions
Modish	:	Fashionable
Constraint	:	Inhibition, lack of naturalness
Encumbered	:	Burdened
Retrench	:	Get rid of
Unconstrained carriage	:	Natural and affected behaviour
Agreeable negligence	:	A lack of formality which is pleasing.
Our manners sit….us	:	We do not observe rigid formalities.
Excess of good-breeding	:	Extravagant observance of politeness
Precendency	:	Preference according to rank or status
Cull	:	Choose
Stile	:	Small gate in the fence
Obscene	:	Contrary to decorum, vulgar
First extreme	:	Here it means 'Looseness'
Coxcombs	:	Conceited young men
Left in the lurch	:	Left without any support
Behindhand	:	Backward
Outvie	:	Outdo, excel

4.3.3 Summary

One major distinction between the manners in the town and the country is that many formalities and ceremonials, which once formed a part of civilized life in the city, but are no more in vogue now- are still observed in the countryside. The mark of good breeding in the city now, says Addison, is the unaffected behaviour rather than an overformal courtesy. In the countryside good breeding is carried to ridiculous extremes, so that it becomes troublesome at social occasions like dinners as one is expected to sit according to the rigorous precedence of mark and status. A country gentleman might make one as many bows as would last courtier for a whole week. According to Addison, wives of country justices make more ado on this score than even duchesses. It does not matter that by the time the seating problem is resolved, the dinner might have become cold.

Even a sensible man like Will Wimble has been infected with the extravagant formality of country life. He may have been fishing all morning, but he will not help himself until the spectator has been served.

A revolutionary change has occurred in the field of polite conversation. It used to be the chief distinction of the conversation of a well-bred man that he scrupulously avoided all terms which had the least tincture of vulgarity. Only the clown could speak in an obscene language. Now the pendulum has swung to the other extreme. Fashionable men of town now take pleasure in speaking in a coarse and uncivilized manner. In fact a clown would blush at their lack of restraint and decorum in speech. We are fortunate, says Addison, that this piece of good breeding has not so far reached the country.

In matters of dress the country people are very much behindhand. The countryside women are trying to excel each other by wearing the tallest head dresses which have already passed out of fashion in the town. On this matter the author promises to write in detail in a later essay.

4.4 Some Model Explanations

(i) Several obliging……..of civilities. (Para - 2)

Addison believes that a great revolution has recently taken place with regard to the conception of good manners in polite town circles. In the preceding age good manners were supposed to be directly proportionate to the amount of good breeding which a person displayed in his behaviour or conversation. At that time the chief distinction between a man of the town and one from the country was that the latter was more blunt and unaffected in the expression of his thoughts. In time this grew to absurd extremes. The natural reaction was that the conception of good manners underwent a radical change, and it became a fashion to behave in an unconstrained way, and good breeding came to be reflected not in its own display but in lack of obtrusion.

(ii) One may……..duchesses. (Para3)

Countrymen are very much behindhand in their conception of good manners. They cling to a notion which has become outdated, i.e. good breeding must be plainly reflected in one's way of behaviour. The current notion is that one should be free and unconstrained in one's behaviour. In the country excessive attention is still being paid to ceremonial matters. In fact one can distinguish a man who has moved in polite circles from one who has not by the fact that the latter will be found to display excessive good breeding. A country squire will make as many bows in greeting a person as would suffice a courtier for a whole week. The wives of country justices are more squeamish in matters of precedence than even duchesses would be in a town gathering.

4.5 Let's Sum up

In this unit we have discussed the essay **Rural Manners** in detail so as to enable you to understand the major distinction, as pointed out by Addison, between the manners observed in a town and the countryside area. You should, by now, be able to understand that the present essay is a social document because it throws light on the manners prevalent in the contemporary times.

4.6 Suggested Readings

1. Fowler, J. H. *Essays from Addison*, Cambridge University Press
2. Myers, O. M. *The Coverley Papers from the Spectator*, OUP
3. Walker, Hugh *The English Essay and Essayists*, OUP

4.7 Questions

Attempt the following questions:

1. In which category can you put the essay **Rural Manners**?

_____

_____

2. Point out the main idea in the essay.

_____

_____

3. Who, according to Addison, are much behindhand in their conception of good manners?

_____

_____

4. Who has been infected with the extravagant formality of country life?

_____

_____

5. What is the change that has occurred in the field of polite conversation?

_____

_____

6. On the basis of your reading the essay, point out the main features of the contemporary society.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

4.8 Answers

1. The essay can be considered a social document.
2. The essay deals with the distinction of manners in a town and a country life.
3. The countryside people are much behind in their conception of good manners.
4. Will Wimble
5. Fashionable men of town take pleasure in speaking in a coarse and uncivilized manner.
6. For answer to this question, refer to the section 3.3.3 (Summary)

UNIT - 5

Charles Lamb : Modern Gallantry

Structure

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5.5 Questions
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5.7 Answers
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5.0 Objectives

In this Unit we have given you an essay by Charles Lamb. We aim at equipping you with the basic understanding of an essayist in the context to his period, in this case Romantic period. After completing this Unit you will be able to

1. Know certain literary terms which are necessary to understand English literature in general.
2. Have an idea about the art of essay writing and how it os different from other genres.
3. Understand and have details about Romantic period in English literature, and how it was a reaction against its preceding era i.e. neoclassical age.
4. Know Charles Lamb as an essayist on the basis of his essay *Modern Gallantry*.
5. Explain certain lines with reference to context by adding critical notes on matter and style.

5.1 Study Guide

In this Unit we aim at discussing with you an essay by Charles Lamb. You have been given some details about the age i.e. Romantic era to which the essayist belongs. You will find meanings of the difficult words of the essay in the section Glossary. Key works used in the Unit have been explained to you so that you may understand the Unit in a batter way and in less time.

You should read about the author so that you may have an idea about his personal and social life, and the important works written by him.

You should study the Section *About the Age*. This section will provide you details about the Romantic era to which Lamb and Hazlitt belong. This will help you understand the writers i.e. their essays included in Unit No. 3 and Unit No. 4 for you. You should try to locate the general trends of the era of these writers prescribed for you. You will find that they share many elements of Romanticism namely contrast with neoclassicism, role of imagination, autobiographical details and a felling of recluse or reble with society. The essays chosen for you in Unit 3 and Unit 4 are didactic ones and reflect the reaction of the essayist against the society.

The section *About the Essay* provides you the critical summary of the essay so that you may understand it in line with the summary given. You should notice how certain lines are explained with reference to the context. You have been given model explanations in Section 3.2.7.

You should try to answer the questions given in the Section 3.5. For answers you should consult Section 3.7. You can rephrase the answers or write them in your own words but the gist or the information should be correct as given in the essay by the writer. Section 3.3 *Key words* and Section 3.6 *Suggested Readings* are meant for improving your study of English literature, particularly this Unit. If you understand the *Key Words* which are lime and again used in this Unit, you will be able to understand the Unit in a better way. They are a great help at your level. An exercise has been given for you in the form of some general questions at the end.

5.2 Charles Lamb : Modern Gallantry

5.2.1 About the Age: Romantic Period

The Romantic period in English literature in usually considered to have begun from 1789 (The beginning of the French Revolution) or 1798 (The Publication of the Lyrical Ballads by Wordsworth and Coleridge) and continued the beginning of the Victorian era. This is considered a great literary period with a strong contrast with the Neoclassical period (From Restoration 1660 to the beginning of the Romanticism) in theme and style. Wordsworth, Coleridge, Blake, Byron, Shelley, Keats as poets; Lamb, Hazlitt, De Quincey and Leigh Hunt as essayists; Jane Austen and Sir Walter Scott as novelists are well-known writers of this age.

Ryden, Pope, Addison, Swift, Johnson, Goldsmith and Edmund Burke are important writers of neoclassicism who imitated the classical writers in form & style; and had high respect for the Roman writers who acted as their models. The Romantic writers of the first three decades of the 19th Century differ from the neoclassical writers in their approach of ideals and writings. Their materials, forms and style of literature are different from their predecessors. The Romantic manifesto or statement of revolutionary aims come into being with the publication of the *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) by Wordsworth rejected the use of artificiality in theme and style, Common man from the

country side in common man's language become the subject matter and the style of Wordsworth's poetry. This was in contrast with the urban ideas and artificial diction of the neoclassical writers. Use of Supernatural element become one of the other innovations in the poetry of Colleridge and Keats. Blake, Wordsworth, Shelley acted as the poet-prophets of the era.

In his Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*, Worldworth defines poetry as the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings recollected in tranquility. Thus it is free from artificial rules and traditions of the neoclassic predecessors. Keats said "If poetry comes not as naturally as the leaves to a tree, it had better not come at all". Thus the Romantics were against artificiality in theme and style. Imagination played an important role in the poetic process of the Romantics.

Mature, he landscape alongwith its flora and fauna become the subject matter of Romantic poetry. Wordsworth is considered the high priest of nature. Accurate description and sensuousness become the integral part of the poetry of Keats. Nature become an important medium for human thinking and human problems. Nature become an important theme against the fever and fret of this world, against the evils of industrialization which deserted the solitude of the countryside, the evils of urban life and the satanic mills.

Much of the Romantic works are full of autobiographical details representing the poet himself. While the works of the neoclassicists were mainly about other men. Most of the Romantic poems reflect the life and mood of the poet, for example Wordsworth's *Prelude* or odes of Shelley of Keats or Byron's *Childe Harold*. Similarly we find autobiographical details in the personal essays of Lamb and Hazlitt. In all these works the writer appears as a solitary figure, socially non- conformist or outcast. He is usually away from society. Many a times the chief character of a Romantic work is a rebel, whether for good or evil.

While the new classical writers rejoiced in perfect accomplishment of from and style in the manner of their Greco-Roman models, the Romantics preferred the glory of the imperfect. The Romantics rejoiced the notion of unachievable ideals. The poet's faculty of imagination leads limitless aspirations. The French Revolution ideals of fraternity, liberty, quality and humanity affected the Romantics to a great extent and thus the Romantic era became an age of new beginning and great possibilities in subject matter as well as in style.

5.2.2 Literary Device : The Essay

Essays like dramas, novels, short stories and other types of literature act as an important vehicle to convey our thoughts. Essayists have written essays on various topics and in different styles. Their levels of difficulty may be different. Their aims may be different. These two Units 3 and 4 deal with didactic type of essays meant for instruction as well as pleasure. Hey are not

too long to tire your brain and lead you to boredom.

While studying these essays you should know how an essay is different from other types of literary genres. When you are asked to write an essay in your examination, do you express your views in such a language as used in these essays? Perhaps not. Here lies the charm of personality of the essayist. Personality of the essayist is reflected in the essay though the essay may not be an autobiographical one.

One more important point t note is how these essayists have begun their essays. Do you feel it is a matter of chance that both these essays, chosen in Unit No. 3 and Unit No. 4, begin with a definition of the key word of the title? If you know what the title mean, it becomes easy to write or to understand the essay.

5.2.3 About the Author: Charles Lamb.

Charles Lamb (1775-1834) is a famous essayist who wrote under his pseudonym of Elia. He pseudonym Elia was borrowed from the surname of a fellow clerk in the South Sea House where Lamb worked for quit a long time. He was then transferred to East India House. This is reflected in autobiographical details in his essays. For a short time in 1795-96 he was mentally deranged, and the threat of madness become a shadow on his life. His sister, Mary, under the severe attack of insanity killed her own mother in 1796. His love affair with Ann Simmons of Hertfordshire was unsuccessful and unfortunate.

Lamb's literary criticism is scattered and small in volume, though A.C. Bradley regarded him as the greatest critic of his century. Lamb had mastered the art of brief and accurate characterization. His comments are generalized but perceptive. This has made his word original and illuminating. He was a well-known letter writer of great charm and quality.

Lamb tried to write poetry and dramas also but he is chiefly known for his essays. Lamb's *Essays of Elia* appeared in 1823, his most remarkable work, which made him "The Prince of the Essayists". In this book he has presented the criticism of life in his characteristic style laving wit and humour. In these essays lamb. Presents himself as *Elia*, and his sister Mary as "Cousin Bridget". Some of his famous essays are:

1. Dream Children: A Reverie
2. The Praise of Chimney Sweepers.
3. Imperfect Sympathies.
4. All Fools' Day
5. The Old Familiar Faces.
6. A Bachelor's Complaint Against the Behaviour of Married People.
7. The Old and the new School Master.
8. Poor Relations.

9. Witches, and Other Night Fears.

As has already been mentioned, Lamb got the pseudonym Elia from the name of an Italian who worked as his colleague at the South Sea House.

Most of Lamb's essays are depply personal and autobiographical. These essays are a good vehicle for self-revelation. The first person singular pronoun in the essays stands for the writer and is not a persona.

Lamb's essays are full of wit and homour. He makes fun of himself as well as of others. His wit and humour are usually not full of hatred or personal revenge.

Pathos is closely related to Lamb's humour. Lamb was unmarried and therefore the question of having children does not arise. Pathos is some kind of Catharsis and brings happiness to the writer. At the back of pathos is lamb's won tragic life.

His essays are full of brief character-sketches. Lamb's remarkable characterization makes his characters memorable. Some of them are master pieces of humour. Lamb has keen observation and masterly power of representing contemporary manners and moods.

Lamb's essays are full of anecdotes. In Modern Gallantry also he has conveyed his ideas of regard and respect for ladies through the story of Susan Winstanley and Joseph Paice. These anecdotes provide a narrative appeal to his essays and become a part and parcel of his essays.

The structure of Lamb's essays is loose as he indulges in digressions too much. His essays are not so compact and precise as those of Bacon.

5.2.4 About the Essay: Modern Gallantry

According to Hugh Walker, "Lamb has wisdom as one of his greatest qualities." He is considered as one of the wisest persons of his limes. His essays are full of philosophical, tersa, pithy, proverbial, aphoristic and didactic lines which can be explained in detail. But there is a difference between Bacon and Lamb on the issue. Bacon provides worldly wisdom which may sometimes be immoral or illegal. Lamb provides the wisdom which is expected from a genius. In the essay Modern Gallantry lamb has expressed his dissatisfaction over the behaviour and attitude of men towards the women of his age. He has given many examples of his observations on different occasions and in different capacities where men missed the mark of paying respect to their counterpart i.e. females as females. Wealth, beauty, age, rank, relation and circumstances are vital factors which decrease or increase amount of reverence towards the female members of society. Lamb observes the bad habits not only of men folk but also of the ladies. By way of advice he has suggested the women to first learn to pay respect themselves and their sex. If this happens, others will also pay respect to them. There cannot be any thing more direct and emphatic than the concluding lines of the essay:

What a woman should demand of a man is courtship, pr after it, is First respect for her as she is a woman ; and next to that – to be respected by him above all other women. Let her first lesson be to reverence her sex.

This is a bitter truth for both the parties – the male as well as the female.

Moreover the essence of the essay has universal appeal for all times to come. This is applicable in every kind of society throughout the world and is away from recial prejudice. Here lies the real estimate of Lamb's views about the respect to ladies as ladies.

5.2.5 The Essay: Modern Gallantry (Text)

In comparing modern with ancient manners, we are pleased to compliment ourselves upon the point of gallantry ; a certain obsequiousness, or deferential respect, which we are supposed to pay to females, as females.

I shall believe that this principle actuates our conduct, when I can forget, that in the nineteenth century of the era from which we date our civility, we are but just beginning to leave off the very frequent practice of whipping females in public, in common with the coarsest male offenders.

I Shall believe it to be influential, when I can shut my eyes to the fact that in England women are still occasionally – hanged.

I shall believe in it, when actresses are no longer subject to be hissed off a stage by gentlemen.

I Shall believe in it, when Dorimants hands a fish-wife across the kennel ; or assists the apple woman to pick up her wandering fruit, which some unlucky dray has just dissipated.

I shall believe in it, when the Dorimants in humbler life, who would be thought in their way notable adepts in this refinement, shall act upon it in places where they are not known, or think themselves not observed – when I shall see the traveler for some rich tradesman part with his admired box coat, to spread it over the defenseless shoulders of the poor woman, who is passing to her parish on the roof of the same stage coach with him, drenched in the rain—when I shall no longer see a woman standing up in a pit of a London theatre, till she is sick and faint with the exertion, with men about her, seated at their ease, and jeering at her distress ; till one, that seems to have more manners or conscience than the rest, significantly declares "She should be welcome to his seat, if she were a little younger and handsomer." Place this dapper worehouseman, or that rider, in a circle of their own female acquaintance, and you shall confess you have not seen a politer-bread man in Lothbury.

Lastly, I shall begin to believe that there is come such principle influencing our conduct, when more than one-half of the drudgery and coarse servitude of the world shall cease to be performed by women.

Until that day comes I shall never believe this boasted point to be anything more than a conventional fiction ; a pageant got up between the exes, in a certain rank, and at a certain time of life, in which both find their account equally.

I shall be even disposed to rank it among the salutary fictions of life when in polite circles I shall see the same attentions paid to age as to youth, to homely features as to handsome, to coarse complexions as to clear – to the woman, as she is a woman, not as she is a beauty, a fortune, or a title.

I shall believe it to be something more that a name, when a well-dressed gentleman in a well dressed company can advert to the topic of *female old age* with exciting, and intending to excite, a sneer—when the phrases "antiquated virginity," and such a one has "overstood her market," pronounced in good company, shall raise immediate offence in man, or woman, that shall hear them spoken.

Joseph Paice, of Bread-street-hill, merchant, and one of the Directors of the South Sea company – the same to who Edwards, the Shakespeare commentator, has addressed a fine sonnet – was the only pattern of consistent gallantry I have met with. He took me under his shelter at an early age, and bestowed some pains upon me. I owe to his precepts and example whatever there is of the man of business (and that is not much) in my composition. It was not his fault that I did not profit more.

Though bred a Presbyterian, and brought up a merchant, he was the finest gentleman of his time. He had not one system of attention to females in the drawing-room and another in the shop, or at the stall. I do not mean that he made no distinction. But he never lost sight of sex, or overlooked it in the casualties of a disadvantageous situation. I have seen him stand bareheaded —smile if you please — to a poor servant-girl, while she has been inquiring of him the way to some street — in such a posture of unforced civility, as neither to embarrass ger in the acceptance, not himself in the offer, of it.

He was no dangler, in the common acceptation of the word, after women ; but he reverenced and upheld, in every form in which it came before him, womanhood. I have seen him—nay, smile not—tenderly escorting a market-woman, whom he had encountered in a shower, exalting him umbrella over her poor basket or fruit, that it might receive no damage, with as much carefulness as if she had been a countess. To the reverend form of Female Eld he would yield the wall (though it were to an ancient beggar woman) with more ceremony that we can afford t show our grandams. He was the Preux Chevalier of Age ; the Sir Calidore, or Sir Tristan, to those who have no Calidores or Tristans to defend them. The roses, that had long faded thence, still bloomed for him in those withered and yellow cheeks.

He was never married, but in his youth he paid his addresses to the beautiful Susan Winstanley – old Winstanley's daughter of Clapton – who dying in the

early days of their courtship, confirmed in him the resolution of perpetual bachelorship. It was during their short courtship, he told me, that he had been one day treating his mistress with a profusion of civil speeches – the common gallantries – to which kind of thing she had hitherto manifested no repugnance – to which kind of thing she had hitherto manifested no repugnance – but in this instance with no effect. He could not obtain from her a decent acknowledgement in return. She rather seemed to resent his compliments. He could not set it sown to caprice, for the lady had always shown herself above that littleness.

When he ventured on the following day, finding her a little better humoured, to expostulate with her on her coldness of yesterday, she confessed with her usual frankness, that she had no sort of dislike to his attentions ; that she could even endure some high – flown compliments ; that young woman placed in her situation had a right to expect all shorts of civil things said to her ; that she hoped she could digest a dose of adulation, short o fin sincerity, with as little injury to her humility as most young women ; but that – a little before he had commenced his compliments – she had overheard him by accident, in rather rough language, rating a young woman, who had not brought home his cravats quite to the appointed time, and she thought to herself, "As I am Miss Susan Winstanley, and a young lady – a reputed beauty, and known to be a fortune, — I can have my choice of the finest speeches from the mouth of this very fine gentlemen who is courting me – but if I had been poor May Such a one (naming the milliner), — and had failed of bringing home the cravats to the appointed hour — though perhaps I had sat up half the night to forward them – what sort of compliments should I have received them ? – And my woman's pride came to assistance ; and I thought – that if it were only to do *me* honour, a female, like myself, might have received handsomer usage ; and I was determined not to accept any fine speeches to the compromise of that sex, the belonging to which was after all my strongest claim and title to them."

I think the lad discovered both generosity, and a just way of thinking, in this rebuke which she gave her lover ; and I have sometimes imagined, that the uncommon strain of courtesy, which through life regulated the actions and behaviour of my friend towards all of womankind indiscriminately, owed its happy origin to this seasonable lesson from the lips of his lamented mistress.

I wish the whole female world would entertain the same notion of these things that Miss Winstanley showed. Then we should see something of the spirit of consistent gallantry; and no longer witness the anomaly of the same man – a pattern of true politeness to a wife – of cold contempt, or rudeness, to a sister – the idolater of his female mistress the disparager and despiser of his no less female aunt, or unfortunate – still female – maiden cousin, Just so much respect as a woman derogates from her own sex, in whatever condition placed – her hand-mind, or dependent – she deserves to have diminished from herself on that score ; and probably will fell the diminution, when youth, and beauty, and advantages, not inseparable from sex, shall

lose of their attraction. What a woman should demand of a man in courtship, or after it, is first – respect for her as she is a woman — and next to the – to be respected by him above all other women. But let her stand upon her female character as upon a foundation; and let the attentions incident to individual preference, be so many pretty advisements and ornaments – as many, and as fanciful, as you please to that main structure. Let her first lesson be with sweet Susan Winstanley – *to reverence her sex.*

5.2.6 Glossary

gallantry	:	respectfulness shown by men towards women.
obsequiousness	:	humbleness
derential	:	an attitude of respectfulness
deferential	:	punishing with lash attached to a short or long stick.
coarest	:	roughest, most vulgar
offenders	:	criminals
dorimant	:	a young fashionable man, a character in Sir George Etherge's comedy *The man of Mode, or Sir Fopling flutter.*
fishwife	:	a woman selling fish.
kennel	:	here it is used in the sense of gutter.
dray	:	low cart without sides for heavy loads.
dissipated	:	dispersed, dispelled.
adepts	:	skilled performers, experts.
box coat	:	a kind of thick overcoat worn by a traveler sitting on the box seat of a stage coach
pit	:	part of theatre meant for common people
distress	:	difficulty
dapper	:	smart or well-dressed man
warehouseman	:	worker in a building where goods are stored.
Lothbury	:	a part of London known for its business houses
drudgery	:	dull, laborious, distasteful work.
servitude	:	slavery
pageant	:	show, pretence
salutary	:	modes of behaviour having a wholesome effect refer or turn to the subject
antiquated virginity	:	a woman grown old without having been able to get married.

precepts	:	maxims, moral instruction
presbyterian	:	a follower of National Church of England.
distinction	:	making of a difference.
posture	:	position of body.
dangler	:	a person tempting others, hovering after.
escorting	:	accompanying another for protection or guidance.
Female Eld	:	elderly or old women.
Preux Chevalier	:	brave, gallant knight.
Sir Calidore	:	a virtuous knight in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*
Sir Tristan	:	a brave knight of King Arthur
courtship	:	love affair
perpetual	:	constant
profusion	:	a large quantity
caprice	:	sudden change of mind or conduct.
expostulate	:	make protest, argue
milliner	:	dress maker
indiscriminately	:	without any difference
anomaly	:	irregularity of behaviour.
disparager	:	bringer of discredit, a person speaking slightingly.
derogates	:	detracts, takes away part from.
diminution	:	act of diminishing
additaments	:	additions

5.2.7 Model Explanations

(a) In comparing modern with ancient manners, we are pleased to compliments ourselves upon the point of gallantry; a certain obsequiousness, or deferential respect, which we are supposed to pay to females, as females.

These lines have been taken from the essay Modern Gallantry written by charles Lamb. Lamb is well- known essayist belonging to the Romantic period. He has written many autobiographical essays. But this essay is not autobiographical. Lamb expresses his views about gallantry of his age i.e. the beginning of the 19th Century

Lamb says that his contemporary British congratulate themselves on the point of being more gallant during the modern age. He defines what gallantry means. Gallantry is the social respect, humbleness shown by males towards females as females. People considered that moderns age

has became more civilized and cultured and therefore shows more respect to females because they are females.

Lamb does not agree to the idea of being more civilized and cultured in modern times. He cites many situations where people do not show respect to females as females but the respect shown to females depends upon their rank, beauty, wealth, age, relation and many other factors. Thus, according to him, womanhood is not paid respect irrespective of others factors.

These are the opening lines of the essay where the writer defines gallantry. He has noted down the general feelings of congratulation on the point of gallantry. But in the rest of the essay he has rejected the common point of view. The definition at the very beginning of the essay makes the title very clear and the subject matter of the essay can be guessed at the very start. The prose of Lamb is terse, pithy, aphoristic. The essay is didactic one and has universal appeal due to its subject matter and style.

(b) *What a woman should demand of a man in courtship, or after it, is first -respect for her as she is a woman — and next to that - to be respected by him above all other women.*

This is an extract from the essay Modern Gallantry by Charles Lamb. Lamb has written many essays which are autobiographical and reveal his personal life. But this essay is didactic one and has universal appeal. the writer has provided a good advise to the women-folk if they wish more respect from the men-folk.

The woman in love is usually jealous of others and becomes selfish. She wants more and more respect for herself individually but not for females in general. That diminishes respect for individual female also. According to the essayist, a woman in lover should ask for respect for her because she is a woman. Being a woman is her foundation, solid ground on which additions can be made. Those additions are like ornaments. Demand of respect above all other women comes next. If a woman detracts respect from her own sex, she detracts that much respect for herself also. Respect for female should be demanded on the basic ground of being a female, and not because of beauty, rank, age, wealth, position, or any other such factor.

The writer has conveyed his ideas on gallantry in a very precise, brief, aphoristic and terse manner. He had directly advised females how to demand more and more respect from men and that must be the best method for all types of women belonging to any category, rank, society or position.

5.3 Key Words

wit - a kind of verbal expression which is brief, deft intended to produce a shock or surprise.

genre	-	a broad literary form or type.
era	-	age or period
didactic	-	providing advice
essay	-	A composition on any particular subject
pathos	-	quality in speech, writing, events etc. that excites pity or sadness.
humour	-	any element in literature intended to amuse or excite mirth in the mind of the reader.
Romanticism	-	The Romantic Movement, a literary movement marked with a profound shift in sensibility, which took place in Britain and throughout Europe roughly between 1770 & 1848.
Classicism	-	rules or norms adopted by the Greeks or Romans in art and literature.
Neoclassicism	-	imitation of the Greek or Roman artists and writers in matter and style by the British artists and writers.

5.4 Let's Sum Up

In this Unit you have learnt how the study of a particular period is important to understand a writer because the main trends of the period affect the works of the writer. This Unit has provided you material about the Romantic period as against the neoclassic period in matter and style. You must have also noted Lamb's reaction against the claim of his age to have become gallant.

5.5 Questions

1. Do you think Lamb agrees to the point that the nineteenth century people have become more gallant than their predecessors?

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2. Name some of the practices which are discourteous to ladies?

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3. What category of females was revered by the men of fashion in the Nineteenth century?

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4. Give famous examples of gallantry as cited by Charles Lamb.

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5. Who was Joseph Paice?

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6. What are the writer's ideas about coarse servitude?

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7. Narrate the story of Susan Winstanley affair.

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8. What should a woman demand from her lover in courtship?

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9. What does the writer mean by foundation and main structure?

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10. What should be the first lesson of a woman?

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11. Why doesn't the writer agree to the notion of modern gallantry?

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12. What does the writer wish?

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13. Comment on the style of the essay.

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5.6 Suggested Readings

1. *A Glossary of Literary Terms by M.H.A brams.*
2. *Lines Composed upon the Tintern Abbey by William Wordsworth*
3. *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner by S.T.Coleridge.*
4. *The Art of the Essayist by A.C.Benson.*
5. *Dream Children: A reverie by Charles Lamb.*

   A Bachelor's Complaint Against the Behaviour of Married People by Charles Lamb.
6. *Of Married and Unmarried People by Francis Bacon.*
7. *On Going a Journey by William Hazlitt.*

5.7 Answers

1. No. because he thinks that true respect to the female sex is not given to them irrespective of relation, colour, age, money, beauty or rank.
2. Whipping females in the public, hissing off the stages of the actresses, coarse servitude done by the ladies are some of the practices which prevailed in the nineteenth century and were considered bad for them.
3. Lamb says that only rich, beautiful, young and well - ranked ladies were given respect by the fashionable men who claimed for gallantry in the 19th Century.
4. The writer gives the examples of true gallantry shown by Preux Chevalier, Sir Tristan & Sir Calidore. They have become the symbols of gallantry.
5. He was merchant by profession and one of the directors of the South Sea Company. He wanted to marry Susan Winstanely. Joseph Paice is considered a model of gallantry.
6. Coarse servitude is rough, monotonous and hard work of the domestic world. Most of this drudgery and rough work is done by women. This, according to the writer, is not the case of gallantry in modern times.
7. Sir Joseph Paice wanted to marry Susan Winstanley. She was young, smart, rich and aristocratic. On one occasion Joseph Paice paid high compliments in her praise but the lady rebuked him mildly. Susan had overheard him rating a

young woman who had not brought home his cravats (part of dress material) to the appointed time. This made clear in the mind of Susan that Joseph was courteous to her because she had youth, beauty, wealth and rank. Otherwise, he was not respectful to female sex in general. She taught a good lesson to Joseph by not marrying him. Thus Joseph remained a bachelor; and revered and upheld womanhood in every form.

8. A woman should demand from her lover first - respect for her as a woman, and next to that - to be respected by him above all other women.

9. The writer by foundations and main structure means female as a female and not as a wife, or a mistress or a sister. Theses are additional ornaments to decorate the main structure.

10. Her first lesson must be - to revere her sex, pay respect to her as she is a female.

11. Because he can see the practice of whipping females in public, woman being hissed off a stage, a fish wife or the apple women being helpless, a women being in distress in theatres, coarse servitude being done by women. Women are differentiated on the basis of relation, age, beauty, colour, wealth and rank.

12. The writer wishes that all women should have the same thoughts about gallantry as those of Susan Winstanley. They should not accept any anomaly in the behaviour of their male partners on the basis of beauty, age, colour, wealth or rank.

13. The writer has written this essay in a style different from the style of his other essays. There are no autobiographical details or arousing of pathos, satire or humour. The essay has been written in a didactic way. First he has catalogued a number of practices prevailing in the Nineteenth century which are against the thought of gallantry or civilized behaviour. The use of future time at the beginning of many paragraphs shows that the writer is not yet ready to accept that we have become more civilized as far as gallantry (respect to female as female) is concerned. He has appropriately given the example of courtship of Joseph Paice and Susan Winstanley to prove his point of view. The last paragraph becomes aphoristic, terse and didactic in a direct manner. At the end he has used a strong metaphor for basic female character. It is compared to a foundation and main structure and rest of the things or demands by women as additions to the main thing.

5.8 Some General Questions

1. Wrote the salient features of the Romantic Age in English Literature.
2. How is an essay different from a novel?
3. Sum up Lamb's views about modern gallantry.
4. What is the piece of advice given by the writer to ladies?
5. Comment upon the prose style of Charles Lamb.

Unit - 6

William Hazlitt : On Prejudice

Structure

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6.2 William Hazlitt : On Prejudice
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  6.2.2 The Essay : Its Development
  6.2.3 About the Author : William Hazlitt
  6.2.4 About the Essay : On Prejudice
  6.2.5 The Essay : On Prejudice (Text)
  6.2.6 Glossary
  6.2.7 Model Explanations
6.3 Key Words
6.4 Let's Sum Up
6.5 Questions
6.6 Suggested Readings
6.7 Answers
6.8 Some General Questions

6.0 Objectives

In this unit we aim at giving you details about what an essay is and how it is different from other literary forms. You have been given a short history of the development of the essay as a literary form. By the end of this unit you will be able to

1) tell what the important elements of an essay are.
2) know about important essayists from Greco-Roman times to the modern era.
3) know about William Hazlitt as an essayist of the Romantic period.
4) learn the ideas of Hazlitt about a general human feature i.e. prejudice.
5) explain certain lines with reference to context adding critical notes about subject matter, theme and style.

6.1 Study Guide

In this unit you have been given details about what makes an essay. You will find development of essay from Plato to the Modern period with an emphasis on important writers and their main characteristics. The essay *On Prejudice* by William Hazlitt has been discussed as a sample. You should try to know how to study a literary essay. You have been provided short definitions of key words used in the unit which will help you understand this form of literature in a better way. Glossary, model explanations and answers to questions are given to help you develop your own vocabulary and composition skills. An exercise has been given for you in the form of some general questions at the end.

6.2 William Hazlitt : On Prejudice

6.2.1 About the Age : Romantic Period

As William Hazlitt and Charles Lamb belong to the same era i.e Romantic Period, therefore the details about the age have been given in Unit 3. This section given in Unit 3 is therefore common for Unit 3 and 4.

6.2.2 The Essay : Its Development

An essay is the author's response to any given subject. It has the appearance of a casual and unpremeditated ease. It is an expression by a writer of what he feels as a man. It is free and spontaneous approach of a writer to any subject. As a subject any topic is sufficient. It comes directly from his mood and reflects his personality. It is not fiction, not drama, not history, no story but is has the elements of all these in some way. The essay provides pleasure to the reader. According to Dr. Johnson an essay is "a loose sally of the mind, an irregular, undigested piece, not a regular and orderly composition." According to Murray's Dictionary it is a "composition of moderate length on any particular subject or branch of a subject... originally implying want of finish, but now said of a composition more or less elaborate in style, though limited in rage". It is not exhaustive. Thus, it is a trial of a subject, or an attempt towards it, and not in the least a complete or thorough analysis of it. Thus the author's mind and character play an important role because any theme or subject matter under the sun can be the matter of discourse. This unlimited freedom in the choice of subject matter leads to a wide range of topics— from personal, autobiographical to philosophical treatise. Style is the matter of author's personality i.e. how he deals with the material available to his sensitive mind. The essayist is a minute and sensitive spectator of life. A.C. Benson says that "an essay is a thing which someone does himself, and the point of the essay is not the subject, for any subject will suffice, but the charm of personality". According to him "the essayist, then, is in his particular fashion an interpreter of life, a critic of life. He does not see life as the historian or as the philosopher or as the poet or as the novelist; yet he has a touch of all these."

A.C. Benson in his essay The Art of the Essayist says that Plato's dialogues have a dramatic colouring and therefore cannot be called essay because the essential condition for the essay is soliloquy. Montaigne (333-392) is considered the first important essayist. Bacon took this form from Montaigne and developed it into terse, proverbial, aphoristic style. He is famous for providing worldly wisdom through is essays by arguing on both sides of the given topic and giving examples from the Bible, Greco-Roman history and contemporary British history. Charles Lamb (1775-1834) like Bacon wrote in compact, concise, epigrammatic and proverbial style. His essays are full of autobiographical details which provide humour and pathos. His contemporary William Hazlitt (1778-1830) wrote on various topics but his essays are full of verbosity, digressions and rambling. Most of his essays are unlike that of Lamb in style and subject matter.

Richard Steele (472-1729) and Joseph Addison (472-1719) wrote in a new literary form which is known as the periodical essays. Their main aim was to instruct as well as to please the readers. Their essays primarily appeared in the Tatler and the Spectator and they represent the contemporary society well. Wit, humour and satire are the important elements of their prose style. John Dryden (431-1700) wrote literary critical essays, for example, Of Dramatic Poesy.

Johathan Swift (467-1745) also wrote periodical essays but he is famour more for his other prose works. Daniel Defoe (461-1731) developed his essays into news paper editorial articles.

Dr. Johnson (1709-1784) contributed essays to periodicals namely. *The Rambler, The Guardian and The Idler*. He wrote literary critical essays also. Oliver Goldsmith (1730-1774) is popular for his periodical essays collected in the Citizen of the World. R.L. Stevenson, A.C. Benson, E.V. Lucas, G.K. Chesterton, Robert Lynd, J.B. Prestley, Aldoux, Huxley and George Orwell are some of the other famous English essayists.

6.2.3 About the Author : William Hazlitt

William Hazlitt (1778-1830) was born at Maidstone. He was the son of a Unitarian minister. His father has strong liberal views which were inherited by the son. Most of his youth was spent near Shrewsbury. He came under the influence of S.T. Coleridge and chose writing as his career. He was introduced to other literally persons by Charles Lamb who became his friend in London. Hazlitt started his career as a prolific journalist, parliamentary reported, dramatic and literary critic, essayist and lecturer. He showed his concern for his country and was supporter of the French Revolution. He was married to Sarah Stoddard in 1808. Later on in 1819 he fell in love with Sarah Walker which resulted into some kind of insanity. In 1882 he got divorce from his wife. In 1823 he was arrested for debts. In 1824he was married to Isabella Bridgewater. After 1812 he wrote profusely for various periodicals including Edinburgh Review. His writings turned from political journalism to literary criticism and essay. Some of his works are enlisted below :

A view of the English Stage	-	1818
Lectures on the English Poets	-	1818
Lectures on the English comic writers	-	1819
Table Talk	-	1821-22
The Spirit of the Age	-	1825
Life of Napoleon	-	1828-30

Hazlitt's great achievement is that he made his livelihood from criticism. He disliked formulas of criticism. He was severely criticized and was called a 'mere quack' or a member of the cockney school of poetry. The critics, however, admit that he was a voracious reader and his immense contribution as a critical historian to the field of English Literature cannot be denied.

6.2.4 About the Essay : On Prejudice

Like Francis Bacon Hazlitt has written the essay in a very lucid, clear, precise, terse and proverbial style. There are many aphoristic lines in the essay which need detailed explanation; these lines constitute his minute observations about human nature regarding prejudice.

Hazlitt has described the nature of prejudice, the factors which are responsible for causing it. All these have been written in a systematic way. The emotions are very common in human nature and can be noticed in all races and cultures all over the world. That speaks of the universality of the theme of this essay.

The writer begins the essay by defining prejudice which means prejudging i.e. coming of conclusion about something without facts, figures, reasons or logics. The factors leasing to prejudging are ignorance, hatred and self-willingness. If we are ignorant about some matter, we are inclined to decide on the basis of pre-existing ill-founded ideas on the subject. Those who are in the habit of taking decision under introversion are liable to be prejudiced because a limited knowledge of the proposition may lead them to decide in an unjustified way. This happens in the case of religion, form of Government, different social norms of various communities or geographical regions. Narrow-mindedness and short vision lead to prejudice and ill-judging. The notion of majority and minority also puzzles our vision. Some people think majority is always right but we know many a times, it is made of fools. Numbers should not decide what is right or what is wrong. Majority is equally liable to commit errors. We always wish that others should surrender to our whims without reason or rhyme. But we are not ready to accept that our conclusions can be wrong and fatal.

6.2.5 The Essay : On Prejudice (Text)

Prejudice, in its ordinary and literal sense, is prejudging any question without having sufficiently examined it, and adhering to our opinion upon it through ignorance, malice, or perversity, in spite of every evidence to the contrary.

The little that we know has a strong alloy of misgiving and uncertainty in it ; the mass of things of which we have no means of judging, but of which we form a blind and confident opinion as if we were thoroughly acquainted with them, is monstrous.

Prejudice is the child of ignorance; for as our actual knowledge falls short of our desire to know, or curiosity and interest in the world about us, so must we be tempted to decide upon a greater number of things at a venture; and having no check from reason or inquiry, we shall grow more obstinate and bigoted in our conclusions, according as they have been rash and presumptuous. The absence of proof, instead of suspending our judgment, only gives us an opportunity to make things out according to our wishes and fancies; mere ignorance is a blank canvas on which we lay what colours we please, and paint objects black or white, as angels or devils, magnify or

diminish them at our option: and in the vacuum either of facts or arguments, the weight of prejudice and passions falls with double force, and bears down everything before it.

If we enlarge the circle of our previous knowledge ever so little, we may meet with something to create doubt and difficulty; but as long as we remain confined to the cell of our native ignorance while we know nothing beyond the routine of sense and custom, we shall refer everything to that standard, or make it out as we would have it to be, like spoiled children who have never been away from home, and expect to find nothing in the world that does not accord with their wishes and notions. It is evident, that the fewer things we know, the more ready we shall be to pronounce upon and condemn what is new and strange to us; that is, the less capable we shall be of varying our conceptions, and the more prone to mistake a part for the whole. What we do not understand the meaning of must necessarily appear to us ridiculous and contemptible; and we do not stop to enquire, till we have been taught by repeated experiments and warnings of our own fallibility, whether the absurdity is in ourselves or in the object of our dislike and scorn.

The most ignorant people are rude and insolent, as the most barbarous are cruel and ferocious. All our knowledge at first lying in a narrow compass (bounded by local and physical causes) whatever does not conform to this shocks us as out of reason and nature.

The less we look abroad, the more our ideas are introverted : and our habitual impressions, from being made up of a few particulars always repeated, grow together into a kind of concrete substance, which will not bear taking to pieces, and where the smallest deviation destroys the whole feeling. Thus the difference of colour in a black man was thought to forfeit his title to belong to the species, till books of voyages and travels, and old Fuller's quaint expression of "God's image carved in ebony", have brought the two ideas into a forced union, and Mr. Murray no longer libels men of colour with impunity.

The word *republic* has a harsh and incongruous sound to ears bred under a constitutional monarchy; and we strove hard for many years to overturn the French republic, merely because we could not reconcile it to ourselves that such a thing should exist at all, notwithstanding the examples of Holland, Switzerland, and many others. This term has hardly yet performed quarantine: to the loyal and patriotic it has an ugly taint in it, and is scarcely fit to be mentioned in good company. If, however, we are weaned by degrees from our prejudices against certain words that shock opinion, this is not the case with all; for those that offend good manners grow more offensive with the progress of refinement and civilization so that no writer now dare venture upon expressions that unwittingly disfigure the pages of our elder writers, and in this respect, instead of becoming callous or indifferent, we appear to become more fastidious every day. There is then a real grossness which does not depend on familiarity or custom.

This account of the concrete nature of prejudice, or of the manner in which our ideas by habit and the dearth of general information coalesce together into one indissoluble form, will show (what otherwise seems unaccountable) how such violent antipathies and animosities have been occasioned by the most ridiculous or trifling differences of opinion or outward symbols of it'; for, by constant custom, and the want of reflection, the most insignificant of these was as inseparably bound up with the main principle as the most important, and to give up any part as to give up the whole essence and vital interests of religion, morals, and government. Hence we see all sects and parties mutually insist on their own technical distinctions as the essentials and fundamentals of religion, and politics, and, for the slightest variation in any of these, unceremoniously attack their opponents as atheists and blasphemers, traitors and incendiaries. In fact, these minor points are laid hold of in preference, as being more obvious and tangible, and as leaving more room for the exercise of prejudice.

Another thing that makes our prejudices rancorous and inveterate, is, that as they are taken up without reason, they seem to be *self-evident;* and we thence conclude, that they not only are so to ourselves, but must be so to others, so that their differing from us is willful, hypocritical, and malicious.

The Inquisition never pretended to punish its victims for being heretics or infidels, but for avowing opinions which with their eyes open they know to be false. That is, the whole of the Catholic faith, ''that one entire and prefect chrysolite", appeared to them so completely without flaw and blameless; that they could not conceive how anyone else could imagine it to be otherwise, except from stubbornness and contumacy, and would rather admit (to avoid so improbable a suggestion) that men went to a stake for an opinion, not which they held, but counterfeited, and were content to be burnt for the pleasure of playing the hypocrite. Nor is it wonderful that there should be so much repugnance to admit the existence of a serious doubt in matters of such vital and external interest, and on which the whole fabric of the church hinged, since the first doubt that was expressed on any single point drew all the rest after it ; and the first person who started a conscientious scruple, and claimed the *trial by reason,* threw down, as if by magic spell, the strongholds of bigotry and superstition, and transferred the determination of the issue from the blind tribunal of prejudice and implicit faith to a totally different ground, the fair and open field of argument and inquiry.

On this ground a single champion is a match for thousands. The decision of the majority is not here enough : unanimity is absolutely necessary to infallibility; for the only secure plea on which such a preposterous pretension could be set up is, by taking it for granted that there can be no possible doubt entertained upon the subject, and by diverting men's minds from ever asking themselves the question of the truth of certain dogmas and mysteries, any more than whether *two and two make four.* Prejudice in short is egotism : we see a part, and substitute it for the whole; a thing strikes us casually and by halves, and we would have the universe stand proxy for our

decision, in order to rivet it more firmly in our own belief; however insufficient or sinister the grounds of our opinions, we would persuade ourselves that they arise out of the strongest conviction, and are entitled to unqualified approbation; slaves of our own prejudices, caprice, ignorance, we would be lords of the understandings and reasons of others; and (strange infatuation !) taking up an opinion solely from our own narrow and partial point of view, without consulting the feelings of others, or the reason of things, we are still uneasy if all the world do not come into our way of thinking.

6.2.6 Glossary

adhering	:	supporting firmly, remaining faithful to
malice	:	active ill will, desire to harm others
perversity	:	willingly choosing a wrong course, feelings contrary to reason
mass	:	crowd
means	:	methods
monstrous	:	very large, devilish
venture (N)	:	an undertaking which has risk
bigoted	:	intolerant and narrow-minded
presumptuous	:	too bold or self-confident (of behaviour)
confined	:	limited, imprisoned
condemn	:	dislike, criticize
contemptible	:	worth hatred
fallibility	:	likelihood to commit an error
absurdity	:	strangeness
compass	:	range, area
introverted	:	turned inwards upon ourselves
deviation	:	change
forfeit	:	lose
fuller	:	Thomas Fuller (408-61), an English author and moderate royalist
quaint	:	strange
ebony	:	black
Murray	:	the publisher, he has disliked by the Romantics as he was the editor of the magazine *Quarterly Review*
libels	:	anything that brings discredit upon or fails to do justice to

impunity	:	freedom from punishment
Holland, Switzerland	:	two famous republics of Europe
quarantine	:	free from collection
taint	:	colour
venture (v)	:	come upon
fastidious	:	hard to please, quick to find fault
dearth	:	shortage
coalesce	:	come together and unite into one group
antipathies	:	strong, dislikes
animosities	:	strong dislikes active enmities
insignificant	:	unimportant
blasphemers	:	persons who speak in disrespectful way about God and sacred things, use violent language about someone or something
tangible	:	clear and definite
rancorous	:	full of deep and long lasting feeling of bitterness
inveterate	:	deep rooted, long established
hypocritical	:	falsely making oneself appear to be virtuous and good
Inquisition	:	the infamous Spanish institution which punished heretics
heretics	:	persons who told an unorthodox opinion, persons having belief or opinion contrary to generally accepted ones
infidels	:	persons with no belief in a religion
chrysolite	:	a precious stone (refers to Shakespeare's Othello, V, ii, 145)
contumacy	:	obstinate resistance, stubborn disobedience
hinged	:	turned or depended on something else
conscientious	:	guided by one's sense of duty, done carefully or honestly
scruple	:	uneasiness of conscience
preposterous	:	absurd, completely contrary to reason or sense
pretensions	:	claim to possess skills, qualities, etc.

dogmas	:	beliefs, systems of belief put forward by some authority to be accepted as true without questions
egoxism	:	practice of talking too often or too much about oneself
stands proxy for	:	guarantees
sinister	:	evil
conviction	:	faith
approbation	:	approval, sanction
caprice	:	sudden change of mind or behaviour that has no obvious cause; tendency to change suddenly without any apparent cause
infatuation	:	full of wild and foolish love

6.2.7 Model Explanations

(a) Prejudice is the child of ignorance

This is a proverbial line from the essay *On Prejudice* written by William Hazlitt. He has written many essays which are verbosity, digressions and rambling in subject matter and ideas. This essay falls into a different category as it is bereft to verbosity and digressions. In this essay, the writer has explained what causes prejudice.

One of the main reasons to be prejudiced against something or someone is ignorance. Prejudice means prejudging which excludes coming to a conclusion based on reason. But if we do not know the thing or the idea, we try to decide in our own favour without knowing the facts on the other side. A little knowledge is a dangerous thing and thus ignorance causes prejudice in favour or against any idea concerning religion, politics or day to day life.

The writer has tried to convey his ideas about prejudice in a very lucid, terse, aphoristic and proverbial style. The essay is a good example to prove that Hazlitt can write in the style of Bacon. The subject matter is unlike the other essays of Hazlitt which deal with contemporary and autobiographical details. It is not meant for any individual, but like Bacon's proverbial lines has a universal appeal.

(b) *The most ignorant people are rude and insolent as the most barbarous are cruel and ferocious.*

This is an extract from the essay On Prejudice written by William Hazlitt. He has written many essays and most of them are full of autobiographical details and contemporary references. But this essay is different from most of the other essays as it has been written in the style of Bacon.

Commenting on the role of ignorance leading to prejudice, Hazlitt says that ignorance makes a person rude and insolent. Ignorant people are not ready to understand the point of view of other people. They have little knowledge of the given topic and judge things according to their own whims and notions. They are intolerant towards the view expressed by the other party and thus become rude and insolent. This is explained by a comparison of such people with barbarous people who are cruel and terrible. Uncivilized people are hard-hearted and uncultured and therefore become cruel and terrible towards others.

This is an important universal observation applicable to all nations and all times. The line is a good example of terse, aphoristic and proverbial style. The simile used is very appropriate. Hazlitt has written in the vein of Bacon and thus has universal applicability instead of autobiographical or personal and individualized references. This is away from verbosity and rambling manner which is quite usual with Hazlitt. Thus the subject matter and the style of the present way are different from those of the other essays.

6.3 Key Words

autobiographical : writing about oneself; works which reveal the life of the writer

treatise : a book etc. deals systematically with one subject

style : the manner a writer expresses his notions. It varies from writer to writer depending upon the use of literary devices.

soliloquy : speech made by a single character on the stage. The character talks to himself / herself so that the audience can know what is going on in his / her mind.

periodical : magazine, general or any other publication which appears at regular intervals. From the beginning of the 18th century until the Second World War the literary periodicals flourished, and contributed significantly to the development of creative writing and criticism.

criticism : evaluation of the works of art. It is not negative only as often understood

novel : extended work of prose fiction. Its length permits a greater variety of characters, incidents and plot construction

universal appeal : if the artistic and literary work has some value for all the communities of the world instead of a particular person, place or community, it has real value for humanity. Thus its appeal is universal. However, if the incident or idea is of some importance to an individual or a category of people only, it cannot be generalized and thus loses its universal appeal.

6.4 Let Us Sum Up

In this unit you have studied about the essay as a literary genre and its various elements. You have also known the development of this form of literature in short. Besides, you have studied Hazlitt as an essayist in his historical context and have learnt something about the universal appeal of the essay *On Prejudice*. You have also read some model explanations which will help you interpret a line or passage given from any piece of literary work and in particular from *On Prejudice*.

6.5 Questions

1) Define prejudice.

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2) What leads to prejudice ?

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3) Describe how ignorance results into prejudice.

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4) Point out the simile used in Para 4 of the essay on Prejudice.

_____

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_____

5) How does a little knowledge spoil our personality ?

6) What do certain things appear ridiculous and contemptible to us?

7) Why are the most ignorant people rude and insolent ?

8) What do you mean by the two ideas about black colour ?

9) Why did we strive hard to remove the French republic ?

10) Who became more offensive with the progress of civilization ?

11) Why do all parties and sects insist upon their own technical distinction ?

12) Why did the Inquisition punish their victims ?

13) Why is majority not necessary to decide a prejudice ?

14) Explain : Prejudice is egoxism.

15) Comment on the style of the essay.

16) Comment on the universal appeal of the essay.

6.6 Suggested Readings

1) *A Glossary of Literary Terms* by M.H. Abrams.
2) *The Art of the Essayist* by A.C. Benson.
3) *On Going a Journey* by William Hazlitt.
4) *Confessions of an English Opium - Eater* by Thomas De Quincey.
5) *Essays in the History of Ideals* by A.O. Lovejoy.
6) *A Study of English Romanticism* by Northrop Frye.

6.7 Answers

1) It means prejudging. We want to have our own point of view contrary to the evidence available.

2) Ignorance, malice or perversity may lead to prejudice. Insufficient examination of the question under consideration tempts us into prejudice.

3) We cannot have actual knowledge of many things in this world. We do not have any check of reason or enquiry. As a result, the absence of proof gives us an opportunity to decide things according to our own whims and fancies.

4) In para 4 the writer has used a simile, comparing persons of native ignorance to spoiled children who have never been away from home.

5) If we know fewer things, we will not be able to judge impartially the things which are new and strange to us. We are prone to commit mistakes and decide unreasonably in our own favour.

6) Because we do not understand the right, impartial meaning of certain things or ideas. Human beings are fallible too.

7) Because our knowledge has a narrow compass and we are shocked to see whatever does not suit our personality or our own veins.

8) The two ideas about colour refer to that of the blackness of sin and that of the dark colour of human beings; that is the Blacks.

9) We thought that republic and constitutional monarchy cannot go side by side though we had seen the successful examples of Holland, Switzerland and many other countries.

10) Those who offend good manner become more offensive with the progress of civilization.

11) Because giving up any part is considered as giving up the whole essence and vital interests of religion, morals and movement. As a result of it, they call their opponents traitors or atheists.

12) Because they considered the victims to be the followers of falsehood.

13) Because the truth or falsehood of an opinion does not depend on the numerical strength of its followers or opponents.

14) A thing may strike us casually or incompletely true but we insist that our casual impression is as good as a total and well-considered view. We want the world to be with us. Thus prejudice leads to egoxism.

15) The prose used by the writer is lucid and precise. The nature of prejudice and factors responsible for it are examined in a scientific and systematic manner. There are least Biblical or historical allusions and the subject matter is not autobiographical or personalized.

16) This essay in subject matter and style is not like other essays of Hazlitt. it has no autobiographical or verbose or rambling details. It is one of the didactic essays written in compact, lucid, aphoristic style which is not the usual way of historical examples except a few. Thus is has universal appeal for all times; past, present and future. It is written in the style of Bacon with some arguments to prove a proposition but is lacks in the worldly-wisdom of Bacon.

6.8 Some General Questions

1) Comment on the prose style of William Hazlitt. How is it different from that the Lamb?
2) Describe the development of Literary Essay as a genre.
3) Compare and contrast Francis Bacon with William Hazlitt on the point of instruction and wisdom.
4) Write an essay on some of the prejudices existing in your society.
5) Suggest certain ways to remove prejudices from your society.

UNIT - 7

Richard Steele : The Spectator Club

Structure

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7.6 Suggested Readings
7.7 Questions
7.8 Answers

7.0 Objectives

The purpose of this unit is to stimulate your interest in the writings of Steele and his writing skill, which is easy and familiar. Steele was very much involved in the social scene of the time and had a desire for the reformation of morals and manners. 'The Spectator Club' is perhaps Steele's finest achievement.

7.1 Introduction

'The Spectator Club' is perhaps Steele's finest achievement. This essay was published in **The Spectator**. The first essay in **The Spectator** was contributed by Addison. The second essay – The Spectator Club was Steele's contribution. In this essay Steele has given an account of the members of the Club. These members represent important sections of society. Steele describes six of the members of the Club they are Sir Roger de Coverley, Captain Sentry, Sir Andrew Freeport, Will Honeycomb, the Clergyman and the Student of Law.

7.2 About the Author

Richard Steele was born in Dublin, Ireland and educated at the Charter house and Oxford. He left before taking his degree and joined the army in 1694. In 1713 as a staunch Whig, he became the Member of Parliament. Steele owes his reputation to his effort as an essayist. *The Tatler* which he started in 1709, constitutes a landmark in English prose literature. His easy familiar style, humour, gentle irony, and scholarship made him just the man to adapt the essay and the "characters" of Earle to the needs of an age that was marked by levity of conduct and thought, but at the same time eminently reasonably. Steele is sentimental and warm hearted, but always urbane. He has also a delicate sense of humour. Comparison between Steele and Addison has a strong critical relevance. We may find Steele to be greater funded with knowledge of life. He has also a more sympathetic heart. Addison on

his part has much greater refinement and delicacy of wit. Addison's prose is also more balanced and lively. The common feature in both these essayists is their involvement in the social scene of the time and their desire for the reformation of morals and manners.

7.3 Reading the Text

Now read the essary carefully:

7.3.1 The Spectator Club (Text)

The first of our society is a gentleman of Worcestershire, of ancient descent, a baronet, his name Sir Roger de Coverley. His great-grandfather was inventor of that famous country-dance which is called after him. All who know that shire are very well acquainted with the parts and merits of Sir Roger. He is a gentleman that is very singular in his behaviour, but his singularities proceed from his good sense, and are contradictions to the manners of the world only as he thinks the world is in the wrong. However, this humour creates him no enemies, for he does nothing with sourness or obstinacy; and his being unconfined to modes and forms makes him but the readier and more capable to please and oblige all who know him. When he is in town, he lives in Sohosquare. It is said, he keeps himself a bachelor by reason he was crossed in love by a perverse beautiful widow of the next country to him. Before this disappointment, Sir Roger was what you call a fine gentleman, had often supped with my Lord Rochester and Sir George Etherege, fought a duel upon his first coming to town, and kicked bully Dawson in a public coffee-house for calling him youngster. But being ill-used by the above-mentioned widow, he was very serious for a year and a half; and though his temper being naturally jovial, he at last got over it, he grew careless of himself and never dressed afterward. He continues to wear a coat and doublet of the same cut that were in fashion at the time of his repulse, which, in his merry humours, he tells us, has been in and out twelve times since he first wore it …. He is now in his fifty-sixth year, cheerful, gay and hearty; keeps a good house both in town and country; a great lover of mankind, but there is such a mirthful cast in his behaviour, that he is rather beloved than esteemed.

He tenants grow rich, his servants look satisfied, all the young women profess love to him, and the young men are glad of his company. When he comes into a house he calls the servants by their names, and talks all the way upstairs to a visit I must not omit, that Sir Roger is a justice of the Quorum; that he fills the chair at a quarter-session with great abilities and three months ago gained universal applause, by explaining a passage in the game act.

The gentleman next in esteem and authority among us is another bachelor, who is a member of the Inner Temple, a man of great probity, wit, and understanding; but he has chosen his place of residence rather to obey the direction of an old humoursome father, than in pursuit of his own inclinations. He was placed there to study the laws of the land, and is the most learned

of any of the house in those of the state. Aristotle and Longinus are much better understood by him than Littleton or Coke. The father sends up every post questions relating to marriage-articles, leases, and tenures in the neighbourhood; all which questions he agrees with an attorney to answer and take care of in the lump. He is studying the passions themselves when he should be inquiring into the debates among men, which arise from them. He knows the argument of each of the orations of Demosthenes and Tully, but not one case in the reports of our own courts. No one ever took him for a fool, but none, except his intimate friends, know he has a great deal of wit. This turn makes him at once both disinterested and agreeable: as few of his thoughts are drawn from business, they are most of them fit for conversation. His taste of books is a little too just for the age he lives in; he has read all, but approves of very few. His familiarity with the customs, manners, actions and writings of the ancients, makes him a very delicate observer of what occurs to him in the present world. He is an excellent critic, and the time of the play is his hour of business; exactly at five he passes through New Inn, crosses through Russell-court, and takes a turn at Will's till the play begins; he has his shoes rubbed and his periwig powdered at the barber's as you go into the Rose. It is for the good of the audience when he is at a play, for the actors have an ambition to please him.

The person of next consideration is Sir Andrew Freeport, a merchant of great eminence in the city of London; a person of indefatigable industry, strong reason and great experience. His notions of trade are noble and generous, and (as every rich man has actually some sly way of jesting, which would make no great figure were he not a rich man) he calls the sea the British Common. He is acquainted with commerce in all its parts, and will tell you that it is a stupid and barbarous way to extend dominion by arms; for true power is to be got by arts and industry. He will often argue, that if this part of our trade were well cultivated, we should gain from one nation; and if another, from another. I have heard him prove, that diligence makes more lasting acquisitions than valour, and that sloth has ruined more nations than the sword. He abounds in several frugal maxims, amongst which the greatest favourite is, 'A penny saved is a penny got.' A general trader of good sense is pleasanter company than a general scholar and Sir Andrew having a natural unaffected eloquence, the perspicuity of his discourse gives the same pleasure that wit would in another man. He has made his fortunes himself; and says that England maybe richer than other kingdoms, by as plain methods as he himself is richer than other kingdoms, by as plain methods as he himself is richer than other men; though at the same time I can say this of him, that there is not a point in the compass, but blows home a ship in which he is an owner.

Next to Sir Andrew in the club-room sits Captain Sentry, a gentleman of great courage, good understanding, but invincible modesty. He is one of those that deserve very well, but are very awkward at putting their talents within the observation of such as should take notice of them. He was some years a captain, and behaved himself with great gallantry in several

engagements and at several sieges; but having a small estate of his own, and being next heir to Sir Roger, he has quitted a way of life in which no man can rise suitably to his merit, who is not something of a courtier as well as a soldier. I have heard him often lament, that in a profession where merit is placed in so conspicuous a view, impudence should get the better of modesty. When he had talked to this purpose, I never heard him make a sour expression, but frankly confess that he left the world, because he was not fit for it. A strict honesty, and an even regular behaviour, are in themselves obstacles to him that must press through crowds, who endeavour at the same end with himself, the favour of a commander. He will, however, in his way to talk excuse generals, for not disposing according to men's desert, or inquiring into it; for, says he, that great man who has a mind to help me, has as many to break through to-come at me, as I have to come at him; therefore he will conclude, that the man who would make a figure, especially in a military way, must get overall false modesty, and assist his patron against the importunity of other pretenders, by a proper assurance in his own vindication. He says it is a civil cowardice to be backward in asserting what you ought to expect, as it is a military fear to be slow in attacking when it is your duty. With this candour does the gentleman speak of himself and others. The same frankness runs through all his conversation. The military part of his life has furnished him with many adventures, in the relation of which he is very agreeable to the company; for he is never overbearing, though accustomed to command men in the utmost degree below him; nor ever too obsequious, from a habit of obeying men highly above him.

But that our society may not appear a set of humorists, unacquainted with the gallantries and pleasures of the age, we have amongst us the gallant will Honeycomb, a gentleman who according to his years, should be in the decline of his life, but having been very careful of his person, and always had a very easy fortune, time has made but very little impression, either by wrinkles on his forehead, or traces on his brain. His person is well turned, and of a good height. He is very ready at that sort of discourse with which men usually entertain women. He has all his life dressed very well, and remembers habits as others do men. He can smile when one speaks to him, and laughs easily. He knows the history of every mode, and can inform you from which of the French king's wenches our wives and daughters had this manner of curling their hair, that way of placing their hoods…. and whose vanity to show her foot made that part of the dress so short in such a year. In a word, all his conversation and knowledge has been in the female world. As other men of his age will take notice to you what such a minister said upon such an occasion, he will tell you, when the Duke of Monmouth danced at court, such a woman was then smitten—another was taken with him at the head of his troop in the Park. In all these important relations, he has ever about the same time received a kind glance, or a blow of a fan from some celebrated beauty, mother of the present Lord Such -a -one ….This way of talking of' his very much enlivens the conversation among us of a more sedate turn; and I find there is not one of the company, but myself,

who rarely speak at all, but speaks of him as of that sort of man who is usually called a well-bred fine gentleman. To conclude his character, where women are not concerned, he is an honest worthy man.

I cannot tell whether I am to account him whom I am next to speak of as one of our company; for he visits us but seldom; but when he does, it adds to every man else a new enjoyment of himself. He is a clergyman, a very philosophic man, of general learning, great sanctity of life and the most exact good breeding. He has the misfortune to be of a very weak constitution, and consequently, cannot accept of such cares and business as preferments in his function would oblige him to; he is therefore among divines what a chamber-cousellor is among lawyers. The probity of his mind, and the integrity of his life, create him followers, as being eloquent or loud advances others. He seldom introduces the subject he speaks upon; but we are so far gone in years, that he observes, when he is among us an earnestness to have him fall on some divine topic, which he always treats with much authority, as one who has no interest in this world, as one who is hastening to the object of all his wishes and conceives hope from his decays and infirmities. These are my ordinary companions.

7.3.2 Glossary

singular	:	here outstanding strangely peculiarly
sourness	:	enmity, bitterness
contradictions	:	opposed to, against
obstinacy	:	stubbornness
unconfined to modes & forms	:	free from common fashion
humour	:	ruling passion, disposition
soho-square	:	lying to the south of Oxford street, it was fashionable residential area in Steele's days
perverse	:	ill-natured
Lord Rochester	:	John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester (1647-1680), poet, wit and man of fashion of the Restoration
Etherage	:	(1635-1691) author of several comedies.
Bully Dawson	:	a notorious ruffian of the restoration period.
mirthful	:	full of joy
esteemed	:	honoured
quorum	:	a fixed number of members
universal	:	general
applause	:	Praise

quarter-session	:	a criminal court held quarterly by the Justice of the Peace
bachelor	:	an unmarried person
probity	:	honesty
humoursome	:	whimsical
passion	:	deep feeling
Aristotle	:	famous Greek philosopher
Longinus	:	Greek philosopher and grammarian of the third century A.D.
Littleton or Coke	:	Sir Thomas Littleton (1422-81) was a judge who wrote a treatise on the law of property. Sir Edward Coke (1552-1634) published a commentary on Littleton under the title of *Institutes.*
every post	:	by every dispatch of the post office.
marriage articles	:	a legal agreement regarding the property of a person about to marry.
lease	:	a contract by which a leaser gives land or house to a lessee for a certain period of time.
tenures	:	right or title to property
Demosthenes	:	Athenian orator and patriot
Tully	:	(106-43 B.C.) Roman orator, author and politician; his full name was MarcusTullins Cicero
familiarity	:	close touch
critic	:	one who can judge the quality of a thing
Russell-Court	:	a narrow street
Will's	:	The coffee-house in Russell Street, frequented by men of letters and politicians
periwig	:	artificial hair
The Rose	:	a tavern frequented by actors
eminence	:	importance
British Common	:	Sir Andrew means that the sea belongs to the British as the enclosed wasteland in a village belongs to the entire community
By arms	:	by conquest with the help of weapons
diligence	:	constant hard work

frugal maxims	:	proverbs encouraging thrift
perspicuity	:	clarity
discourse	:	speech
invincible	:	overpowering
conspicuous	:	attracting attention
impudence	:	disrespect
importunity	:	making repeated requests
vindication	:	show or prove the truth
candour	:	saying freely what one thinks.
obsequious	:	too eager to obey or serve
wenches	:	mistresses
hood	:	head dress
vanity	:	proud
Duke of Monmouth	:	(1649-1685) an illegitimate son of Charles II, who organized a rebellion against James II
Preferment	:	higher appointments
Chamber Counsellor	:	a lawyer who gives opinions in private and does not argue in court.
integrity	:	straight forwardness
Divines	:	clergymen

7.3.3 Summary

Steele talks about the first gentleman of his company whose name is Sir Roger de Coverley. The people, who knew about the county of Sir Roger, knew Sir Roger. Sir Roger was a man of extra ordinary nature and had a good sense. He always found fault with the ways of the world but this unusual nature never made him any enemies. Sir Roger had a unique capacity to please others. Sir Roger was a bachelor because he was disappointed in the love of a beautiful widow. Before this disappointment Sir Roger was a normal happy young man. He moved in society of important persons like Lord Rochester and Sir George Etherege. However, after being ill-used by the widow he lost all his joviality and interest in social life for more than a year. He became very serious. Gradually his joviality returned. However, he grew careless about his dress. He wore a coat and jacket of a cut, which was in fashion at that time. Now Sir Roger was fifty-six years old but was quite hale and hearty. He had a house in village and town. He had such a good nature that people loved him. He also treated his servants well. He was also the justice of the quorum and showed his judicial abilities on the chair of the justice at a quarter- session.

After this, Steele has described another companion of the club. He is a lawyer. He was also a bachelor. He was a man of sharp wit and clear understanding. He chose his occupation rather to obey the direction of his old father than to incline to his own tendencies. He took to the study of law in obedience to his father. He was more interested in the study of drama and dramatic criticism. The philosophers like Aristotle and Longinus were well understood by him. His father used to send to him various questions on law in order to ensure his son's progress in legal studies. The son outwitted the father by getting them answered through a lawyer whom he had engaged for the purpose. No body took him as a fool but only his friends knew that he had a great wit. He liked to read the books, which were not of the age he lived. He was familiar with the writings, customs, actions and manners of ancient writers, which made him a keen observer of the worldly affairs. He was a good critic. His real hour of business was the time of the play. The presence of an able critic among the audience would rouse the actors to give the best performance possible.

Next the author has discussed about Sir Andrew Freeport who was is a good businessman of London. He was very laborious, experienced and had a great understanding. His knowledge of commerce was extensive. He had his own ideals of the ways of enlarging a country's trade. He was of the opinion that a dominion may be extended by art and industry than by power. Diligence or industry alone would help the country to gain things of permanent value, and sloth or idleness more than the sword had caused the ruin of many nations. He knew many short maxims. He had a unique art of speech. he was a self made person and believed that England too could become richer than other kingdoms, by methods which had so benefited him.

After Sir Andrew, the author has described the merits of Captain Sentry. He was very courageous intelligent and had good understanding. He was such a man who had not received good consideration of his abilities. He had been Captain in military for some years and fought bravely on fronts. He left the army because even though he rendered meritorious service, which any one could see and appreciate, promotion did not come to him. He used to say that only that man could hold a position in military who gets over his false modesty. He was of the opinion that it is cowardice to stand back modestly. Similarly a man who failed to assert himself and demand what was his due was a coward. He was frank in speaking about the weaknesses of his officers. This frankness was a part of his character. Though he commanded many persons in military, he was never haughty. He never became a flatterer, although he obeyed his superiors.

The author then talks about Will Honeycomb. Though he was old, there were no traces of the passage of time in his brain or in his person. He had an attractive personality and could impress women by his talk. He dressed well and was well acquainted with the history of every fashion that remained in vogue in England. Will Honeycomb was always interested in matters pertaining to women. In his conventions he talked mostly of women, their

dresses, their manners and their fashions. He had a good knowledge of history. He could tell that the hairstyles or hats of our wives and daughters resemble to those of the wenches of French Kings. But the author says that he was a gentleman. Leaving the relations of women he was an honest and worthy man.

At the end of the essay, the author tells us about one of his companions who seldom waited him. He was a philosopher and clergyman. He lived a sacred life. He was very weak in constitution. Because of ill health, he could not fulfill the responsibilities which promotion in the church might have brought him. He spoke on divine topic with authority. He wished for the good of the world even after his death.

7.4 Some Model Explanations

(i) His tenants grew rich, his servants look satisfied, all the young women profess to love him, and the young men are glad of his company. When he comes into a house he calls the servants by their names, and talks all the way upstairs to a visit. I must not omit, that Sir Roger is a justice of the quorum, that he fills the chair at a quarter-session with great abilities, and three months ago gained universal applause, by explaining a passage in the game act.

Exp. Sir Roger got disappointed in his love of a beautiful widow. He decided not to marry and stayed a bachelor. Before this disappointment he was a normal happy young man. He was a sincere gentleman and loved everyone and was good to them. He also treated his servants well. He was a well-behaved gentleman. He was a justice of the quorum and showed his judicial abilities on the chair of the justice at a quarter-session. He was praised by everyone for wisely explaining a passage of the Game Act.

(ii) He was placed there to study the laws of the land, and is the most learned of any of the house in those of the stage. Aristotle and Longinus are much better understood by him than Littleton or Coke. The father sends up every post questions relating to marriage articles, leases and tenures in the neighbourhood, all which questions he agrees with an attorney to answer and take care of in the lump. He is studying passions themselves when he should be inquiring into the debates among men, which arise from them. He knows the arguments of each of the orations of Demosthenes and Tully but not one case in the reports of our own courts.

Exp. Next in importance to Sir Roger de Coverley was a lawyer who was also a bachelor. He was an intelligent man, with sharp wit and clear understanding. His father wanted him to study law but he was more interested in the study of drama and dramatic criticism. The philosophers like Aristotle and Longinus were well understood by him than Littleton or Coke. His father used to send by every post various questions on law in order to ensure his son's progress in legal studies. The son outwitted his father by getting them answered

through a lawyer whom he had engaged for this purpose. He knew everything about the orations of Demosthenes and Tully but not a single case in the reports of the English courts. He was not looked upon as a fool, but only a few friends knew his real merit.

(iii) *He is an excellent critic and the time of the play is his hour of business; exactly at five he passes through New Inn, crosses through Russell-court, and takes a turn at Will's till the play begins; he has his shoes rubbed and his periwig powdered at the barber's as you go into the Rose. It is for the good of the audience when he is at a play, for the actors have an ambition to please him.*

Exp. Lawyer, who is the member of the Spectator Club, was more interested in poetry and drama than law. His real home of business was the time of the play. Exactly at five he passed through New Inn, crossed through Russell-Court and took a turn at Will's before the play began in the theatre. He was a good critic of the stage and never missed any performance. The presence of an able critic would encourage the actors to give the best performance possible.

(iv) *I have heard him prove, that diligence makes more lasting acquisitions than valour, and that sloth has ruined more nations than the sword. He abounds in several frugal maxims, amongst which the greatest favourite is, 'A penny saved is a penny got.'*

Exp. After describing Sir Roger and the student of law, Steele tells us about another member of the Club, who belonged to their business community. He was Sir Andrew Freeport. He was an eminent merchant in the city of London. He is a man of great understanding and experience. His knowledge of commerce was extensive. He had his own ideals of the ways of enlarging a country's trade. He was of the opinion that a dominion can be extended by art and industry rather than by power. Military power might enable one country do attack and subdue another, but such submission would never be a lasting acquisition. Diligence or industry alone would help the country to gain things of permanent value, and sloth or idleness more than the sword had caused the ruin of many nations. He knew many short maxims. He often said that if one wanted to become rich one must save money. According to him 'A penny saved is a penny got.' He meant that saving was as important as earning.

7.5 Let's Sum Up

In this unit we have discussed Steele's essay *The Spectator Club* describing all the six members of the Club. (i) Sir Roger de Converley, a typical country squire represents the landed interest (ii) Captain Sentry, Sir Roger's heir, stands for the military officers as a class (iii) The Merchants of London, is presented in the form of Sir Andrew Freeport (iv) Will Honeycomb is a fashionable man of the town (v) The legal profession is are represented by the student of law (vi) The clergyman is an ecclesiastical charouter.

7.6 Suggested Readings

1. C.H. Lockitt ed. : ***The Art of the Essayist***, Orient Longman Ltd., New Delhi
2. Susanta K. Sinha : ***English Essayists***, Oxford University Press, Calcutta.

7.7 Questions

(1) Give a brief description of the members of the Spectator Club as given by Richard Steele in his essay.

(2) Write a short note on Steele's style.

(3) The members of the Spectator Club are called a "set of humorists." Illustrate.

7.8 Answers

(1) Richard Steele's finest achievement is possibly his essay entitled 'The Spectator Club' published in the **The Spectator** started by Joseph Addison. In the first essay Addison has given an account of The Spectator. All the essays in the periodical are supposed to be written by him. He is a member of the Club and the periodical is said to be run by the Club. Besides **The Spectator,** there were six other members of The Spectator Club.

Sir Roger de Converley – He was the doyen of The Spectator Club. His great grandfather was the inventor of that famous country-dance which is called after him as Converley dance. He was a man of extra ordinary nature and had a good sense. He never made any enemies because of his unusual nature. He had a unique capacity to please others. Sir Roger was a bachelor because he was disappointed in the love of a beautiful widow. Before this, Sir Roger was a normal happy young man. However, after being ill-used by the widow he lost all his joviality and interest in social life for more than a year. Gradually, he got over it. But this incident in his life made him careless of himself and his dress. He was a sincere gentleman and a great lover of mankind and was very much loved by every one. He also treated his servants well. He was a justice of the quorum and showed his judicial abilities on the chair of the justice at a quarter-session.

The Lawyer - Next in importance to Sir Roger de Coverley was again a bachelor. He was a lawyer and a member of the Inner Temple. He studied law only because he was forced by his father to do so. He was also a bachelor. He was a man of sharp unit and clear understanding. He chose his occupation rather to obey the direction of his old father than to incline to his own wishes. He was more interested in the study of drama and dramatic criticism. The philosophers like Aristotle and Longinus were well understood by him. His father used to send to him by every post various questions on law in order to ensure his son's progress in legal studies. The son outwitted the father by getting them answered through a lawyer whom he had engaged for the purpose. He was not looked upon as a fool, but only a few friends knew his real merit. He was familiar with the writings, customs, actions and manners of ancient writers, which made him a keen observer of the worldly

affairs. He was a good critic of the stage and never missed any performance.

Sir Andrew Freeport – was an eminent merchant of London ranked next in importance. He was very labourious, experienced and had a great understanding. His knowledge of commerce was extensive. He had his own ideals of the ways of enlarging a country's trade. He was of the opinion that a dominion may more be extended by art and industry than by power. Diligence or industry alone would help the country to gain things of permanent value, and sloth or idleness more than the sword had caused the ruin of many nations. He knew many short maxims. He had a unique art of speech. Since he had made his fortune himself, he believed that England too could become richer than other Kingdoms by methods, which had so benefited him.

Captain Sentry – Another important member of the Spectator Club was Captain Sentry. He sat next to Sir Andrew in the club-room. He was noted for his modesty and for his courage. He was very courageous, intelligent and had good understanding. He had won reputation for himself in the army and he fought bravely on fronts. But he left the army because even though he rendered meritorious service, which any one could see and appreciate, promotion did not come to him. He was of the opinion that those who were pushing and assertive without any sense of false modesty could hope to rise in the army. Similarly a man who failed to assert himself and demand what was his due was a coward. He was frank in speaking about the weaknesses of his officers in failing to do what was right and giving him due promotions. This frankness was a part of his character. He commended many persons in military, and was never haughty. He never became a flatterer, although he obeyed his superiors.

Will Honeycomb - The Spectator Club was not merely a set of humorists unacquainted with the gallantries and pleasures of the age. There was a gallant among them. His name was Will Honeycomb. Though he was old, there were no trace of the passage of time in his brain or in his person. He had an attractive personality and could impress women by his talk. He was always mentally alert. He was always well dressed and was well acquainted with the history of every fashion that remained in vogue in England. He knew the various styles of curling the hair or wearing the hood. He could talk about women most easily. He could say when the Duke of Monmouth danced at court and who fell in love with him then. His conversation was always pleasing, and he was generally spoken of as a well-bred fine gentleman.

The Clergyman - The last member of The Spectator Club was a Clergyman. He rarely attended the meetings of the Club. He was known for his wide knowledge, sanctity and good breeding. He was very weak in constitution. Because of ill-health he could not fulfill the responsibilities which promotion in the church might have brought to him. He was among the divines as the counsel chamber among the lawyers. He spoke on divine topic with authority.

He wished for the good of the world even after his decay.

(2) Sir Richard Steele, like Addison has the distinction of not merely founding the English essay, but also of making it a vehicle of gentle criticism, refined humour and kind satire**.** His essay on The Spectator Club' is an example of this skill.

The character sketch of the various members of the Spectator Club invites criticism both of social types and individuals. Sir Roger, the lawyer, Sir Andrew Freeport, Captain Sentry, Will Honeycomb and the Clergyman not merely represent various classes and professions but are also interesting as individuals. They are 'humorists' either in exaggerating their class characteristics or in deviating from them. Sir Roger is defective in taste like a typical country square, but he shows it only in actions prompted by good feeling. Captain Sentry has none of the sycophancy of careerist in the army. The lawyer is more interested in literature and drama than in law, while the Clergyman is unworldly to an extreme extent. In 'The Spectator Club' we have representative men from all walks of life who entertain us and we cannot help loving them at the same time.

Steele's object in presenting these characters as representatives of society is to refine manners and cure the society of its follies and shortcomings. This object is fulfilled in a perfect manner.

(3) Steele says that the members of The Spectator Club are a "set of humorists." Humorist means an eccentric person. *Sir Roger de Converley* is the most eccentric among the members of The Spectator Club. He values morals above manners and prefers kindliness and goodness to soulless conventions and insincere etiquettes. He was very close to the servants of the house and had a genuine interest in them although it was required of him according to social convention to keep a distant reserve with servants. He was disappointed in the love of a beautiful widow and stayed a bachelor throughout his life. Though at one time he was a man of fashions and he moved in the best circles of society. However, after being ill-used by the widow he lost all his joviality and interest in social life for more than a year.

Thus Sir Roger brings out the defects as well as the virtues of the country squire. He was defective in taste like a typical country squire.

Another member of the Club is a *lawyer.* He took to the study of law in obedience to his father. He was more interested in the study of drama and dramatic criticism. His father used to send to him by every post various questions on law in order to ensure his son's progress in legal studies. The son outwitted the father by getting them answered through a layer whom he had engaged for this purpose.

Sir Andrew Freeport, an eminent businessman of London, represents the commercial classes. He is a standing illustration of the prudence as well as the narrow self complacency of the successful businessman. He knew many short maxims. He had neither wit nor learning. He had a unique art of speech.

Captain Senry is Sir Roger's nephew. His eccentricity lies in his refusing to play the courtier to his superior officers. He was not a flatterer and he retired from the army because of his own innate modesty and honesty. He was of the opinion that it is cowardice to stand back modestly.

Will Honeycomb is the gallant of the company forming The Spectator Club. He was considered "a well- bred fine gentleman." His talk was always about women and fashions. He was honest and worthy only where women were not concerned.

The Clergyman is also a member of The Spectator Club who rarely visited the Club. He lived a sacred life. He was among the divines as the counsel chamber among the lawyers. He wished for the good of the world even after his decay. The Clergyman's eccentricity was his extreme unworldliness.

The Spectator shows a nice sense of judgement and discrimination by describing the eccentricities of the members of the Club. The sketch of the various members of The Spectator Club is an attempt at comprehensive criticism both of social types and individuals.

UNIT : 8

Charles Dickens : Oliver Twist

Structure

8.0 Objectives
8.1 Introduction
8.2 Reading Oliver Twist
  8.2.1 The Life of Charles Dickens
  8.2.2 Historical Background to the Novel
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8.0 Objectives

In this unit you will study about the Novel, Oliver Twist Written by Charles Dickens. After having gone through this unit, you will be able to

- Understand the background to the Novel
- Understand about the life, background and ideas of the Novelist Charles Dickens
- Understand the story, structure and characters in the Novel
- Write in your own words about any aspect of the Novel.

8.1 Introduction

In this unit you will study about the Novelist, the Novel, the background and context of the Novel. Through key words and exercises given, you will reinforce your understanding of the unit.

8.2.1 The Life Of Charles Dickens

Birth and parentage: Charles Dickens, the most popular novelist of the nineteenth century England, was born on 7th February, 1812 at Portsea. His father, John Dickens, was a clerk in the Navy Pay Office. He was an affectionate and generous man, but lacked in thrift and foresight. Not much is known about Dickens's mother except that she was gentle and virtuous and had a gift for mimicry. Charles was the second of six children and was the eldest among the sons. In his childhood, one could often see him perched on some chair or table singing comic songs in an atmosphere of perpetual applause. *A* touch of illhealth prevented him from participating in the usual children's games. He had to amuse himself by reading novels. His family was not particularly literary; but they had a good collection of novelsthe major

works of Defoe, Cervantes, Smollet Fielding and Goldsmith. Charles would often crawl up into a lonely garret and lose himself in reading these classics. He was specially fond of *Humphrey Clinker* and *Tom Jones.*

Warren's Blacking Factory: In 1822, John Dickens was transferred to London. He had always been handling his financial affairs rather clumsily. But now, he was faced with an acute financial crisis. Charles was forced to accept work in a blackingfactory, on the Thames waterfront. His job was to cover and label the pots of blacking, *i.e.* bootpolish. Charles was then just twelve and receptive and hyper sensitive. He felt tormented to mix with the coarse boys gloating in foul language throughout the day. He worked in this factory for barely four or five months, but he could never fully recover from the humiliation of this episode. And he could never forgive his parents for forcing him to work in the squalid, ratinfested factory. He also developed excessive sympathy for deprived children like himself who would be condemned by their circumstances to such an inhuman task.

John Dickens in the Debtors Prison: Charles Dickens had just started working in the Warrens b1acking factory when his father was arrested for debt and removed to the Debtors Prison at the Marshalsea. His mother, along with the other members of the family, joined him in the prison. Charles was the only one left outside. He was not keeping good health. In addition, he had to remain hungry four or five times a week. Sometimes he would drop down groaning while at his work. This was perhaps the most miserable period of his life. It ended when John Dickens got a small legacy which enabled him to leave the prison and to send his son to a school at Hampstead. Charles remained in this school for two to three years.

Early career: Dickens began his career as a lawyer's clerk at the age of fifteen in 1827. It was a modest beginning. But he had his aspirations and was endowed with initiative and drive. Besides, he had the energy and zeal to put in real hard work. He began to learn shorthand in his spare time. Sometimes, he would forego even sleep and continue practicing shorthand.

In love with Maria Beadnell: It was at this time that he fell in love with Maria Beadnell. He was working hard to lift himself above the trap of poverty and obscurity and Maria's love would have sustained him in his struggle. But she ridiculed and spurned his suit. Dickens was disappointed but determined to ride on. Later Dickens immortalised Maria by making her Dora in *David Copperfield.*

Journalism: In 1832 Dickens left law and embarked upon a career of journalism. He was a natural reporter's flair for descriptive writing. He had an eye for detail which enabled him to present lively accounts of whatever he had seen. He began by covering cases in the ecclesiastical courts but soon worked his way up to Parliament; he gained reputation as an efficient parliamentary reporter but was personally disillusioned with the proceedings of that august house. He was amazed by the stupid pomposity of parliamentary warfare, and for the rest of his life held the legislature in contempt.

Preparation to be a novelist: Dickens was a man of divergent interests. He was also possessed extraordinary energy which enabled him to pursue several interests at once. He frequented theatres, learnt acting and narrowly missed entering this profession. He also regularly went to the British Museum Library and furthered his selfeducation. Thus, by the age of twentyone, when his first published work appeared, Dickens had acquired a solid knowledge of those subjects which run like thread through all his novels: the law, the theatre, and above all the city of London and its inhabitants.

First sketches and marriage In 1833, Dickens published his first sketch in the *Old Monthly Magazine;* Other sketches followed and in 1834, he published them in a bookform under the penname of Boz. The book was an instantaneous success. The same year, he married Catherine Hogarth, the daughter of a fellow journalist.

Early novels: *Sketches by Boz* (1836) was followed by *Pickwick Papers* (183637), Dickens full length work, which brought him resounding success. *Pickwick Papers* was followed by four novels in quick succession () *Oliver Twist* (183739), *Nicholas Nickleby* (18389), *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1840.1) and a historical novel, *Barnaby Rudge* (1841). All these novels appeared in monthly instalments.

The first tour of America and Canada: In 1842, Dickens, accompanied by his wife, went on a tour of America and Canada. His reputation as a novelist had already reached there and he was given a rousing welcome wherever he went. He based his next two works *American Notes* (1842) and *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1844) on his impressions gathered during this tour. These works reflect the life in America in a rather uncomplimentary manner.

The novels of the middle phase: *Martin Chuzzlewit* was followed by *A Christmas Carol* (1843), the most famous of his five 'Christmas Books'. These books were shorter pieces appearing in the next few years. Next came *Dombey and Son* (18468) and *David Copperfield* (184950). *David Copperfield,* the most popular of Dickens's novels, marks a turning point, in his productive activity; for thematically and structurally, the novels following *David Copperfield* are much different from the earlier works. It has special interest for the readers, for it contains a good deal of autobiographical materials.

Later novels: The novels written before 1842 were rather formless. They abounded in episodes which, hilarious in themselves, tended to loosen the construction. His readers loved him for such episodes, but the enlightened ones expected something aesthetically more satisfying from him. He felt infuriated if someone pointed out the absence of organic structure and coherence in his works, but somewhere in his heart of hearts he was also becoming aware of the need of imposing an artistic design on his novels. As he grew older, he started paying greater attention to the form of his novels. He also took longer to write them. It is not a mere coincidence that his contemporaries loved his earlier writings whereas it is his later novels that

have been more favorably received by the modern readers. These later novels include *Bleak House* (18523), *Hard Times* (I854) and *Little Dorrit* (18557).

Unhappy domestic life: Comparatively little is known of Dickens's wife Catherine, except that she failed to bring him the happiness he might have expected his wife to bring him. As time passed, Dickens's outside commitments went on increasing and life at home became miserable. A stage came when he just could not endure more. He separated from his wife after having spent twentytwo years in her company and having got ten children. Dickens treated al1 his children with affection and concern.

The last novels: On account of domestic troubles, Dickens went through a comparatively unproductive period following his *Little Dorrit.* But very soon he wrote A *Tale of Two Cities* (1859), *Great Expectations* (18601) and *Our Mutual Friend (*18645). *Our Mutual Friend* is his last complete novel.

The second tour of America: On finishing *Our Mutual Friend* September 1865, Dickens devoted his attention to prepare new readings for public. The scene of the murder of Nancy by Bill Sikes in *Oliver Twist* was the most powerful reading in his repertory. In 1867, he went to America on a reading tour. This was a very exhausting work but Dickens enjoyed it and continued it even after his return from America. On March 15, 1870 he gave a final reading in London.

Death: Dicken was now working on *Edwin Droon* which he had begun in 1869. On 9th June, 1870, he wrote fresh chapters for this novel. Then suddenly he was taken suddenly ill. His sisterinlaws efforts to get him on the sofa were unavailing. "On the ground", he murmured, and shortly afterwards passed away without recover-ing consciousness. He was buried at the Westminster Abbey.

8.2.2 Historical Background To The Novel

Oliver Twist was Dickens's second novel, the first being *Pickwick Papers. Pickwick Paper* was a hilarious comedy, bordering on farce, written primarily with the aim of entertaining the readers. However, in Dickens the reformatory instinct was very strong and in the very next novel, his readers were surprised to see him ruthlessly attacking the social evils, in particular the wretched conditions in the workhouse. In his later novels he carried on a crusade against other evils like the miserable conditions in the debtor's prison in the factories and shops, the corruption prevalent in the election system and certain other evils caused by the rapid industrialisation of the country. In order to understand these novels, including *Oliver Twist,* it is important to have a fair idea of the historical background in which they were written. In this chapter as much of this background is being discussed as is relevant to *Oliver Twist.*

Poor Laws: The first few chapters of *Oliver Twist* are a very strong protest against the workhouse life that virtually dehumanized human beings. Certain systems that initiated to bring relief to the poor people had gradually been so corrupted that instead of giving them any solace, they had actually made their life miserable. It was under Queen ElizabethI, that laws were made to provide relief to those poor people who could not support them-selves. There was a twofold arrangement. The old, the sick, the lame and the blind were relieved at home; orphans were boarded out and then apprenticed to a trade. The vagabonds were sent to the houses of correction.The theory behind this arrangement was to provide work to the ablebodied poor and to offer relief to the disabled. Special buildings were set up to provide work to the poor people under supervision. These buildings were known as work-houses. By an Act passed in 1722, the poor could be compelled to live and work in these buildings in order to be eligible to get relief. In other words, either a poor man was to live in the workhouse or he was to be denied any relief. This was known as the workhouse test. At first there were separate institutions for the different needs of children, old people or those who were mentally or physically sick. But gradually the workhouse conditions deteriorated; workhouse came to contain a mixture of able and disabled alike and by the end of 19th century they became symbols of utter degradation. In most workhouse husbands were separated from wives, children lacked proper care, diseases were rife and food was inadequate.

In the late 18th century, laws were passed to allow outdoor relief to the ab1eBodied so that the workhouses could house only the old or disabled. The original plan was to offer minimum wage for the laborers. But later a system known as 'Speenhamland System' was devised. According to it relief based on the current prices of bread was given in addition to wages. Once again the intention was to make the life of the poor people worth living, but in practice it led to a general weakening of independence and self respect of laborers and to an increase of pauperism in the long run. In the early 19th century, therefore, the need was felt to effect reforms in the poor laws. It was felt that a more suitable alternative solution was needed for the practice of outdoor relief which had become both useless and corrupt. Besides, the system of administering relief also needed to be overhauled.

The administration of relief: At this stage it would be useful to make a note of the system of administering relief to the poor. Basically it was the responsibility of the parish which was the main unit of local government in ruling it. Apart from other officials, the parish had the 'Justice of the Peace' whose duty was to impose the compulsory rates (the poor rate) and to appoint local overseers to administer actual relief. Another petty official was the beadle. Originally the beadle was almost, but a towncrier. His main function was to proclaim meetings but he was also expected to keep order in Church and to punish petty offenders. Gradually the beagle came to yield considerable power on small scale. In *Oliver Twist* there is one such beadle, Mr. Bumble.

Most of the parish officials were unfit for their jobs because of their own lack of education, experience, and responsibility. Their positions were both unpaid and compulsory. Therefore, it was rarely that really good people ever got elected to them.

Poor law reforms: In 1832 a Commission was appointed to study the entire issue of the Poor Law Reform. On the basis of the proposals put forward by this Commission, the New Poor Law of 1834 came into being. According to it a Central Authority was created, the Prior Law Commissions, were given full powers to control local administration. One of the most important changes made by the new poor laws was the replacement of the Parish officers by elected local bodies known as Boards of Guardians. These Boards were required to supervise petty officials such as the Matron of the workhouse.

The inefficacy of the reforms: There is no doubt that the 1834 measures were excellent in intention but they failed to prove effective. The poor people continued to suffer. Howsoever humane might be the laws, it is actually their efficient administration which can ultimately bring any benefit. A corrupt administration will make a mockery of the best possible laws. Therefore, Dickens has directed his criticism as much against the system as against the individuals; if he is critical of the system that degraded human beings, he is equally critical of the people who were responsible for evolving or running such a system. In *Oliver Twist* we find that the workhouse incharge, Mrs Mann, appropriates the greater part of the stipend given for the food of the children and the children are mostly starved. Here it is Mrs Mann who is at fault.

It should be noted that Dicken's main concern was the individual as an integral part of the system. A system without human beings would be lifeless and even meaningless. Human beings without a system would tend to be confused. So Dickens felt the need of basically good human beings working under a system that was designed to serve the society. Of these two also, he gave greater importance to the human beings. It is Mr Brownlow as an individual who ultimately rescues Oliver from this system. Laws were pad, the underworld, where people like Fagin ruled was also a dark world but noble people like Mr Brownlow and the Maylies could rise above these systems and do some good to the society.

Therefore, Dickens makes a very selective criticism in *Oliver Twist.* He attacks the harsh regime of the workhouse with special regard to diet and the utter neglect of the needs of the pauper children but more than that the inefficiency and inhumanity of such officials as Mr. Bumble and Mrs. Corney. These officials not only physical1y starved the children but often made them emotional wrecks.

There has been a good deal of discussion among scholars as to whether Dickens was attacking the Old Poor Laws or the New. But this discussion is almost irrelevant. We should remember that the novel is more an attack

on the way the laws are administered rather than on the intention of the laws. On paper most of the laws are just, but in practice they prove to be injurious As K.J. Fielding points out, the novel was never intended as an attack on mere institutions, but on the spirit behind them, which remains largely unchanged.

It is hard to say if any reforms were really carried out as a result of Dickens's attack on these laws. In fact the protests made by writers are never so quickly effective. But one thing is certain, this novel as well as the others to follow definitely prepared a climate in which a genuine need was felt to have a second look at the entire administrative setup and to change it.

8.2.3 The Story In Brief

Oliver is born. A child was born in a dark and dingy work-house about seventyfive miles north of London. His mother's name was not known. She had perhaps undertaken a long journey on foot and had fallen unconscious by the roadside near the workhouse. She died almost immediately after giving birth to the child, leaving behind a locket and a ring as the only tokens of the child's identity. These too were stolen by old Sally, present at her death. Sally was just an ordinary pauper, living in the workhouse.

Mr Bumble, the parish beadle and a bullying official of the workhouse named the child, Oliver. Mr. Bumble named the children born in the workhouse in the interesting order of an alphabetical system he had himself devised. On Mr. Bumble's list, Twist was the name falling between Swubble and Unwin. So he was named Oliver Twist.

A reward of ten pounds was offered to anyone who could give helpful clues about Oliver's parents. But no useful information could be procured. Oliver was sent to a nearby poor farm, where he passed his early childhood in neglect and near starvation. At the age of nine, he was moved back to the workhouse. The children in the workhouse were given very little to eat, so virtually they were always hungry. One day Oliver was forced by other children to ask for a second serving of porridge. The authorities were stunned by this unusual and unprecedented demand. In order to give him deterring punishment, they immediately put him in solitary confinement and posted a bill offering five pounds to some master who would take him off the parish.

Apprenticeship at Sowerberry's and departure for London : Oliver was apprenticed to Mr Sowerberry, a coffin maker, to learn a trade. Since Oliver cut a pathetic figure, Sowerberry finally made him an attendant at children's funerals. Noah Claypole, another employee of Sowerberry, once teased Oliver about his parentage. Oliver patiently stood the insult but when he could not endure more, he ran into a violent fury and fiercely hit Claypole. It was with great difficulty that he was overpowered by Mrs Sowerberry, Charlotte, a maid at Sowerberrys and Claypole, and locked in the cellar. When Sowerberry returned, Oliver was given a severe thrashing. But later he was released. That night Oliver packed his meagre belongings and left for

London.

Fagin's den and the art of pickpocketing : The journey to London was tiresome and painful. When Oliver reached the out-skirts of London, he was worn out walking and had become weak from hunger. He met Jack Dawkins, popularly known as the Artful Dodgr, who offered him food and lodgings in the city. Oliver soon found himself in the midst of a gang of young thieves led by a miserly old Jew, Fagin. Here Oliver was trained as a pickpocket.

The first pickpocketing mission; the kindly Mr Brownlow : One day the Artful Dodger, Charley Bates and Oliver were sent on a pickpocketing mission. Oliver did not pick any pockets, but it was he who was caught and taken to the police station. There he was rescued by kindly Mr Brownlow, the man whose pocket Oliver was accused of having picked. This adventure left a rude shock on young Oliver's mind and for some time he was terribly sick. He was carefully looked after by Mr Brownlow, his gruff friend Mr Grimwig and the old housekeeper Mrs Bedwin. In the room where Oliver was kept, there hung on one of the walls the portrait of a young woman, and almost everyone marveled at the resemblance between young Oliver and the lady in the portrait.

Oliver is back to Fagin : Mr Brownlow was sure that Oliver was a sincere and honest boy but his friend Mr Grimwig thought otherwise. When Oliver was fully recovered, he was one day given some money and books to take to a bookseller. Grimwig wagered that Oliver would not return. Brownlow was equally confident he would. Meanwhile Fagin and his gang had been on the constant look-out for his appearance. So as soon as he left Mr. Brownlow's house, he was intercepted by Nancy, a young street girl associated with the gang and brought back to Fagin's den.

The villainous Mr Bumble appears again : Mr Brownlow still sure that Oliver had been the victim of some unfortunate mishap advertised for his recovery. This advertisement was seen by Mr Bumble, then in London on some parochial business. Hoping to earn some profit, he hastened to Mr Brownlow and reported that Oliver was incorrigible. The information made Mr Brownlow an utterly dejected and unhappy person. He felt so miserable that he refused to have Oliver's name mentioned in his presence.

The Roberry at Chertesy : Oliver was once more back in the hands of Fagin. During his absence the gang had been studying a house in Chertsey, west of London, with a view to breaking into it at night. The time came for his adventure and Oliver, much to his horror, was chosen to participate. This daring robbery was to be attempted by Bill Sikes, the brutal young coleader of the gang, Toby Crackit, another housebreaker and Oliver, who had been chosen because of his short height. They thought he would be handy to let into the house through a ventilator. The three met in the dark of early morning and pried open a small window of the house. Oliver was in no mood to be an accomplice in the robbery. He entered the window, determined to warn the occupants. He fell on the floor with a thud and the

robbers were discovered. All the three of them fled, but as he was running, Oliver was wounded by a gunshot.

The entry of Monks into the story : It was not, possible to carry the wounded Oliver with them. So Sikes, threw him into a ditch and covered him with a cape. Toby Crackit returned to Fagin and reported the incident. In the meantime one Monks had met Fagin and held with him an important conversation about Oliver's parentage. Monks wanted to got hold of the boy and sought Fagin's assistance. This conversation was overheard by Nancy, who later played a very significant role in Oliver's life.

Oliver goes to the Maylies : Oliver, left by Bill Sikes in the ditch, was feeling weak and miserable. But he crawled back to the house into which he had gone the night before. He was taken in by the owner, Mrs Maylie and Rose, her adopted niece. Oliver's story aroused their sympathy and he was saved from police investigation by Dr Losberne, friend of the Maylies. He had still not forgotten Mr Brownlow. After he had recovered, he accompanied Dr Losberne to seek out Mr Brownlow but he was disappointed to learn that the old gentleman and his friend Mrs Bedwin had gone to the West Indies.

Mr Bumble marries Mrs Corney : Meanwhile Mr Bumble had been courting the widow, MrsCorney. During one of their conversations, Mrs Corney was called out to attend the death of old Sally, who had stood by at the death of Oliver's mother. After old Sally died, Mrs Corney removed a pawn ticket from her hand. In Mrs Corney's absence, Bumble appraised her property to his satisfaction. He also proposed marriage to Mrs Corney.

Oliver accompanies the Maylies to the Countryside : The Maylies moved to the country where Oliver studied gardening, read and took long walks. During the holiday Rose Maylie fell sick and nearly died. After her recovery, Harry Maylie, the son of Mrs Maylie joined the group. Harry, in love with. Rose, proposed marriage to her. But Rose declined the proposal. She said she could not marry him before she had discovered her real identity. Secondly he must mend his ways before he married her. One evening Oliver was frightened to see Fagin and. Monks peering at him through the study window.

Monks destroys the tokens of Oliver's parentage : Mr Bumble was soon disillusioned with his wife, for the former Mrs Corney dominated him completely. Monks went to the workhouse seeking information about Oliver. He met Mrs Bumble and learnt that she had recommended a locket and a wedding ring with the pawn that she had recovered from old Sally. Monks bought the trinkets from Mrs Bumble and threw them into the river.

Nancy meets Rose Maylie with some clues about Oliver's parentage : Monks told Fagin that he had disposed of the tokens of Oliver's parentage. This conversation was again overheard by Nancy. She drugged Bill Sikes, whom she had, been nursing after the robbery at Chertsey and went to Rose

Maylie whose name and address she had overheard in the conversation between Fagin and Monks. Nancy told Rose everything she had heard concerning Oliver. Rose was unable to understand fully the various connections of the plot nor could she see Monks' connection with Oliver. She offered the miserable girl the protection of her own home. But Nancy refused the offer since she was in love with Bill Sikes and could never leave him. The two young women, however, agreed on a time and place for a later meeting.

Oliver again meets Mr Brownlow : Oliver had seen Mr Brownlow in the street. So he persuaded Rose to take him to the old gentleman. The reunion of Oliver, Mr Brownlow and Mrs Bedwin was a joyous one. Even old Mr Grimwig gruffly expressed his pleasure at seeing Oliver again. Rose acquainted Mr Brownlow with the important facts in Nancy's story.

Noah Claypole also joins Fagin : Noah Claypoie and Charlotte, maidservant of the Sowerberrys, had in the meantime, run away from the undertaker and arrived in London. They happened to go to the pubic house which was also the haunt of Fagin and his gang. Fagin easily succeeded in persuading Noah to join him. He was given the job of stealing small coins from children on household errands.

Noah Claypole spies on Nancy : Nancy could not meet Rose Maylie at the appointed time. Bill Sikes was still unwell and he did not let her move from his side. Noticing Nancy's impatience to go away, Fagin concluded that she had got tired of Sikes and that she had another lover. Fagin hated Sikes because Sikes wielded a strong power over the gang. He saw this situation as an opportunity to get rid of Sikes. He asked Noah to spy on Nancy.

Nancy is murdered by Sikes : The following week Nancy got free with the aid of Fagin. She went to Rose and Mr Brownlow and revealed to them the haunts of all the members of the gang except Sikes. Noah overheard all this and reported it to Fagin who conveyed it to Sikes. Sikes was naturally infuriated. He brutally murdered Nancy without knowing that the girl had been faithful to him. But once the murder was over, he was haunted by the vision of murdered Nancy's eyes. He just kept running about but got no peace. Apprehending that the presence of his dog might betray him, he attempted to kill his dog. The dog ran away.

The puzzle is solved : On the basis of Nancy's information, Monks was soon apprehended. And he confessed to Mr Brownlow the plot against Oliver. Oliver's father, Edwin Leeford had married a woman older than himself. Their son, Edward Leeford was the man now known as Monks. The senior Mr Leeford separated from his wife after leading several years of unhappy married life with her. Monks and his mother stayed on the continent while Mr Leeford returned to England. Later he met a retired naval officer and fell in love with his seventeen years old daughter. There was another daughter aged three. Leeford contracted to marry the girl, but before the marriage could be solemnised, he was called to Rome, where and old

friend had died. On the way to Rome, he stopped at the house of Mr Brownlow, his best friend, and left with him a portrait of his betrothed. He himself fell sick in Rome and died.

Mr Leeford's former wife seized all his papers : The girl he was to marry on his return was pregnant. When she heard of Leeford's death, she ran away to hide her condition. Soon afterwards, her father died and the younger sister was eventually adopted by Mrs Maylie. She was Rose Maylie, Oliver's aunt. Monks squandered away much of the property left to him. When his mother died, he went to the West Indies where Mr Brownlow had gone in search of him. But Monks had already returned to England. He wanted to find his half brother Oliver's whereabouts so that he might appropriate his part of the property. It was Monks who had offered the reward at the work house for information about Oliver's parentage, and it was Monks who had paid Fagin to see that the boy remained with the gang as a common thief.

The end of Sikes and Fagin : After the Artful Dodger had been seized, Bill Sikes and the remainder of the gang met at Jacob's Island in the Thames River. They wanted to stay there in a deserted house till the hunt had died down. But Sike's dog led their pursuers to the hideout. Bill Sikes hanged himself accidentally with the rope he was using as a means of escape. The other robbers were captured. Fagin was hanged publicly at Newgate after he had revealed to Oliver the location of the paper concerning the boy's heritage. Monks had entrusted these papers to the Jew for safekeeping.

The end of the story : Harry Maylie, who had become a minister, married Rose Maylie. Mr Brownlow adopted Oliver and took up residence near the church of Reverend Harry Maylie. Mr and Mrs Bumble lost their positions in the parish and soon became inmates of the workhouse which once had been their domain. Monks allowed to retain his share of the father's property, went to America and eventually died in prison. Charley Bates went to Northamptonshire and reformed himself. Oliver's years of hardship and unhappiness were over.

8.2.4 Important Characters In The Novel

The characters in *Oliver Twist* can be roughly divided into three groups, with Oliver and, to a certain extent, Monks acting as a link among them. The characters through whom the callousness and cruelty of the workhouse system are exposed include Mr Bumble, Mrs Mann, Mrs Corney, the gentleman in the white waistcoat, Mr Gamfield the Chimney sweep, Mrand Mrs Sowerberry, Noah Claypole and Charlotte. The second group belongs to the crime world. It includes Fagin, Sikes, the Artful Dodger, Charley Bates, Nancy, Toby Crackit, Tom Chiding and even the magistrate, Mr Fang. Monks figures in this group as well. The third group belongs to the middle class world in which Oliver ultimately finds a place. Mr Brownlow,

Mr Grimwig, Mrs Maylie, Rose, Harry Maylie, Dr Losberne, Mrs Bedwin, Giles and Brittles belong to this world. These characters, with the exception of Giles and Brittles, are not very interesting and not very successfully drawn.

OLIVER

A symbolic character: Oliver is the central character of the novel. He is also a link among the three different worlds depicted in the novel—the workhouse, the crime world and the world of the genteel middle class people. He is, as a matter of fact, more a symbol than a fully individualized character. In the opening sentence of the Novel, Dickens describes him as an item of mortality. Till the end of the novel nothing is specifically known about his parents. The name that he bears is given to him just by chance. All this suggests that Dickens wanted to make him an instrument of exposing the inhumanity and the cal1ousness of the workhouse and the underworld. He belongs to the class to which Huckleberry Finn and Becky Sharp belong, that is to say, he belongs to no class. He is a mobile character and the novelist makes him freely come across the different crosssections of the society in order to expose them. In his Preface to the third edition of *Oliver Twist,* Dickens says, "I wished to show in little Oliver the principle of Good surviving through every adverse circumstance and triumphing at last". So, in a way, Oliver is symbolic of the principle of good. If we appreciate Oliver, it is for his propensity towards always being good, and if we sympathise with him, it is for his being a deprived and outcast child. In any case we accept him less as a real child and more as a symbol.

Innocent and melancholy looks. It should be noted that Dickens has nowhere fully described Oliver's appearance. In fact, with the exception of Rose Maylie, Oliver is the only major character whose appearance is not well depicted. However, we come to understand that he is delicate and handsome. He always looks innocent and the chief expression on his face is that of melancholy. In chapter 5, Mr Sowerberry notices it and is convinced that he will make a very effective mute. Soon after, he is given the responsibility of accompanying the funeral processions, particularly when it is young children that are being taken to be buried. The young melancholy, Oliver, dressed in black quietly moving at the head of the procession, makes a very pathetic appearance. Later in the novel, in chapter 22, Toby Crackit also observes the same thing, "Wot an invalable boy that" I'l make, for the old ladies pockets in chapels! His mug is a fortun to him."

It is worth noticing that Oliver looks innocent because he is innocent.. Unlike some other novels where external appearances are utterly deceptive, in Oliver's case there is a remarkable correspondence between his inward nature and external appearance. Sikes is evil and he looks evil. The diabolical and sinister nature of Fagin is adequately reflected on his face, and So is Oliver's innocence. When he collapses outside Mrs Maylie's house, he looks not only weak but also innocent. Rose is sure that a childlike Oliver could never commit a robbery. Mr Brownlow low also does not need a second thought to convince himself of Oliver's innocence. Even the sceptical

Mr Grimwig easily acknowledges his goodness.

Virtue uncontaminated: Another point to be noted about Oliver's character is that his virtue remains uncontaminated throughout the novel. Most of his life is spent under the care of scoundrels like Mr Bumble, Mrs. Mann, the inconsiderate Mrs Sowerberry, the sneakish rogue Noah Claypole, the devilish Fagin, and the odious Sikes. Anyone living under the shadow of the wicked characters would have either completely succumbed to and turned into a rogue himself, but Oliver survives. In spite of all the effort made by Monks to convert him into a thief, Oliver persists in his goodness. That is why it has been said that he represents goodness. Dickens has made him so good that on occasions he ceases to be a convincing character.

His courage: Apart from his almost incredible piety and irreproachable conduct, his one positive characteristic that is conspicuously in evidence in the early chapters is his courage. In chapter 2, we are told nature or inheritance had planted a good sturdy spirit in Oliver's breast which enabled him to survive the cruel regime of Mrs Mann's baby farm. In the same chapter, he approaches the board and makes his famous demand, "please, sir, I want some more". It is true that he is as much prompted by his own courage as by the fear or that domineering and bullying senior boy who had threatened that he would eat raw the boy sleeping next to him, if he were not given an additional helping of gruel. Still it must have taken tremendous courage to approach the members of the boards in view of their inevitable fury. Further evidence of his courage is seen in chapter 3 when he resists being apprenticed to Mr Gamfield, the Chimney sweep and in chapter 6 when he gives a sound thrashing to Noah Claypole. The charity boy is older than Oliver and enjoys the patronage and help of Mrs Sowerberry and Charlotte. But once when Oliver is provoked by the disparaging marks of Noah about his mother, nothing can suppress his wrath, not even Mr. Bumble, who in spite of the properly waxed cane in his hand, is frightened by Oliver's audacity. His flight from Mr Sowerbenys in chapter 7 is another proof of his being courageous. But after he goes to London, he is almost swallowed by his circumstances and after "this everything seems done to him and for him, and almost nothing is done by him".

Oliver's half brother Monks: Monks is Oliver's half brother. His real name is Edward Leeford. For quite some time he remains in the background. If at all he makes an appearance, he is more a mysterious force than a real character. It is quite late in the novel, in chapter 40; that his real identity is revealed. All the other aspects of his life are given much later.

Ugly and disfigured: subject to fits. In chapter 25 Monks is described as a dark stranger. This vague impression of his personality persists untill chapter 46 when Nancy gives a very detailed account of his appearance. He is tall, strong, with dark hair and eyes even his face is dark, his eyes are deeply sunken and his whole personality looks almost disfigured. Nancy tells Mr Brownlow that there is a mark like a burn or a scald which he tries to keep covered with his handkerchief. He is subject to fits, most probably the fits

of epilepsy. When he suddenly comes across Oliver in the innyard, he is much taken by surprise that he curses the boy and then falls into a fit The poor, frightened Oliver has to shout for help before he goes back. Because of these fits, he is in the habit of biting his lips and hands. He has a lurking walk and constantly looks over his shoulder as he goes along. He is completely evilminded and his evil is fully reflected in his appearance.

Unstable and cowardly character: Monks is obviously unstable and subject to uncontrollable fear. Although he pretends to be brave, he is rather cowardly. While talking to Fagin, he notices a womanshadow moving along the wainscot and is overpowered by a sense of fear. Fagin takes him round the whole building but even then Monks is not satisfied. It becomes difficult for the old Jew to hide his contempt for Monks's cowardice. At other moments also, very trivial provocations make him tremble and he throws himself into violent outbursts. About Nancy, at one moment he says that he would like to see her throttled, but the very next minute he declares thathe won't shed blood. It becomes difficult to reconcile these two aspects of his character. In chapters 378, in his meeting with Mr Bumble and his wife, he is in a position of command and he bullies them. But he easily succumbs to Mrs Bumble and betrays his cowardly nature. He gets frightened during the storm also. When Mr Brownlow interrogates him, he is sullen and defiant in the beginning but almost immediately collapses under the weight of evidence and blurts everything.

Incorrigibly wicked : Monks is incorrigibly wicked. It seems that he has inherited this wickedness from his mother. Before her death his mother tells him something about Oliver's birth. He also knows that Oliver is to get his father's property, subject to the condition that he does not taint his life with any evil action and from that day he makes it the sole purpose of his life to convert Oliver into a thief. He is so much obsessed with this idea that his personality becomes unstable. He pays quite a huge sum to Fagin and it is mainly to satisfy him that Oliver is involved into the robbery at Chertsey although he is furious when the robbery fails and Oliver is taken over by Mrs Maylie. He tries to destroy all evidence about Oliver and his parentage and feels triumphant when he throws the locket into the dark, surging water of the river Thames. The kind and benevolent Mr Brownlow agrees to give him half the property to allow him another opportunity to redeem himself but Monks squanders the whole of the money and is imprisoned. He ultimately dies in a jail, most probably as a result of his epileptic fits.

A device to link three worlds : It should be noticed that Monks is not so much a character, like Oliver he is a device created by the novelist for the purpose of linking the three worlds in which Oliver moves, the three worlds represented by Mr. Bumble, Fagin and Mr Brownlow, and Oliver and Monks are themselves linked up by their blood relationship. Thus Monks is a key figure in the plot. He introduces a lot of suspense and mystery and provides additional motivation to Fagin for his villainy. It is rather regrettable that Dickens has not made him a more convincing character.

Mr. BUMBLE

The Parish beadle : Mr Bumble is the parish beadle in the town where Oliver Twist is born. He plays a prominent role in the early chapters of the novel and makes recurrent appearances later. He is both a representative character and an individual. In this first capacity, he helps to bring out the inhuman workhouse system which was a bane of the Victorian era. As all individuals, he is portrayed in a light vein and is the chief source of comic relief in the novel.

Physical appearance : Mr Bumble's appearance is invariably described in terms of his dressthe official magnificent coat with its giltedged lapel and gold laced cuff, and beauti-ful buttons in which Mr Bumble takes inordinate pride. Without the beadles coat, plush breeches, cane and cocked Mr Bumble is merely a fat man, for as Dickens remarks in chapter 37 "dignity, and even holiness too, sometimes, are more questions of coat and waistcoat than some people imagine."

Very cruel : Mr Bumble seems to enjoy inflicting pain on the poor little orphans. He presents Oliver to the board after giving him a tap on the head with his cane to wake him up and another on the back to make him lively. On another occasion he gives him the benefit of exercise which is washing himself in nice cold water under the pump where he privets his catching cold by causing a tingling sensation to all his body by repeated application of the cane. He is quite a terror to the inmates of the workhouse. When Oliver misbehaves in a refractory manner at Mr Sowerberrys, it is Mr Bumble who is summoned to control him.

Ironic Treatment : A very important point to be noted about Mr. Bumble is that he has been treated very ironically by the novelist. The office of beadle was an inferior position in the parish. But Mr Bumble's selfimportance is in inverse proportion to his actual status. The children feel overawed while Mrs Mann fawns on him when he visits the workhouse. But later he is reduced to his proper size by the Chairman of the board when he is rebukes him, "hold your tongue, Beadle." After this even though he continues to assume the air of importance, there is no doubt left in the reader's mind about his true smallness and vulnerability.

The irony indulged in by the novelist at the expense of Mr Bumble is externally effective and amusing. At one stage Mr Sowerberry is very appreciative of the buttons of his coat. Mr. Bumble gratefully acknowledges this note of appreciation and enlightens Mr Sowerberry that the buttons are embossed with the parochial seal; "the good Samaritan healing the sick and bruised man" and he tells him, I put it (coat) on, I remember, for the first time, to attend the inquest on that reduced tradesman who died in a doorway at midnight." What a delightful irony and how happy Mr Bumble is to be oblivious of it !

Very greedy : Basically Bumble is a very greedy man. When he comes across the advertisement inserted by Mr Brownlow for some information

about Oliver, he immediately approaches him and speaks against Oliver thinking that it would help him. When later Mr Brownlow tells him that he would have rewarded him very generously if he had reported favorably, he is very regretful. His decision to marry Mrs Corney is also prompted by his greed. He decides to marry her for her spoons, sugar tongs, some old pieces of furniture, and may be a little money in case. It is much later that he realises he sold himself dirt cheap. In Mrs Corney he catches a Tartar and is completely humbled. Immediately after his marriage, he is divested of his cocked hat without which he hardly appears like Mr Bumble.

Cowardly : Mr Bumble is also a big coward. When Oliver fights with Noah Claypole and Mr Bumble is called for help, he goes there well prepared with the waxend properly twisted round the bottom of his cane to flog Oliver. However, the accounts of Oliver's ferocity are so startling that he judges it prudent to parley before opening the door. When Oliver persists in his defiance, Mr Bumble does not have the courage to open the door and deal with him. Instead he talks to Mrs Sowerberry in a philosophical mode. "It is meat..... You have overfed him, Ma' am You have raised an artificial soul and spirit in him".

A comic character : As remarked rightly in the beginning, Mr Bumble is the chief comic character of this novel. To begin with, it is his self importance that makes him a source of comedy, he appears utterly ridiculous in his assumptions of dignity. His wooing of Mrs Corney is also comic. The novelist puts him in a very funny situation when he plants a very impassioned kiss on Mrs Corney's chaste Dose or he puts his arms round her waist or he tastes the medicine Mrs Corney prepares for herself. His counting the cutlery and the furniture pieces and his opening of the chest of drawers and exulting in the jingling sound of coins are also quite funny. His humiliation at the hands of Mrs Bumble, in direct contrast to his earlier pomposity, has also been depicted in a comic vein. Mrs Bumble at first resorts to shedding tears, but immediately after this, she overpowers him, scratches his face ahd threatens to douse him with soapsuds. She even insults him in the presence of old ladies in the workhouse. Mr Bumbles ma1apropism also renders him a comic character. His use of language betrays his ignorance.

A touch of humanity : Although Mr Bumble mostly beha-ves in a callous manner, the novelist does give him at least one humanising touch. Mr Bumble is seen to be moved by the heart-broken loneliness and weeping of the poor Oliver as Oliver accompanies him, and he pretends to have a troublesome cough. This little touch of humanity lifts Mr Bumble from the group of caricatures and puts him in the category of realistic characters. Later when Dickens degrades him completely and makes him an inmate of the workhouse in which he has been tyrannizing so long, he also becomes one of those he victimised. Poetic justice might have demanded this but the reader would have been more thankful to the novelist if he had shown the same kind of generosity to Mr Bumble as he had shown to Monks.

Noah Claypole : is a charity boy employed by Mr Sowerberry: He is

senior to Oliver in age and superior to him in status because his parentage is known. In his appearance he is largeheaded, smalleyed, of lumbering make and heavy countenance. In a book which seeks to expose the miserable conse-quences of malnutrition, he stands out as one character who is really fond of eating. At Mr Sowerberrys, he is first shown to be having a feast of bacon and later drinking wine and eating oysters.

When we first meet Noah Claypole, we see him bullying and persecuting Oliver, but Dickens makes it very clear that he persecutes him not so much through malice as through his need for a scapegoat. He has himself been badly treated by the society. He has been exposed to a lot of humiliation and when he gets an opportunity, he immediately transfers all this humiliation to Oliver.

Claypole is a Coward : It is a psychological truth that those who are bu1lies are also great cowards. Mr. Bumble is a bully and a coward, and so is Noah Claypole. When Oliver Challenges him, he immediately starts shouting and yelling for help. When Charlotte suggests that they should send for the police officers, he says that they should preferably call the military. He betrays the same cowardice in London when he tells Fagin that he would like some work "something not too trying for the strength, and not very dangerous, you know". So in Noah Claypole cowardice and a tendency to avoid work are both combined.

At the end of the novel Noah Claypole becomes a police informer. He is given reprieve for having betrayed Fagin to the Police. Later he takes this as a profession. In this work, Charlotte assists him as she has been assisting him earlier in all his undertakings.

He is also a victim. Despite Noah's all delinquent qualities, he ranks not with the villains in Dickens's gallery, but with the victims. He is simply a typical product of the whole system Dickens was attacking and he ends up as the most despised servant of that system, for having turned kings evidence against Fagin, he finally goes into business as an informer.

Mrs Mann is an elderly lady incharge of the baby farm where Oliver spent the first nine years of his life. She is, like Mr Bumble, one of the very petty officials of the workhouse, and like him she is cruel and inhuman.

We just meet her twice, in chapter 2 and chapter 17, and on both occasions she displays her lack of humanity. In chapter 2, Mr Bumble comes to visit her and she tries to hatter him in order to please him. We are also told that the major part of the stipend meant for the children is appropriated by Mrs Mann, who is very clear about what is best for them. Dickens writes, "The elderly female was a woman of wisdom and experience; she knew what was good for children, and she had a very accurate perception of what was good for her self. So she, appropriated the greater part of the weekly stipend to her own use, and consigned the rising parochial generation to even a shorter allowance than was originally provided for them".

She not only underfeeds the children but even thrashes them and locks them in a coalseller for 'presuming to be hungry'. In fact, when Mr Bumble comes to meet her, she has already punished Oliver by imprisoning him in the coalcellar. Mr Bumble's verdict "You are a humane woman, Mrs Mann ..... You feel as a mother, Mrs Mann" is another example of Dickens's use of irony.

Fagin is the old man who provides shelter to 0liver on his arrival in London. The Artful Dodger who meets Oliver on the outskirts of the capital takes him to Fagin. Fagin is the leader of a gang of young pick-pockets, who also deals in stolen goods and is quite willing to undertake any other villainy that might offer him some material benefit. The Dodger, Charley Bates, Tom Chiding and later Noah Claypole work for him. All these boys are enaged in pick-pocketing. With Sikes, he plans robberies. It is Fagin who is entrusted with the job of converting Oliver into a criminal by Monks.

When we first hear of him, he is referred to as a merry old gentleman and later a number of other epithets like kind, merry, pleasant or playful are applied to him. The initial inference is reinforced by his habit of calling everyone my dear. But Fagin is one character who is painted in different shades on different occasions, Frying sausages over the fire in the filthy room of a dark house on a slum street, he appears a very old, shrivelled Jew, whose villainousIooking and repulsive face was obscured by a quantity of matted red hair.

Throughout the novel Fagin is described in terms of animal imagery. In chapter 19 Dickens writes, "As he glided, stealthily along, creeping beneath the shelter of the walls and doorways, the hideous old man seemed like some loathsome reptile, engendered in the slime and darkness through which he moved: crawling forth, by night, in search, of some rich offal for a meal." The expressions glided stealthily, creeping, loathsome reptile, slime and darkness remind us immediately of Milton's serpant, the ultimate corrupter of mankind, the evil incarnate. So for Dickens, Fagin is the very essence of evil. As Satan corrupted Adam and Eve and caused their fall from paradise, Fagin corrupts innocent children, converts them into thieves and pick-pockets and permanently condemns them to the accursed underworld. In chapter 44, Sikes calls him a wolf and in chapter 47 when we see him biting his nails, he discloses among the toothless gums such fangs as should have been a dogs or rats. When he is ultimately arrested and put into the prison, he is badly distracted and rocks from side to side with a countenance more like that of a snared beast than the face of a man.

Apart from being described as a beast, Fagin has also been portrayed as a creature of darkness, who lurks in the streets by night and spends the day indoors. It is remarkable that we rarely see him in daylight. In chapter 18, Oliver explores his house and he finds all the windows tightly closed and "the only light which was admitted, stealing its way through the round holes at the top: which made the room more gloomy, and fined them with strange shadows." In chapter 12 when Fagin goes to visit Sikes, it seemed just the

night when it befitted such a one as the Jew to be abroad. The only time he appears by day, it is when Oliver is half asleep at the Maylies and he finds Fagin and Monks peeping through a window as if in a dream.

Dickens has made Fagin a Jew and throughout the novel he identifies himself as a Jew. This might give one a feeling that Dickens was against the Jews. He was himself once questioned on this point. But he said that he had no such feelings of antisemitism. Fagin was the only Jew in the novel, but he was not the only criminal. All other criminals are Christians. Besides, Fagin is never attacked as a Jew, he is attacked as a criminal. Dickens simply takes it for granted that a typical receiver of stolen goods in London at that time would be a Jew.

Fagin is the focal point of the criminal activity with a number of juvenile delinquents hovering around him. On the surface he talks very politely, but basically he is a heartless schemer. When he finds it difficult to stand the humiliating behaviour of Sikes, he decides to make Nancy an instrument of his destruction. He sets Noah Claypole as a spy on Nancy and when he realises that Nancy has disclosed some of the vital secrets to Mr Brownlow, he incites Sikes to murder her. The tact with which he provokes Sikes is an evidence of his scheming nature. He also contrives a scheme to convert Oliver into a thief. He doesn't trust anyone and he has no sympathies for anybody.

Angus Wilson says that Fagin is the evil spirit that always keeps hovering around Oliver. "With Fagin are associated three of the principal atmospheric devices that have given the novel its unique power. It is his appearance with Monks at the country cottage window which lies at the centre of the Kafkaesque nigthmare effect of a net enclosing Oliver wherever he may be. Not only does Fagin seek to keep Oliver for ever by making him an accomplice in crime but it also seems that he has supernatural powers to seek him out wherever his good friends may hide him. It is this sense of pervasive evil embodied in Fagin that has made Mr Graham Greene characteristically describe the novel as Manichean. Then again it is Fagin ever on the move from one squalid, halfruined hideout to another, scuttling along corridors, squatting in rooms that were once tenanted by ordinary respectable people, who give that extraordinary sense of the criminal gang as a population of rats, vermin living among us without our knowing it. And at last Fagin at his trial is the culmination of the many passages, mostly associated with Oliver himself. Fagin whom Dickens himself called such an out and outer "I don't know what to make of him", makes nonsense of an easy moral view of life. Fagin is our perpetual human conscience, for Fagin too, as Oliver and the Dodger uncomfortably remind us, was once a boy. As Mr Leslie Fiedler has entitled an essayWhat Shall We do with Fagin? It is one of Societies' more uncomfortable questions and Dickens, like many of us, finds it easier to suggest that he is the devil.

Bill Sikes is the most terrifying figure in the novel. He is thief and house breaker for whom there are no limits and no laws except his own self.

Although he belongs to Fagin even Fagin is afraid of Him. In fact if Fagin is afraid of anybody, it is Sikes.

Sikes' outward appearance is fully described in chapter 13 when he first enters, betraying his inner nature. Dirty, unshaven and scowling, he looks like the criminal he is with the kind of legs which always look in an unfinished and incomplete state without a set of fetters to complete them. Dickens tries to reinforce this picture of Sikes with a number of adjectives like 'savage', 'surly', 'bitter', 'fierce', 'harsh', 'furious' and 'desperate'. Sikes outward appearance reveals Dickens's belief that in human beings there is a kind of correspondence between the inner nature and external appearance. Those who are internally ugly also look ugly and those who are inwardly gentle and noble look gentle and noble. Oliver's innocence is reflected on his face and so is the monstrosity of Sikes.

Right from the beginning, we are given indications that Sikes is almost inhuman. He owns a dog but nowhere does he show any trace of affection towards it. Nancy is sincerely in love with him and she persists in her loyalty towards him in spite of his brutality. But he is equally rough with her. In fact he habitually addresses her with a growl that he was accustomed to use when addressing his dog. It is true that he has some respect for her in chapter 30. He says that Nancy is an honour to her sex and in chapter 19 he expresses his full confidence in her. Nevertheless these feelings of faith and respect are nowhere revealed in his outward manner towards her. Instead, he displays extreme ruthlessness and cruelty when he murders her. He doesn't listen to any of her entreaties. He defies the pleading look in her eyes and with utter unconcern, he strikes her with a heavy club. With children as well he is equally cruel. Throughout the burglary episode, he is rough and threatening towards Oliver. He tells Oliver to be careful or he would shoot him. At one moment he is almost close to carrying out his threats but is restrained by Toby Crackit.

Sikes is a completely different man after Nancy's murder. He is so frightened that he starts running from place to place. He is haunted by the ghastly act that he has committed and finds it extremely difficult to forget, in particular, Nancy's eyes. He feels he is being followed by Nancy's apparition, the eyes specially, and he does not find any rest anywhere. In the fire incident, he puts all his energy in extinguishing the fire not because he has any sympathies for the fire victims but because he is badly in need of some diversion and human company. His crime has alienated him from humanity and he finds it very difficult to restore the bonds that have once been snapped. The way Charley Bates shouts at him and threatens to give him up is an evidence of his isolation, and howsoever cruel he might have been, he is totally humbled by this feeling. Dickens has given a masterly portrait of Sikes during his wanderings from place to place as well as his ultimate end at Jacob's Island. In fact, his end is among the most powerful pieces of writing in the novel. Sikes at this moment is not merely a hunted animal but a human being in the

grip of terrible guilt; he suffers, in fact, from conscience and is thus finally transformed from brute to man.

Sikes is an unconvincing character. It has often been said that Sikes is overdrawn. It is really difficult to believe that there can exist in the world people as brutal as Sikes., Dickens was, quite aware of this objection. So he writes in the preface to the novel "It has been objected to Sikes.....that he is surely overdrawn. But.....of one thing I am certain: that there are such men as Sikes, who, being closely followed through the same space of time and through the same current of circumstances, would not give, by one look or action of a moment, the faintest indication of a better nature" In the case of Sikes, however, there are quite a few indications of a better nature, most notably in the change which comes over him, after the murder of Nancy. Although the overwhelming impression that he is a savage, coarse, vicious creature who can scarcely be called a man. persists.

THE ARTFUL DODGER

The Artful Dodger, whose real name is Jack Dawkins, is Fagin's chief pupil. He is initially responsible for taking Oliver to Fagin's den. He is also the most prominent figure among a host of boys that include Charley Bates and Tom. He is more resourceful than all the others and he stands out like a splash of colour in the dark underworld.

The Artful Dodger is one of those characters whose external appearance is fully described. This is how Dickens describes him, "...one of the queerest looking boys that Oliver had ever seen. He was a snubnosed, flatbrowed commonfaced boy enough, and as dirty a juvenile as one would wish to see; but he had about him all the airs and manners of a man. He was short for his age; with rather bowlegs, and little, sharp, ugly eyes. His hat was stuck on the top of his head so lightly, that it threatened to fall off every moment and would have done so, very often, if the wearer had not "had a knack of every now and, then giving his head a sudden twitch, which brought it back to its old place again. He wore a mans coat, which reached nearly to his heels. He had turned the cuffs back half way up his arm to get his hands out of the sleeves; apparently with the ultimate view of thrusting them into the pockets of his corduroy trousers". His face is peculiarly intelligent at al1 times. In contrast to Charley Bates, he is preeminently serious and seldom gave way to merriment when it interfered with business not because he lacks Charley Bates high spirits but because he is more self possessed.

The Dodger has no scruples . He is ready to desert a companion if need be. He doesn't think even for a moment. Oliver is arrested and is taken to the Police Station. Fagin has taught the boys that their object is to take care of number one and in this as in other matters, the Dodger is his outstanding pupil. If he is to betray even his master in the process, he wouldn't mind.

The Dodger has a peculiar wit which we can see in the trial scene. Fagin has great confidence in him and he sends Noah Claypole to the court to see how he conducts himself in his trial. His prestige among his associates is so

high that when they learn that he been arrested they all feel sorry for him, not so much because he will be transported for life but because it is on charge of stealing only a snuff box. In the court he behaves in a peculiar manner. In his broken English he asks why he has been brought there, claims his privileges, calls to the Magistrate who is busy reading the newspaper that he should first conduct his trial. After the trial is over and he is found guilty and sentenced, he threatens the jailor and the Magistrate of dire consequences, "Ah, (to the bench) its no use looking frightened, I won't show you no mercy, not a ha'porth. You'll pay for this my fine fellers, I wouldn't be you for something. I wouldn't go free, now, if you was to fall down on your knees and ask me. Here, carry me off to prison"! Take me away!". His daring role deserves appreciation.

Arnold. Kettle writes, "it is an interesting instance of the power of Dickens's genius that he should have realised that in the Dodger he had created a figure which the plot was quite incapable either of absorbing or obliterating and so he is obliged to give the irrepressible boy his final fling (the trial scene), a fling which raises the book into a serious art. The importance of the Artful Dodger in the pattern of the novel is that he, almost alone of the characters of the underworld, does stick up for himself, does continue and develop the conflict that Oliver had begun when he asked for more.

CHARLEY BATES

Charley Bates, the unusual companion of the Artful Dodger is an important member of Fagin's gang. It is mainly these two young boys who are given the joy of picking pockets and introducing other young people to take to a life of crime. When Oliver is introduced to the gang, he is very soon advised to take the Dodger and Master Bates as his models. Fagin tells him that if he follows the two assiduously, he will soon prosper.

Charley Bates is always gay and mirthful. With his perpetual tendency to find things uproariously funny, he helps a great deal to relieve the gloom and tension of Fagin's world, This is the one major difference between Bates and the Dodger. The Dodger can never be as lighthearted and sprightly as Bates. In chapter 9, he heartily laughs at Oliver's display of ignorance. Oliver thinks that the two young boys are engaged in some honest and hard work and he makes a sincere promise that he will try to follow them. This makes Bates burst into a loud peal of laughter again, and has a loud laugh when both he and the Dodger escape after having picked Mr Brownlow's pocket while the poor Oliver is apprehended. Oliver's recapture also throws him into a violent outburst of joy. He looks at Oliver's new suit and the beautiful books that he was carrying and finds it a great occasion to feel happy. Dickens says that he laid him self flat on the floor, and kicked convulsively, in an ecstasy of joy. His attitude to their way of life is summed up when he declares that it is such a jolly game.

Of all the characters in Fagin's gang it is only Charley Bates who gets disillusioned with it. The Dodger's arrest makes him feel depressed and

sobered. He is almost sure that the Dodger will be transported for life. It is not the punishment that makes him feel sorry; it is the fact that the Dodger has been caught for having stolen an ordinary cheap snuff box. Nancy's cold blooded murder by Sikes opens his eyes fully and when we next meet him, we find him quite prepared even to risk his life to bring Sikes to justice. On Jacob's Island, it is he alone who proclaims that he is going to give Sikes up and even strikes him violent1y. He doesn't feel daunted by the fact that Sikes is much stronger than he is and although Sikes shuts him into a room he keeps shouting to the crowd to keep a watch on the rear of the house and to capture him if he tries to escape from that side. It is mainly because of his shouts that Sikes makes a perilous bid to escape and gets kil1ed in the process.

His transformation. Of all Fagin's gang, it is Charley Bates alone who escapes the consequences of their crimes and who turns to an honest life. In chapter 53 when Dickens is distributing rewards and punishments, we are told that Charley Bates struggled hard; and suffered much, for sometime; but, having a contented disposition and a good purpose, succeeded in the end and from being a farmer's drudge, and a carrier's lad he is now the merriest young grazier in all Northamptonshire.

Nancy : Nancy is a drab (prostitute) working for Fagin's gang. Although this fact is mentioned anywhere in the novel, it is taken for granted and almost all the characters accept her as a drab and treat her accordingly. It is quite a different matter that her conduct in the novel is raised to tragic heights and her pathetic death sublimates her.

Nancy first enters with Bet who is a similar character but who does not play any active role in the novel. Their appearance is described from Oliver's point of view: they wore a great deal of hair, not very neatly turned up behind, and were rather untidy about the shoes and the stockings. They were not exactly pretty, perhaps; but they had a great deal of colour in their faces, and looked quite stout and hearty. Most probably the colour in their face was an evidence of their habitual gin drinking. "Oliver thought them very nice girls indeed. As there is no doubt they were."

Although Nancy plays a very prominent role in the novel, she is not drawn with the same exactitude as the other criminal characters. Only two aspects of her nature are given prominenceher tender heart and her courage. She agrees to recapture Oliver and bring him back to Fagin's den, but when she witnesses the cruel treatment meted out to him by all the members of the gang, she gets furious; she is particularly angry when Sikes tries to set her dog after the child. It is only she who has the courage to defy both Sikes and Fagin and save Oliver. Later when she overhears the conspiracy being hatched by Fagin and Monks, she decides to restore Oliver to the genteel world from where she had captured him.

Nancy's courage is revealed in several important episodes. Her defence of Oliver against Fagin and Sikes has already been mentioned. Her decision to

contact Rose Maylie even at the risk of her own life also reveals her courage. She has to drug Sikes when she goes to meet Rose the first time and next when she meets her on the London Bridge. She has some strange premonition of death, but still she goes. Soon after she is murdered by Sikes.

Another prominent quality of Nancy's character is her extremely sincere love for Sikes. Sikes is a monster and he does not treat Nancy any better than he treats his dog. The poor girl is willing to sacrifice her life for his sake. She is offered material reward as well as asylum anywhere she likes whether in England or outside, but she says that she loves someone, for whose sake she must go back to the ignominious world to which she belongs. She discloses only as much as is barely necessary to rescue Oliver but she takes care that neither Sikes nor Fagin gets implicated. Her intention is to atone for her earlier sin of having captured Oliver for Fagin but she can never dream of betraying her group. This aspect of her character raises her in our esteem as it lends her complexity and depth.

In depicting Nancy more than any other character, Dickens tries to show what she might have been if she had grown up in a different environment. She has great potentiality of goodness in her; simply this goodness remains smothered for a very long time. She is herself quite aware of this and she feels herself doomed by her past. She says to Rose, "thanks heavens upon your knees, dear lady, that you had friends to care for and keep you in your childhood and that you were never in the midst of cold and hunger, and riot and drunkenness and... ...something worse than all...as I have been from my cradle, I may use the word, for the alley and gutter were mine, as they will be my death bed." She blames Fagin for having trapped her into a life of crime; "it is my living; and the cold, wet, dirty streets are my home; and you're the wretch that drove me to them long ago, and that'll keep me there, day and night, day and night, till I die."

Towards the end of the novel, Dickens has sentimentalised Nancy's character. In particular when she meets Rose and Mr Brownlow on the London Bridge with Noah Claypole overhearing them, she behaves in a very sentimental manner. Her refusal to accept either money or any other kind of help is quite acceptable, for she is not the type of lady who would behave in an undignified manner. But when she insists on having some personal trifle of Rose and accepts a white hand-kerchief, she behaves in a sentimental way. This is repeated when she is being murdered by Sikes. When she is almost on the verge of death, she takes out the handkerchief from her bosom, struggles to her knees and raises her hands in prayer to God. This is a little too much and this makes her character slightly unrealistic.

However, Dickens himself thought that he had not exaggerated Nancy's character in any way. He wrote, "It is useless to discuss whether the conduct and character of the girl seems natural or unnatural, probable or improbable, right or wrong. It is true. Everyone who was watched these melancholy shades of life, must know it to be so from the first introduction of that poor wretch, to her laying her bloodstained head upon the robber's breast, there

is not a word exaggerated or overwrought. It is emphatically God's truth, for it is the truth".

Mr Brownlow is the kind old gentleman whom Oliver is accused of having robbed. He is the representative of the middle class benevolent world. He thinks kindly of Oliver and decides to take him home when the testimony given by the owner of the book shop rescues him from being sentenced to three months hard life in jail. When the resemblance between Oliver and the lady whose portrait he finds in Mr Brownlow's house is noticed, we have a strong feeling that there is some connection between Oliver and the old man although we do not discover until chapter 49 that he was in fact a very close friend of Oliver's grandfather.

Mr Brownlow is respectable, kind and courageous. He is very sincere in his love and his greatest quality is that he is a man of strong and lasting attachments. When the girl he wanted to marry dies, he does not marry himself. He develops a great liking for her brother and does whatever he can for his sake. Oliver's father leaves a portrait of the girl he wanted to marry and later Mr Brownlow makes every effort to help her and to help Oliver. He goes to West Indies in search of Monks and in England also he searches him out and compels him to make a confession. His kindness is not confined only to Oliver; he tries to give an opportunity even to Monks so that the latter might turn over a new leaf. If Monks loses this opportunity, wastes the whole money and ultimately dies in prison, the fault lies with himself.

Mr Brownlow is an example of what George Orwell called "that recurrent Dickens figure, the good rich man." Orwell goes on to say that of course this is. a pure dream figure: "Even Dickens must have reflected occasionally that anyone who was so anxious to give his money away would never have acquired it in the first place." It is really an interesting point that Mr Brownlow has been extremely rich and it is difficult to believe that a man as generous as he could also be as rich as he is. However, if we read his character closely, we find him quite a wise and careful man. His being rich does not appear to be improbable but we will have to acknowledge that he is a dream figure. He is a masculine equivalent of a fairy godmother who appears at exactly the right time. Ultimately he adopts Oliver as his own son and settles down in the countryside at a small distance from the Maylies.

One point of interest about all the good characters portrayed by Dickens is their tendency to shed tears readily. Dickens himself was emotionally demonstrative and sometimes he wept as he wrote. Today this exercise in waterworks appears ridiculous to us, but for Dickens it was almost a proof of the ability to feel. In chapter 12, Mr Brownlow is moved to tears at the very sight of Oliver and he has to pretend that he has caught cold. Even Mr Bumble has to pretend once that he has a bad throat. There is nothing strange about Mr Brownlow's shedding tears. Dickens writes, "Mr Brownlow's heart, being large enough for any six ordinary old gentlemen of humane disposition, forced a supply of tears into his eyes by some hydraulic

process which we are not sufficiently philosophical to be in a condition to explain." But whatever explanations may have been offered, it is to be admitted that Dickens has not been able to make his genteel characters including Mr Brownlow as convincing as the criminals like Fagin and Sikes.

8.2.5 Social Criticism In The Novel

Fierce protest against the contemporary world In *Pickwick Papers* Dickens triumphs over the world in which he was born. *Oliver Twist* is his fierce and indignant protest against it. Dickens showed himself a master of luminous humour in the first book. *Oliver Twist* is the most gloomy book that he ever wrote. It is a blazing melodrama where horror is fused with angry pathos. Throughout there is an oppressive, lurid intensity of a claustrophobic world of darkness The progression from the callous, cruel world of the workhouse to the jeering Dodger, the insidious Fagin and the brutal Sikes is not fortuitous; it comes from Dickens's angry and bitter conviction that the world of the workhouse brings forth its dreadful harvest of crime and vice. *Oliver Twist* is a remarkable book revealing the stern side of the author here; if ever anywhere else is angry Dickens, the fierce Satirist and the Social Reformer.

The workhouse world: The workhouse world is full of a bitter and pitiful comedy. Here Dickens's irony serves him as a sharpedged sword with which he attacks the demons of cruelty and callousness. In the babyfarm under the care of Mrs Mann twenty or thirty other juvenile offenders against the poor laws rolled about the floor all day, without the inconvenience of too much food or too much clothing, under the parental superintendence of an elderly female, who received the culprits at end for the consideration of seven pence half penny per small head per week. She appropriated the greater part of weekly stipend to her use and consigned the rising parochial generation to even a shorter allowance than was originally provided for them, thereby finding in the lowest depth a deeper still, and proving herself a very great experimental philosopher. Here children suffer unimaginable crueltiesa child dies as he is overlooked in turning up a bedstead, another is scalded to death when there happened to be a washing. The philosophers managing the workhouse were very sage, deep, philosophical men and when they came to turn their attention to the workhouse, they found out at once, what ordinary folks would never have discoveredthe poor people like it! It was a regular place of public entertainment for the poorer classes; a tavern where there was nothing to pay; public breakfast, dinner, tea and supper all the year round; a brick and mortar Elysium, where it was all play and no work". The board, looking very knowing, established the rule, that all poor people should have the alternative (for they would compel nobody, not they of being starved by a gradual process in the house, or by a quick one out of it. And so the diet was given with so much munificence and prodigality that the bowls never wanted washing. The boys polished them with their spoons till they shone again; and when they had performed this operation, which never took very long, the spoons being nearly as large as the bowls), they would sit staring at the copper with such eager eyes as if they could

have devoured the very bricks of which it was composed ; employing themselves, meanwhile, in sucking their fingers most assiduously, with the view of catching up any stray splashes of gruel that might have been cast thereon. And so naturally, when Mrs Sowerberry offers Oliver the cold bits of meat which were left for the dog. Trip and when his eyes glisten at the mention of meat, the angry Dickens burst out bitterly: "I wish some wellfed philosopher, whose meat and drink turn to gall within him; whose blood is ice, whose heart is iron; could have seen Oliver Twist clutching at the dainty viands that the dog had neglected. I wish he could have witnessed the horrible avidity with which, Oliver tore it asunder with all the ferocity of famine there is only one thing I should like better; and that would be to see the philosopher making the same sort of meal himself with the same relish".

Indifference of the parish authorities over the death of the poor: The description of the slum and the funeral scene are deeply moving. A poor woman has died of starvation. Her old father and mother rave dementedlythe funeral is arranged by Mr Sowerberry the priest is latethe bier is on the brink of the gravethe ragged boys attracted by the spectacle play a noisy game at hide and seek and jump backwards and forwards over the coffin. Mr. Sowerberry and Bumble sit by the fire with the clerk and read the paperthe old man and woman wait in the damp clay, with a cold rain drizzling downthe clergyman comes after an hour, reads as much of the burial service as he can compress in four minutes and walks awaythe old man falls down in a swoonthey throw a can of cold water over him and after some time turn him out of the churchyard. The undertaker asks Oliver how he likes all this. The boy replies, "Not very much, sir." "Ah, you'll get used to it in time, Oliver", said Sowerberry. "Nothing when you are used to it"

The world of Fagin and Sikes: What a pitiful comedy! Wouldn't the world be better if men behaved more humanely and decently? And since they don't, what do they make of the unprotected, neglected, starved and beaten children? The jeering Dodger, the reptilelike Fagin and the ferocious bully Sikes are the answers. The intensity of imagination with which Dickens endows life to these criminals and the nightmarish vividness that bathes the slum world, is the measure of the anger of the otherwise most jovial and laughing humanist. Dickens here creates a dark and confined world in which lurks the smoky fetid thieves kitchen where the Artful Dodger leers and Fagin grins in mirth through the greasy air. Almost all its interiors are bleak and gloomy; the workhouse where halfstarved boys whimper with hunger in the bare stone hall and scrawny hags hang over the beds of the dying, the peep holed back room of the Three Cripples, the ruined warehouse where Monks terrifies Bumble by night. Even when Oliver rests asleep at Mrs Maylie's, just beyond the window loom Fagin and Monks, darkening the sunlight like two monstrous demons. Nancy lurks in black shadows on the slimy steps of the London Bridge. Sikes wanders in horrorhaunted flight away from and back to the city, the waving torches glimmer on the mud of Folly Ditch while the murderer clambers over the tiles of the barricaded house. And the end narrows in relentlessly with Fagin cowered in the

condemned cell, gnawing his nails and glaring at the close wall. In creating all this Dickens seems to be bursting out the horrified protest; "What man has made of man".

Mr. Fang's court: The scene of Mr. Fang's court is a fine specimen of Dickens's rudimentary criticism of the social abuses of his times. Here the 'insolence of office' is subjected to an indignant attack. The insolent magistrate is presented in his utmost impoliteness, haughtiness and callousness to the sufferings of the wretches who have the misfortune of coming to his 'dispensary of summary justice'.

An angry protest on the moral plane: *Oliver Twist* is an angry warning that any society that does not take care of its unfortunate children must face the dismal problems of its Fagins and Sikes. It is an angry protest on the moral plane. No concrete suggestions are offered to fight out the evils described in the book. If there is any obvious lesson, Dickens the moralist points it in these words at the end of the book:

I have said that they were truly happy ; and without strong affection and humanity of heart; and gratitude to that Being whose code is Mercy, and whose great attribute is Benevolence to all things that breathe, happiness can never be attained.

Surely this is no answer to any social problem from any political angle ; it is purely Christian morality.

8.3 Key Words

Chimney Sweeps – In early times in England, little boys who were used to clean the chimneys were called 'chimney sweeps'. A rope was tied around their waist and they were lowered down inside the chimneys to clean the dark soot deposited on the walls. They would come out covered in black soot all over. However, this form of inhuman practice was later abolished by law.

Field Lane – In London ; Fagin's hideout is here.

Chertsey – Outside London ; the residence of the Maylies.

Three Cripples – An inn in London ; the haunt of Monks.

Jacob's Island – Sikes takes refuge here after his flight from London

Folly Ditch – A ditch in Jacob's Island ; Sikes wanted to escape by jumping into the ditch.

8.4 Check Your Progress

(a) Write in brief about on the life of charles Dickens.

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(b) Give a Historical Background to the Novel.

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(c) Draw a Charactersketch of Oliver Twist.

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(d) Write a note on the social criticism in the Novel

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8.5 Let's Sum Up

In this unit, we have studied

- About the novelist
- About the novel, its background and the characters.
- About the critical interpretations of the text.

8.6 Books Suggested

Allen, Walter : *The English Novel,* 1954

Baker, E.A. : *The History of the English Novel Vol. 7,* 1936.

Butt, John and Tillotson K.: *Dickens at Work,* 1957

Cecil, Lord David : *Early Victorian Novelists,* 1984

Chersterton, G.K. : *Charlies Dickens,* 1907

Chesterton, G..K. (ed.) : *Introduction to Oliver Twist, An Everyman Paperback,* 1907

Cockshut, A.O.Q. : *The Imagination of Charles Dickens,* 1961.

Collins, Philip : *Dickens and Crime,* 1962.

Collins, Philip (ed.) : *The Critical Heritage,* 1970

Dyson, A.E. (ed.) : *Dickens (Modern Judgments),* 1968.

Engel, Monroe : *The Maturity of Dickens,* 1959.

Fielding, K.J. : *Charles Dickens : A Critical Introduction,* 1958

Ford, George H. : *Dickens and his Readers,* 1955

Forster, John : *The Life of Charles Dickens,* 187274

Garis, Robert : *The Dickens Theatre,* 1965

8.7 Answers

(a) See 8.7.1 Life of Charles Dickens

(b) See 8.7.2 Historical Background to the Novel

(c) See 8.2.4 Important Characters in the Novel

(d) See 8.2.5 Social Criticism in the Novel

UNIT - 9

Maupassant : The Necklace

Structure

9.0 Objectives

9.1 Introduction

9.2 Reading The Necklace

- 9.2.1 The Author : Guy de Maupassant
- 9.2.2 The Story in brief
- 9.2.3 Introduction to the Story
- 9.2.4 The Story : The Necklace (Text)
- 9.2.5 The Title of the Story
- 9.2.6 Character of Mathilde
- 9.2.7 The Theme of Fatalism
- 9.2.8 Symbolism

9.3 Key Words

9.4 Check your progress

9.5 Let's Sum Up

9.6 Books Suggested

9.7 Answers

9.0 Objectives

In this unit you will to study about the small *The Necklace*. After having gone through this unit, you will be able to

- Understand the background of the Story
- Understand about the life, background and ideas of the Author
- Understand the story, structure and characters of the Story
- Write in your own words about any aspect of the Story.

9.1 Introduction

In this unit you will study about the author, the Story, the background and context of the Story. Through key words and exercises given, you will reinforce your understanding of the unit.

9.2.1 The Author : Guy De Maupassant

Guy de maupassant is quite possibly the greatest French short story writer of all time. Much of the material that helped inspire his pessimistic writing came from the many events in his life like his overbearing mother, his Norman peasant life, the Franco-Prussian War, his time working as a public servant, and the fashionable life of Paris.

According to his mother, Maupassant was born at the Chateau de Miromesniel, Dieppe in 1850; however, these claims are often times disputed. The marriage between his parents was very unstable, and when Maupassant was eleven, they separated. At this time, he lived with his mother, who was a controlling and overbearing woman. She was always concerned about social appearances and had enduring self-delusions about the past. Her personality and character helped Maupassant create a typical woman archetype and many recurring themes in his writing. He grew up in Normandy, and his time here helped influence his writings about the Normandy people and the peasant lifestyle.

In 1869, Maupassant studied law in Paris, the fashionable lifestyle there affected his writing. Many people say that all of Maupassant's fictional writing was influenced by his life. Paris is also the setting of *The Necklace* where the fashionable and vain lifestyle plays a major role in the story. At the age of twenty, Maupassant was enlisted in the Franco-Prussian War, and after this embarrassingly short war, he returned to Paris.

In 1872 Maupassant served as a civil servant for the Ministry of Martine affairs and the Ministry of Education for eight years. The time he spent at the ministries are also incorporated into *The Necklace*, and this is evident because Mathilde's husband also worked at the ministry. Maupassant hated working as a civil servant and this is potrayed by the difficult life Mathilde's husband has in the story. It was during this time that he published his first stories. In the 1880's, he prodigiously wrote about 300 short stories, six novels, three travel books and a book of verse.

When he was twenty-six, Maupassant acquired syphilis from a prostitute, which made him crazier and crazier as years went by. He used to be an athletic and attractive young man, but after acquiring syphilis, it caused hair to fall out and gave him open sores on his body (Barzun and stade 1761). Maupassant tried to kill himself by cutting his throat in 1892, and after that incident, he was admitted to a psychiatric hospital for the remaining year of his life.

9.2.2 The Story In Brief

During the course of Guy de Maupassant's short story *The Necklace*, the main character, Matilda Loisel, makes a number of ironic discoveries. In addition, there are other discoveries that the reader makes but Matilda does not. The discovery that forms the story's climax concerns the true nature of the necklace she has borrowed from her friend Mrs. Forestier. But this is perhaps not the most important lesson of this story.

As the story opens, Matilda, a young middle-class wife who aspires to join the upper ranks of society, is finally invited to a high society affair given by her husband's employer. Hoping to impress her guests and thus "fit in" she borrowa a beautiful diamond necklace from her friend madame Forstier. Unfortunately during the course of the evening the necklace is lost. Rather

than confront her friend directly with the story of her carelessness, she and her husband scrape together every bit of money they can.

As de Maupassant explains "(Mr.) Loisel possessed eighteen thousand franks which his father had left him. He borrowed the rest. He borrowed it, asking for a thousand francs of one five hundred of another five louis of this one and three louis of that one. He gave notes ,made ruinous promises, took money of usurers and the whole race of lenders. He compromised his whole existence, in fact, risked his signature without even knowing whether he could make it good or not, and harassed by anxiety for the future , by the black misery which surrounded him, and by the prospect of all physical privations and moral torture, he went to get the new necklace, depositing on the merchant's counter thirty-six thousand francs. "Matilda then places the new necklace in the same case in which she had borrowed the old one, and returns it to her friend without explanation, hoping against hope that the deception will not be discovered—which it is not.

Now comes the task of paying back all the money that the Loisels have borrowed. In order to do so, they sent away the maid ; they changed their lodgings; they rented some rooms under a mansard roof. A mansard roof is very steeply pitched, so that it is possible to have living quarters beneath it; by implication living "under a mansard roof" means they live in the attic. No longer is Matilda able to send her laundry out to be cleaned, or to employ someone to wash the dishes and care for the house. Because houses in those days had no running water, she has to haul the water up the stairs to the attic herself. Her husband is forced to take on a second and even a third job. However, they are conscientious and hard-working, and by the end of ten years they have repaid every creditor.

But at what a cost! Matilda is no longer lovely and refined; she now looks old, haggard, and common. When she meets Mrs. Forestier in the street, her friend does not even recognize her. The story ends with Mrs. Forestier's revelation that the stones in the original necklace weren't even really diamonds— they were "paste," or rhinestones. We have no way of knowing if Mrs. Froestier was able to refund Matilda's money. But would it matter? Ten years of Matilda's life have been robbed — and for what? - For an evening of vanity and pride.

The central discovery of the story — that the jewels were fake — is, therefore, not really the point of the story at all. The point of the story is that pride goeth before a fall — and in fact, that a fall is precisely what pride will bring about. Matilda felt dissatisfied with her husband and his lifestyle because she was vain; she felt she was entitled to something better than the petty, bourgeois existence his income offered her. She felt she could not attend the Minister's party without a stylish dress and jewels because she was vain; she should never have sought to borrow a necklace so opulent she could not afford to replace. She felt she could not tell Mrs. Forestier about the loss of the necklace — even after it had been replaced — because she was too

proud, and also, by that time, too frightened. Over the ten years that it took Matilda to earn thirty-six thousand francs, she undoubtedly learns much about the hardships of life, but does she learn what has caused these hardships?

There is no real evidence that she does. As she sits, prematurely aged, before her window, she is not thinking of how vain and silly she had been as a young woman; she is daydreaming about how lovely and glamorous the Minster's party had been — "of that ball where she was so beautiful and so flattered." She is not angry with herself for having been so stupid; she is simply puzzled at the way life works itself; "How would it have been if she had not lost that necklace? Who knows? Who knows? How singular is life, and how full of changes! How small a thing will ruin one!" Matilda does not see her ruination as in any way being her own fault, but considers it a particularly cruel trick of fate.

Here is the point at which the reader's understanding of the story departs from Matilda's. We see only too clearly the reason for Matilda's downfall; she does not. We see that her vanity led her to seek to borrow the necklace to begin with; we see that her pride led her to try to conceal the fact from her friend. We see that the loss of Matilda's comfortable existence is due entirely to factors that could have been easily avoided. She does not. All Matilda understands at the end of this story was that life has played a cruel trick on her, and she has suffered ten long years for nothing. We, on the contrary, come to know the depth to which vanity and pride has to drive one, and the terrible price one can pay.

9.2.3 Introduction To The Story

Guy de Maupassant's short story *The Necklace* ("La parure") was first published in the Paris newspaper *Le Gaulois* on February 17, 1884, and was subsequently included in his 1885 collection of short stories *Tales of Day and Night (Contes dejour et de la nuit).* Like most of Maupassant's short fiction, it was an instant success, and it has become his most widely read and anthologized story. In addition to its well-rounded characters, tight plotting, wealth of detail, and keen social commentary, *The Necklace* is conspicuous for its use of the "whip-crack" or "O. Henry" ending, in which a plot twist at the end of the story completely changes the story's meaning. Although Maupassant rarely made use of the device, its presence in this work has tied him to it irrevocably. Although it is not known where Maupassant got the idea for his story, certain connections may be made between *The Necklace* and the novel *Madame Bovary*, written by Maupassant's mentor and friend, Gustave Flaubert. Both stories feature a young, beautiful woman in a social situation that she finds distasteful. Like Madame Bovary, Mathilde Loisel attempts to escape her social station in life, but her scheming actions ultimately doom her.

9.2.4 The Text Of The Story

The Necklace

by Guy de Maupassant

She was one of those pretty and charming girls who are sometimes, as if by a mistake of destiny, born in a family of clerks. She had no dowry, no expectations, no means of being known, understood, loved, wedded, by any rich and distinguished man; and she let herself be married to a little clerk at the Ministry of Public Instruction.

She dressed plainly because she could not dress well, but she was as unhappy as though she had really fallen from her proper station; since with women there is neither caste nor rank; and beauty, grace and charm act instead of family and birth. Natural fineness, instinct for what is elegant, suppleness of wit, are the sole hierarchy, and make from women of the people the equals of the very greatest ladies.

She suffered ceaselessly, feeling herself born for all the delicacies and all the luxuries. She suffered form the poverty of her dwelling, from the wretched look of the walls, from the worn-out chairs, from the ugliness of the curtains. All those things, of which another woman of her rank would never even have been conscious, tortured her and made her angry. The sight of the little Breton, who made this humble home, aroused in her regrets which were despairing, and distracted dreams. She thought of the silent ante-chambers hung with Oriental tapestry, lit by tall bronze candelabra, and of the two great footmen in knee-breeches who sleep in the big armchairs, made drowsy by the heavy warmth of the hot-air stove. She thought of the long salons fitted up with ancient silk, of the delicate furniture carrying priceless curiosities, and of the conquettish perfumed boudoirs made for talks at five o'clock with intimate friends, with men famous and sought after, whom all women envy and whose attention they all desire.

When she sat down to dinner, before the round table covered with a table-cloth three days old, opposite her husband, who uncovered the soup tureen and declared with an enchanted air, "Ah, the good pot-au-feu! I don't know anything better than that," she thought of dainty dinners, of shining silverware, of tapestry which peopled the walls with ancient personages and with strange birds flying in the midst of a fairy forest; and she thought of delicious dishes served on marvelous plates, and of the whispered gallantries which you listen to with a sphinx-like smile, while you are eating the pink flesh or a trout or the wings of a quail.

She had no dresses, no jewels, nothing. And she loved nothing but that; she felt made for that. She would so have liked to please, to be envied, to be charming, to be sought after.

She had a friend, a former schoolmate at the convent, who was rich, and whom she did not like to go and see any more, because she suffered so much when she came back.

But, one evening, her husband returned home with a triumphant air, and

holding a large envelope in his hand.

"There," said he, "here is something for you."

She tore the paper sharply, and drew out a printed card which bore these words:

"The Minister of Public Instruction and Mme. Georges Ramponneau request the honor of M. and Mme. Loisel's company at the palace of the Ministry on Monday evening, January 18th."

Instead of being delighted, as her husband hoped, she threw the invitation on the table with disdain, murmuring:

"What do you want me to do with that?"

"But my dear, I though you would be glad. You never go out, and this is such a fine opportunity. I had awful trouble to get it. Every one wants to go; it is very select, and they are not giving many invitations to clerks. The whole official world will be there."

She looked at him with an irritated eye, and she said, impatiently:

"And what do you want me to put on my back?"

He had not thought of that; he stammered:

"Why the dress you go to the theater in. It looks very well, to me."

He stopped, distracted, seeing that his wife was crying. Two great tears descended slowly from the corners of her eyes towards the corners of her mouth. he stuttered:

"What's the matter? What's the matter?"

But, by a violent effort, she had conquered her grief, and she replied, with a calm voice, while she wiped her wet cheeks:

"Nothing. Only I have no dress, and therefore I can't go to this ball. Give you card to some colleague whose wife is better equipped than I."

He was in despair. He resumed:

"Come, let us see, Mathilde. How much would it cost, a suitable dress, which you could use on other occasions, something very simple?"

She reflected several seconds, making her calculations and wondering also what sum she could ask without drawing on herself an immediate refusal and a frightened exclamation from the economical clerk.

Finally, she replied, hesitatingly:

"I don't know exactly, but I think I could manage it with four hundred francs."

He had grown a little pale, because he was laying aside just that amount to buy a gun and treat himself to a little shooting next summer on the plain of Nanterre, with several friends who went to shoot larks down there, on a Sunday.

But he said:

"All right. I will give you four hundred francs. And try to have a pretty dress."

The day of the ball drew near, and Mme. Loisel seemed sad, uneasy, anxious. Her dress was ready, however. Her husband said to her one evening:

"What is the matter? Come, you've been so queer these last three days."

And she answered:

"It annoys me not to have a single jewel, not a single stone, nothing to put on. I shall look like distress. I should almost rather not go at all."

He resumed:

"You might wear natural flowers. it's very stylish at this time of the year. For ten francs you can get two or three magnificent roses."

She was not convinced.

"No; there's nothing more humiliating than to look poor among other women who are rich."

But her husband cried:

"How stupid you are! Go look up you friend Mme. Forestier, and ask her to lend you some jewels. You're quite thick enough with her to do that."

She uttered a cry of joy:

"It's true. I never thought of it."

The next day she went to her friend and told of her distress.

Mme. Forestier went to a wardrobe with a glass door, took out a large jewel-box, brought it back, opened it, and said to Mme. Loisel:

"Choose, my dear."

She saw first of all some bracelets, then a pearl necklace, then a Venetian cross, gold, and precious stones of admirable workmanship. She tried on the ornaments before the glass, hesitated, could not make up her mind to part with them, to give them back. She kept asking:

"Haven't you any more?"

"Why, yes. Look. I don't know what you like."

All of a sudden she discovered, in a black satin box, a superb necklace of diamonds;; and her heart began to beat with an immoderate desire. her hands trembled as she took it. She fastened it around her throat, outside her high-necked dress, and remained lost in ecstasy at the sight of herself.

Then she asked, hesitating, filled with anguish:

"Can you lend me that, only that?"

"Why, yes, certainly."

She sprang upon the neck of her friend, kissed her passionately, then fled with her treasure.

The day of the ball arrived. Mme. Loisel made a great success. She was prettier than them all, elegant, gracious, smiling, and crazy with joy. All the

men looked at her, asked her name, endeavored to be introduced. All the attaches of the Cabinet wanted to waltz with her. She was remarked by the minister himself.

She danced with intoxication, with passion, made drunk by pleasure, forgetting all, in the triumph of her beatuty, in the glory of her success, in a sort of cloud of happiness composed of all this homage, of all this admiration, of all these awakened desires, and of that sense of complete victory which is so sweet to a woman's heart.

She went away about four o'clock in the morning. Her husband had been sleeping since midnight, in a little deserted ante-room, with three other gentlemen whose wives were having a very good time.

He threw over her shoulders the wraps which he had brought, modest wraps of common life, whose poverty contrasted with the elegance of the ball dress. She felt this and wanted to escape so as not to be remarked by the other women, who were enveloping themselves in costly furs.

Loisel held her back.

"Wait a bit. You will catch cold outside. I will go and call a cab."

But she did not listen to him, and rapidly descended the stairs. When they were in the street they did not find a carriage; and they began to look for one, shouting after the cabmen whom they saw passing by at a distance.

They went down towards the Seine, in despair, shivering with cold. At last they found on the quay one of those ancient nocturnal coupes which, exactly as if they were ashamed to show their misery during the day, are never seen round Paris until after nightfall.

It took them to their door in the Rue des Martyrs, and once more, sadly, they climbed up homeward. All was ended for her. And as to him, he reflected that he must be at the Ministry at ten o'clock.

She removed the wraps, which covered her shoulders, before the glass, so as once more to see herself in all her glory. But suddenly she uttered a cry. She had no longer the necklace around her neck!

Her husband, already half-undressed, demanded:

"What is the matter with you?"

She turned madly towards him:

"I have--I have--I've lost Mme. Forestier's necklace."

He stood up, distracted.

"What! -- how? -- Impossible!"

And they looked in the folds of her dress, in the folds of her cloak, in her pockets, everywhere. They did not find it.

He asked:

"You're sure you had it on when you left the ball?"

"Yes, I felt it in the vestibule of the palace."

“But if you had lost it in the street we should have heard it fall. It must be in the cab.”

“Yes. Probably. Did you take his number?”

“No. And you, didn’t you notice it?”

“No.”

They looked, thunderstruck, at one another. At last Loisel put on his clothes.

“I shall go back on foot,” said he, “over the whole route which we have taken, to see if I can’t find it.”

And he went out. She sat waiting on a chair in her ball dress, without the strength to go to bed, overwhelmed, without fire, without a thought.

Her husband came back about seven o’clock. He had found nothing.

He went to Police Headquarters, to the newspaper offices, to offer a reward; he went to the cab companies -- everywhere, in fact, whither he was urged by the least suspicion of hope.

She waited all day, in the same condition of mad fear before this terrible calamity.

Loisel returned at night with a hollow, pale face; he had discovered nothing.

“You must write to your friend, “ said he, “that you have broken the clasp of her necklace and that you are having it mended. That will give us time to turn round.”

She wrote at his dictation.

At the end of a week they had lost all hope.

And Loisel, who had aged five years, declared:

“We must consider how to replace that ornament.”

The next day they took the box which had contained it, and they went to the jeweler whose name was found within. He consulted his books.

“It was not I, Madame, who sold that necklace; I must simply have furnished the case.”

Then they went from jeweler to jeweler, searching for a necklace like the other, consulting their memories, sick both of them with chagrin and with anguish.

They found, in a shop at the Palais Royal, a string of diamonds which seemed to them exactly like the one they looked for. It was worth forty thousand francs. They could have it for thirty-six.

So they begged the jeweler not to sell it for three days yet. And they made a bargain that he should buy it back for thirty-four thousand francs, in case they found the other one before the end of February.

Loisel possessed eighteen thousand francs which his father had left him. he would borrow the rest.

He did borrow, asking a thousand francs of one, five hundred of another,

five louis here, three louis there. He gave notes, took up ruinous obligations, dealt with usurers, and all the race of lenders. He compromised all the rest of his life, risked his signature without even knowing if he could meet it; and, frightened by the pains yet to come, by the black misery which was about to fall upon him, by the prospect of all the physical privations and of all the moral tortures which he was to suffer, he went to get the new necklace, putting down upon the merchant's counter thirty-six thousand francs.

When Mme. Loisel took back the necklace Madame Forestier opened the box Mme. Forestier said to her, with a chilly manner:

"You should have returned it sooner, I might have needed it."

She did not open the case, as her friend had so much feared. If she had detected the substitution, what would she have thought, what would she have said? Would she not have taken Mme. Loisel for a thief?

Mme. Loisel now knew the horrible existence of the needy. She took her part, moreover, all on a sudden, with heroism. That dreadful debt must be paid. She would pay it. They dismissed their servant; they changed their lodgings; they rented a garret under the roof.

She came to know what heavy housework meant and the odious cares of the kitchen. She washed the dishes, using her rosy nails on the greasy pots and pans. She washed the dirty linen, the shirts, and the dish-cloths, which she dried upon a line; she carried the slops down to the street every morning, and carried up the water stopping for breath at every landing. And, dressed like a woman of the people, she went to the fruiterer, the grocer, the butcher, her basket on her arm, bargaining, insulted, defending her miserable money sou by sou.

Each month they had to meet some notes, renew others, obtain more time.

Her husband worked in the evening making a fair copy of some tradesman's accounts, and late at night he often copied manuscript for five sous a page.

And this life lasted ten years.

At the end of ten years they had paid everything, everything, with the rates of usury, and the accumulations of the compound interest.

Mme. Loisel looked old now. She had become the woman of impoverished households -- strong and hard and rough. With frowsy hair, skirts askew, and red hands, she talked loud while washing the floor with great swishes of water. But sometimes, when her husband was at the office, she sat down near the window, and she thought of that gay evening of long ago, of that ball where she had been so beautiful and so feted.

What would have happened if she had not lost that necklace? How life is strange and how changeful! How little a thing is needed for us to be lost or to be saved!

But, one Sunday, having gone to take a walk in the Champs Elysees to refresh herself from the labors of the week, she suddenly perceived a woman who was leading a child. It was Mme. Forestier, still young, still beautiful,

still charming.

Mme. Loisel felt moved. Was she going to speak to her? Yes, certainly. And now that she had paid, she was going to tell her all about it. Why not?

She went up.

“Good-day, Jeanne.”

The other, astonished to be familiarly addressed by this plain good wife, did not recognize her at all, and stammered:

“But -- Madame! -- I do not know -- you must have mistaken.”

“No. I am Mathilde Loisel.”

Her friend uttered a cry.

“Oh, my poor Mathilde! How you are changed!”

“Yes, I have had days hard enough, since I have seen you, days wretched enough -- and that because of you!”

“Of me! How so?”

“Do you remember that diamond necklace which you lent me to wear at the ministerial ball?”

“Yes Well?”

“Well, I lost it.”

“What do you mean? you brought it back.”

“I brought you back another just like it. And it has taken ten years to pay for it. You can understand that it was not easy for us, us who had nothing. At last it is ended, and I am very glad.”

Mme. Forestier had stopped.

“You say that you bought a necklace of diamonds to replace mine?”

“Yes. you never noticed it, then! They were very like.”

And she smiled with a joy which was proud and naive at once.

Mme. Forestier, strongly moved, took her two hands.

“Oh, my poor Mathilde! Why, my necklace was paste. It was worth at most five hundred francs!”

9.2.5 The Title Of The Story

Maupassant used the simple title *The Neeklace* to introduce his famous short story about a woman who loses her friends necklace and spends ten years of her life paying for the jewel. The simplicity of the title is common in many of Maupassant’s novels. He likes to pick out an element for the reader to focus on as significant. The necklace is significant for many reasons. It is symbolic of the materialism that misguides the main character, and it also reveals Maupassant’s theme of fatalism.

Maupassant uses the title *The Necklace* to pinpoint the necklace as a

noteworthy element of the story because it is a coveted object. By picking a possession as the title of the story, Maupassant is intending to point out that materialism is a focal point of the story. The necklace is representative of the riches and expensive material possessions that Mathilde wastes her time pining after. Importantly, the necklace that Mathilde borrows from her friend, instead being glamorous and satisfying, dooms her into a state of poverty and despair. Maupassant expresses Mathilde's greed saying that when she first saw the necklace, "her heart began to beat covetously", but Mathilde only enjoyed a very temporary satisfaction. Mathilde got the satisfaction of one night of being accepted among rich people, which in the end left her with ten years of suffering. Maupassant foreshadows the gloomy future saying that when the night ended "it was the end for her" and that the characters felt "appalled at the agonizing face of the future, at the black misery about to fail upon (them)". The story is pessimistic and upsetting, and the emphasis is on the necklace, especially as the title reveals that emphasizing material things is harmful and fruitless.

The title encourages the reader to focus on the symbolism of the necklace in the story. The theme of fatalism is emphasized in this title, for each time the necklace is brought into the plot of the story, it involves an event where "fate had blundered" over some characters. The first time the necklace is brought up, Mathilde is borrowing the necklace from her friend, so that she, doomed into a middle class social status, can pretend for one night to be part of a more fortunate class of people. The next time the necklace is spoken of, it is the cause of a "fearful catastrophe", its unfortunate disappearance which causes Mathilde lots of grief. Then, the final time the necklace is brought up, Mathilde discovers that, as fate would have it, the necklace she spent so long replacing was worthless. Fate interacts with the characters every time the necklace comes into the story, and the title helps to focus the reader in on the necklace's implications.

Titles are often used to introduce the main idea of the work, and *The Necklace* is no different. Maupassant carefully chose to use an object as the main idea for the purpose of signalling the object out as important. The main idea is not expressed through the statement of the object itself ; it is expressed through the purpose and through the necklace in the story. In this short story, there are many motifs and themes. However, the important ones, materialism and fatalism, are easily recognized because they revolve round the necklace. The reader knows to focus on these themes because they revolve round the necklace. The reader knows to focus on these themes because the title encourages the reader to analyze the interaction of the necklace in the plot.

9.2.6 Character Of Mathilde

Mathilde's character is introduced as having the belief that she should have been born into a higher class, which results in her profound desire to, at the least, appear to lead a life of luxury.

It is clear right away that Mathilde feels she deserves more than a "little clerk

in the Ministry of Education" for a husband. Her desire to live a life of luxury consumes her and prevents her from finding satisfaction with any aspect of her life. Her husband goes through a great deal of trouble to obtain an invitation to a fancy party; however, when he tells her the news, she replies coldly, "What do you want me to do with this?". He is brokenhearted, and makes every effort to convince her to go to the party and even sacrifices his savings for her to buy a new dress.

Mathilde is so concerned with her appearance at the beginning of the story that she is not satisfied with a new dress; she also needs jewels to feel socially acceptable. Madame Forestier, the one who lends her the necklace, treats her with kindness and lets her choose any piece of jewelry to borrow. After rummaging through Madame Forestier's jewel collection, Mathilde chooses the one that she expects will draw the most attention. Mathilde only cares about other's feelings when they are directed towards her.

Without realizing Mathilde loses the necklace at the party, and for the next ten years, she and her husband work very hard to pay off debts incurred for replacing it. Although the change is gradual, Mathilde does grow and change as a person over the years, making her a dynamic character. Not only does her appearance change, for she grows old during the painstaking decade, but she also changes as a person and finally learns the meaning of hard work. For once in her life, she takes responsibility for her mistake.

Even at the end, Mathilde continues to have a slightly self-centered attitude, which is exemplified best by her meeting with Madame Forrestier. After Madame Forrestier comments on the changes in her appearance, Mathilde's response is, "Yes, I've had some hard times since I saw you last; and many sorrows..... and all on your account". Her experience helps her learn that honesty is more important in the long run than her outward appearance.

In a way, Mathilde is both the protagonist and the antagonist. The events of the story revolve around and seem to be set in motion by her, making her the protagonist. She is also the antagonist because she is struggling with her own desire to have a life of luxury, which causes the whole conflict of the lost necklace. The end also shows that she is the protagonist because despite the fact that she causes the conflict, she is the one who works to resolve it as well by finally telling Madame Forrestier the truth.

9.2.7 The Theme Of Fatalism

In the short story *the Necklace*, Maupassant draws on the recurring theme that humans are victims of fatalism, especially women in the mid-nineteenth century.

Mathilde's marriage and middle class existence are great examples of how women in the nineteenth century were governed by fate. Mathilde's fate was that she was born into a poor family, so she was doomed to be poor all her life for two reasons. First, women in the mid-nineteenth century were discriminated against by the ideology of domesticity, where they were expected

to look after the household and the kids, but they were restricted from entering the work force. Mathilde did not have the authority to get a job, education, or change to climb the economic ladder. Thus, she had no way of obtaining the dazzling things that lucky women like her rich friend Madame Forestier enjoyed. Secondly, though her family being poor, she did not have enough of a dowry to entice a rich man to wed her. The author presents Mathilde's situation well by stating, "she had no marriage portion, no expectations, no means of getting known, understood, loved, and wedded by a man of wealth and distinction". With the helplessness of Mathilde's character realized, her actions become more justifiable, and fate, not Mathilde, emerges as the antagonist of the story.

The lost necklace serves to broaden the theme of fatalism to human beings of any day or age. Mathilde had no control over the disastrous disappearance of the necklace, and neither would any other person. The fact that this one event ruined the lives of the couple for ten years shows how cruel fate can be. Mathilde's character expressed this realization wondering. "what would have happened if she had never lost those jewels [……] how strange life is, how fickle! how little is needed to ruin or save". Just when Mathilde felt like she had some power over her life, because she bought a dress, borrowed a necklace, and successfully earned an admirable reputation among the upper class, fate struck a tiny blow and shattered her life to pieces.

Guy de Maupassant's main theme is that fate can be cruel, but at the end he shows that fate can only bring one down to the extent that he or she allows it to. Guy de Maupassant explicitly portrays his negativity towards fate in the novel explaining that from the very beginning of Mathilde's life "fate had blundered over her". However, if Mathilde had just told her friend that she lost the necklace, she would not have had to spend several years suffering because of the misfortune. Here, Guy de Maupassant is saying that if we accept our fate, and do not try so hard to change it, we will not have to suffer so much.

9.2.8 Symbolism In The Story

In The Necklace, Mathilde Loisel, the main character, is symbolic of many reasons. Primarily she represents a woman living a common lifestyle of the nineteenth century. The author, Guy de Maupassant stated, "For women have no caste or class, " which notes the lack of stature that women, like Mathilde, endured. Mathilde felt herself "born for every delicacy and luxury". In today's society, women who aspire to have many material possessions may achieve their goal by working hard and/or getting an education. However, in the 19th century, these opportunities were often ridiculed, because it was the belief of society that women were meant to cook, and mother children. Therefore, Mathilde symbolizes the lack of power that women of her era had, because she seemingly stuck in her rank by the standards of society.

Mathilde's marriage is symbolic of the average marriage in the 19th century. Marriage was considered a necessity and women were wed at a very young

age (before twenty). Single women were scorned and often ostracized by the general public. Mathilde's marriage to "a little clerk in the ministry of Education" was probably not her choice, but rather a decision made for social acceptance and economic support. Mathilde felt that, "she had married beneath her," because she was " one of those pretty and charming girls born". Women during this time were forced into marriages unrelated to love, and Mathilde's unhappiness accentuates this problem.

Mathilde's callous and bitter persona depicts the true feelings of women in the 19th century. Mathilde suffered from her rank in society and her undesired marriage. Furthermore, one exception of Mathilde's marriage versus the average marriage is that she appears not to have had any children. This factor was of great importance in the 19th century society. Her lifestyle and lack of ability to contribute to her family through salary and children changed her inside and outside. In the end, Madame Forestier noticed the transformation of Mathilde and this change (from young beauty to aged distress) might have been noticeable in many women of Mathilde's time.

9.3 Key Words

Tureen – a large deep dish with a lid from which soup is served

Nocturnal – Active (or found) at night

Coupe – An enclosed four-wheeled - horse drawn carriage used in former times

Usurers – Persons who lend money at an unfairly high rate of interest

9.4 Check Your Progress

(a) Write briefly about Guy de Maupassant.

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(b) Write the Story in brief.

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_____

(c) Give an Introduction to the story.

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_____

(d) Describe the Character of Mathilde.

_____

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(e) Write a note on the theme of fatalism in the story.

_____

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(f) Write a note on Symbolism in the story.

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9.5 Let's Sum Up

In this unit, we have studied

- About the author
- About the story , its background and the characters.
- About the critical interpretations of the text.

9.6 Books Suggested

Barzun Jacques, and George Stade, eds. *European Writers: The Romantic Century.* New York : Scribner's, 1985.

Cooper, Jamer F., et al. Courtship and Marriage. *Women's History.* 10 April 2003.

Early Attitudes Toward Women. 1995. *Women's International Center.* 10 April 2003

Guy de Maupassant – Biography and works. *The Literature Network*. 8 Apr. 2003

Maupassant, Guy de. The Necklace. 4 Nov. 1997. *B&L Associates*. 31 March 2003

Stade, George . Guy de Maupassant. *European Writers : the Twentieth Century* 13 (1998) : 1759-1769.

Steegmuller, Francis. Maupassant. *Nineteenth-Century Literature Criticism* 1 (1981) : 462-464.

Vermeer: The Complete Works. 1996. *My Studios*. 15 April 2003

9.7 Answers

(a) See 9.2.1 The Author : Guy de Maupassant

(b) See 9.2.2 The Story in Brief

(c) See 9.2.3 Introduction to the Story

(d) See 9.2.7 Character of Mathilde

UNIT - 10

Katherine Mansfield : A Cup of Tea

Structure

10.0 Objectives
10.1 Study Guide
10.2 Katherine Mansfield: A Cup of Tea
  10.2.1 About the Author: Katherine Mansfield
  10.2.2 About the Story : A Cup of Tea
  10.2.3 The Story : A Cup of Tea (Text)
  10.2.4 Glossary
  10.2.5 Model Explanations
10.3 Let's Sum Up
10.4 Questions
10.5 Suggested Readings
10.6 Answers
10.7 Some General Questions

10.0 Objectives

By the end of this Unit you will be able to know

1) about Katherine Mansfield, a short story writer from New Zealand.
2) that certain passions are common in human beings world over e.g. Jealousy.
3) that certain passions are there in all sections of society; poor or rich, young or old.
4) that there exists a big difference between thinking and execution and that altruism does not always go without hurdles.

10.1 Study Guide

In this unit you have been given the life history of Katherine Mansfield. Before going directly to the original story, you should study the background material of the story given in 7.2.2. For your help a detailed summary and glossary have been provided. Model explanations will help you understand the story better and help you attempt questions in the exams. You can write these explanations and answers to questions in your own language, and tally with those given for your help. Some general questions given in 7.7 are a kind of exercise for you. You should attempt these questions for the purpose of your examinations and composition practice.

10.2 Catherine Mansfield : A Cup Of Tea

10.2.1 About the Author

Catherine Mansfield is one of New Zealand's was most famous writers, who was closely associated with D.H. Lawrence and something of a rival of Virginia Woolf. Mansfield's creative years were burdened with loneliness, illness, jealousy, alienation — all this is reflected in her work with the bitter

depiction of marital and family relationships of her middle-class characters. Her short stories are also notable for their use of stream of consciousness technique. Like the Russian writer Anton Chekhov, Mansfield depicted trivial events and subtle changed in human behaviour.

Katherine Mansfield was born in Wellington, New Zealand, into a middle-class colonial family. Her father, Harold Beauchamp, was a banker and her mother, Annie Burnell Dyer, was of genteel origins. She lived for six years in the rural village of Karori. Later on Mansfield said "I imagine I was always writing. Twaddle it was, too. But better far write twaddle or anything, anything, than nothing at all." At the age of nine she had her first text published. As a first step to her rebellion against her background, she withdrew to London in 1908 and studied at Queen's College, where she joined the staff of the *College Magazine.*

During her stay in Germany she wrote satirical sketches of German characters, which were published in 1911 under the title *In a German Pension.* Earlier her stories had appeared in *The New Age.* On her return to London in 1910, Mansfield became ill with an untreated sexually transmitted disease, a condition which contributed to her weak health for the rest of her life. She attended literary parties without much enthusiasm: "Pretty rooms and pretty people, pretty coffee, and cigarettes out of a silver tankard... I was wretched."

In 1911 Mansfield met John Middleton Murray, a Socialist and former literary critic, who was first a tenant in her flat, then her lover. Mansfield co-edited and contributed to a series of journals. Until 1914 she published stories in *Rhythm* and *The Blue Review.* During the war she travelled restlessly between England and France. In 1915 she met her brother "Chummie". When he died in World War I, Mansfield focused her writing on New Zealand and her family. 'Prelude' (1916), one of her most famous stories, was written during this period. In 1918 Mansfield divorced her first husband and married John Murray. In the same year, she was found to have tuberculosis.

In her last years, Mansfield lived much of her time in southern France and in Switzerland, seeking relief from tuberculosis. As a part of her treatment in 1922 at an institute, Mansfield had to spend a few hours every day on a platform suspended over a cow manger. She breathed odors emanating from below but the treatment did no good. Without the company of her literary friends, family or her husband, she wrote much about her own roots and her childhood. Mansfield died of a pulmonary hemorrhage on January 9, 1923. Her last words were: "I love the rain. I want the feeling of it on my face".

Mansfield was greatly influenced by Anton Chekhov, sharing his warm humanity and attention to small details of human behaviour. Her influence on the development of the short story; a form of literature was also notable. Among her literary friends were Aldous Huxley, Virginia Woolf, who considered her over-praised, and D.H. Lawrence, who later turned against

Murray and her. Mansfield's journal, letters, and scrapbook were edited by her husband.

10.2.2 About the Story

The chief quality of Catherine Mansfield's short stories is their psychological realism which reminds the reader of Maupassant, the great French short story writer. She writes in a flowing, racy style, but bringing in a great deal of the dramatic in her technique takes the reader by surprise. 'A Cup of Tea' deals with an upper-class woman. The female protagonist Rosemary Fell, is a bundle of social snobberies. But Mansfield shows that whatever the status, a woman of Rosemary's type is a woman after all, frail, and jealous, in spite of her desire to appear otherwise. Mansfield's method makes the best of the medium, though limited in its scope.

The story begins with a depiction of the chief characteristics of the female protagonist- Rosemary Fell. She was pretty, young, brilliant, extremely modern, extra ordinarily well dressed, amazingly well read. She was very rich and organized parties; and her parties were the most delicious mixture of the really important people. Her shopping used to be very expensive and choosy.

One winter afternoon Rosemary went inside a little antique shop in Curzon Street. This was the usual shop where the shopkeeper was ridiculously fond of serving her. The man on the counter showed her "an exquisite little enamel box" with a very fine glaze as if baked in cream. The shopman was much interested to sell this creamy box to her as he would gain a big margin. As the box was too expensive, priced twenty eight guineas, Rosemary asked the shopkeeper to keep it for her.

The weather, too, on that winter afternoon was not fine. It was rainy and dark. Rosemary also felt a cold bitter taste in the air and thought of having an extra special tea at home. At that very instant a young thin, dark, shadowy, a little battle poor creature - a beggar girl- later named Miss Smith asked for the price of a cup of tea, in a very sobbing.

Rosemary thought of extra ordinary more than extra ordinary adventure. She brought that shivering thin beggar girl to her big cosy house though the poor girl was very apprehensive. Rosemary wanted to prove to that girl that wonderful things happen in life, that fairy god mothers (like her) were real, that rich people (like her) had hearts that "woman were sisters".

The poor beggar girl felt much uncomfortable in her new surroundings amidst warmth, softness, high a sweet scent, beautiful big bedroom, curtains, wonder furniture, gold cushions and comfy chair of Rosemary's house. After much difficulty Rosemary could handle that poor girl and make her take a slight meal of sandwich, bread and butter, and tea. The slight meal had a big effect upon the poor beggar girl.

At this juncture Philip, Rosemary's husband entered their room and wanted to know all about this real pick up. He tried hard to make Rosemary understand the difficulties in her plans to be nice to this pick up girl, and he explained that Rosemary's plans were just not feasible. But Philip had to adopt some other method to get rid of this poor beggar girl. He aroused feelings of jealously in Rosemary's mind by praising beggar girl's beauty. He called her 'pretty' 'absolutely lovely'. Now Rosemary considered the beggar girl her rival in beauty and love. Rosemary did not want to lose her husband. She paid the poor little girl a present of money and sent her out. Rosemary dressed up herself - by doing her hair, darkening her eyes and putting on her pearls - in order to look attractive. As she talked to her husband her tone became husky and troubled. Now she could see the danger in her fascinating plan.

Thus Katherine Mansfield succeeds in depicting and working out the theme of womanly jealously in this interesting narrative "Cup of Tea". At the end of the story there is a twist. The writer has used mild satire and irony to the convey his message vividly. Rosemary, the female protagonist, had to dispose of the beggar girl whom she had brought home to provide food and tea. She had to give her money which initially she denied. Philip could succeed in arousing womanly jealously in the mind of extremely rich lady Rosemary against the extremely poor beggar girl. At the end Rosemary had to make efforts to look prettier than her rival the poor beggar girl. Thus it proves a Woman of Rosemary's type is a woman after all, frail and jealous in spite of her desire to appear otherwise.

10.2.3 The Story : A Cup of Tea

Rosemary Fell was not exactly beautiful. No, you couldn't have called her beautiful. Pretty? Well, if you took her to pieces... But why be so cruel as to take anyone to pieces? She was young, brilliant, extremely modem, exquisitely well dressed, amazingly well read in the newest of the new books, and her parties were the most delicious mixture of the really important people and... artists - quaint creatures, discoveries of hers, some of them too terrifying for words, but others quite presentable and amusing.

Rosemary had been married two years. She had a duck of a boy. No, not Peter- Michael. And her husband absolutely adored her. They were rich, really rich, not just comfortably well off, which is odious and stuffy and sounds like one's grandparents. But if Rosemary wanted to shop she would go to Paris as you and I would go to Bond Street. If she wanted to buy flowers, the car pulled up at that perfect shop in Regent Street, and Rosemary inside the shop just gazed in her dazzled, rather exotic way, and said: "I want those and those and those. Give me four bunches of those. And that jar of roses. Yes, I'll have all the roses in the jar. No, no lilac. I hate lilac. It's got no shape." The attendant bowed and put the lilac out of sight, as though this was only too true; lilac was dreadfully shapeless. "Give me those stumpy little tulips. Those red and white ones." And she was followed to the car by

a thin shop-girl staggering under an immense white paper armful that looked like a baby in long clothes....

One winter afternoon she had been buying something in a little antique shop in Curzon Street. It was a shop she liked. For one thing, one usually had it to oneself. And then the man who kept it was ridiculously fond of serving her. He beamed whenever she came in. He clasped his hands; he was so gratified he could scarcely speak. Flattery, of course. All the same, there was something...

"You see, madam," he would explain in his low respectful tones, "I love my things. I would rather not part with them than sell them to someone who does not appreciate them, who has not that fine feeling which is so rare..." And, breathing deeply, he unrolled a tiny square of blue velvet and pressed it on the glass counter with his pale finger-tips.

To-day it was a little box. He had been keeping it for her. He had shown it to nobody as yet. An exquisite little enamel box with a glaze so fine it looked as though it had been baked in cream. On the lid a minute creature stood under a flowery tree, and a more minute creature still had her arms round his neck. Her hat, really no bigger than a geranium petal, hung from a branch; it had green ribbons. And there was a pink cloud like a watchful cherub floating above their heads. Rosemary took her hands out of her long gloves. She always took off her gloves to examine such things. Yes, she liked it very much. She loved it; it was a great duck. She must have it. And, turning the creamy box, opening and shutting it, she couldn't help noticing how charming her hands were against the blue velvet. The shopman, in some dim cavern of his mind, may have dared to think so too. For he took a pencil, leant over the counter, and his pale, bloodless fingers crept timidly towards those rosy, flashing ones, as he murmured gently: "If I may venture to point out to madam, the flowers on the little lady's bodice."

"Charming!" Rosemary admired the flowers. But what was the price? For a moment the shopman did not seem to hear. Then a murmur reached her. "Twenty-eight guineas, madam."

"Twenty-eight guineas." Rosemary gave no sign. She laid the little box down; she buttoned her gloves again. Twenty-eight guineas. Even if one is rich... She looked vague. She stared at a plump tea-kettle like a plump hen above the shopman's head, and her voice was dreamy as she answered: "Well, keep it for me will you? I'll..."

But the shop man had already bowed as though keeping it for her was all any human being could ask. He would be willing, of course, to keep it for her for ever.

The discreet door shut with a click. She was outside on the step, gazing at the winter afternoon. Rain was falling, and with the rain it seemed the dark came too, spinning down like ashes. There was a cold bitter taste in the air, and the new-lighted lamps looked sad. Sad were the lights in the houses

opposite. Dimly they burned as if regretting something. And people hurried by, hidden under their hateful umbrellas.

Rosemary felt a strange pang. She pressed her muff against her breast; she wished she had the little box, too, to cling to. Of course the car was there. She'd only to cross the pavement. But still she waited. There are moments, horrible moments in life, when one emerges from shelter and looks out, and it's awful. One oughtn't to give way to .them. One ought to go home and have an extra-special tea. But at the very instant of thinking that, a young girl, thin, dark, shadowy - where had she come from? - was standing at Rosemary's elbow and a voice like a sigh, almost like a sob, breathed: "Madam, may I speak to you a moment?"

"Speak to me?" Rosemary turned. She saw a little battered creature with enormous eyes, someone quite young, no older than herself, who clutched at her coat-collar with reddened hands, and shivered as though she had just come out of the water.

"M-madam, stammered the voice. Would you let me have the price of a cup of tea?"

"A cup of tea?" There was something simple, sincere in that voice; it wasn't in the least the voice of a beggar. "Then have you no money at all?" asked Rosemary.

"None, madam," came the answer.

"How extraordinary!" Rosemary peered through the dusk and the girl gazed back at her. How more than extraordinary! And suddenly it seemed to Rosemary such an adventure. It was like something out of a novel by Dostoevsky, this meeting in the dusk. Supposing she took the girl home? Supposing she did do one of those things she was always reading about or seeing on the stage, what would happen? It would be thrilling. And she heard herself saying afterwards to the amazement of her friends: "I simply took her home with me," as she stepped forward and said to that dim person beside her: "Come home to tea with me."

The girl drew back startled. She even stopped shivering for a moment. Rosemary put out a hand and touched her arm. "I mean it," she said, smiling. And she felt how simple and kind her smile was. "Why won't you? Do. Come home with me now in my car and have tea."

"You - you don't mean it, madam," said the girl, and there was pain in her voice.

"But I do," cried Rosemary. "I want you to. To please me. Come along."

The girl put her fingers to her lips and her eyes devoured Rosemary. "You're-you're not taking me to the police station?" she stammered.

"The police station!" Rosemary laughed out. "Why should I be so cruel?

No, I only want to make you warm and to hear - anything you care to tell me."

Hungry people are easily led. The footman held the door of the car open, and a moment later they were skimming through the dusk.

"There!" said Rosemary. She had a feeling of triumph as she slipped her hand through the velvet strap. She could have said, "Now I've got you," as she gazed at the little captive she had netted. But of course she meant it kindly. Oh, more than kindly. She was going to prove to this girl that - wonderful things did happen in life, - that fairy godmothers were real, that - rich people had hearts, and that women were sisters. She turned impulsively, saying'. "Don't be frightened. After all, why shouldn't you come back with me? We're both women. If I'm the more fortunate, you ought to expect..."

But happily at that moment, for she didn't know how the sentence was going to end, the car stopped. The bell was rung, the door opened, and with a charming, protecting, almost embracing movement, Rosemary drew the other into the hall. Warmth, softness, light, a sweet scent, all those things so familiar to her she never even thought about them, she watched that other receive. It was fascinating. She was like the rich little girl in her nursery with all the cupboards to open, all the boxes to unpack.

"Come, come upstairs," said Rosemary, longing to begin to be generous. "Come up to my room." And, besides, she wanted to spare this poor little thing from being stared at by the servants; she decided as they mounted the stairs she would not even ring to Jeanne, but take off her things by herself. The great things were to be natural!

And "There!" cried Rosemary again, as they reached her beautiful big bedroom with the curtains drawn, the fire leaping on her wonderful lacquer furniture, her gold cushions and the primrose and blue rugs. The girl stood just inside the door; she seemed dazed. But Rosemary didn't mind that.

"Come and sit down," she cried, dragging her big chair up to the fire, "m this comfy chair. Come and get warm. You look so dreadfully cold."

"I daren't, madam," said the girl, and she edged backwards.

"Oh, please," - Rosemary ran forward - "you mustn't be frightened, you mustn't, really. Sit down, when I've taken off my things we shall go into the next room and have tea and be cozy. Why are you afraid?" And gently she half pushed the thin figure into its deep cradle.

But there was no answer. The girl stayed just as she had been put, with her hands by her sides and her mouth slightly open. To be quite sincere, she looked rather stupid. But Rosemary wouldn't acknowledge it.

She leant over her, saying:

"Won't you take off your hat? Your pretty hair is all wet. And one is so much

more comfortable without a hat, isn't one?"

There was a whisper that sounded like "Very good, madam," and the crushed hat was taken off.

"And let me help you off with your coat, too," said Rosemary.

The girl stood up. But she held on to the chair with one hand and let Rosemary pull. It was quite an effort. The other scarcely helped her at all. She seemed to stagger like a child, and the thought came and went through Rosemary's mind, that if people wanted helping they must respond a little, just a little, otherwise it became very difficult indeed. And what was she to do with the coat now? She left it on the floor, and the hat too. She was just going to take a cigarette off the mantelpiece when the girl said quickly, but so lightly and strangely: "I'm very sorry, madam, but I'm going to faint. I shall go off, madam, if I don't have something."

"Good heavens, how thoughtless I am!" Rosemary rushed to the bell.

"Tea! Tea at once! And some brandy immediately!"

The maid was gone again, but the girl almost cried out: "No, I don't want no brandy.* I never drink brandy. It's a cup of tea I want, madam." And she burst into tears.

It was a terrible and fascinating moment. Rosemary knelt beside her chair.

"Don't cry, poor little thing," she said. "Don't cry." And she gave the other her lace handkerchief. She really was touched beyond words. She put her arm round those thin, bird-like shoulders.

Now at last the other forgot to be shy, forgot everything except that they were both women, and gasped out: "I can't go on no longer like this. I can't bear it. I can't bear it. I shall do away with myself. I can't bear no more."

"You shan't have to. I'll look after you. Don't cry any more. Don't you see what a good thing it was that you met me? We'll have tea and you'll tell me everything. And I shall arrange something. I promise. Do stop crying. It's so exhausting. Please!"

The other did stop just in time for Rosemary to get up before the tea came. She had the table placed between them. She plied the poor little creature with everything, all the sandwiches, all the bread and butter, and every time her cup was empty she filled it with tea, cream and sugar. People always said sugar was so nourishing. As for herself she didn't eat; she smoked and looked away tactfully so that the other should not be shy.

And really the effect of that slight meal was marvelous. When the tea-table was carried away a new being, a light, frail creature with tangled hair, dark lips, deep, lighted eyes, lay back in the big chair in a kind of sweet languor, looking -at the blaze. Rosemary lit a fresh cigarette; it was time to begin.

“And when did you have your last meal?” she asked softly.

But at that moment the door-handle turned.

“Rosemary, may I come in?” It was Philip.

“Of course.”

He came in. “Oh, I’m so sorry,” he said, and stopped and stared.

“It’s quite all right,” said Rosemary, smiling. “This is my friend, Miss ”
“Smith, madam,” said the languid figure, who was strangely still and unafraid.

“Smith,” said Rosemary. “We are going to have a little talk.”

“Oh yes,” said Philip. “Quite,” and his eye caught sight of the coat and hat on the floor. He came over to the fire and turned his back to it. “It’s a beastly afternoon,” he said curiously, still looking at that listless figure, looking at its hands and boots, and then at Rosemary again.

“Yes, isn’t it?” said Rosemary enthusiastically. “Vile.”

Philip smiled his charming smile. “As a matter of fact,” said he, “I wanted you to come into the library for a moment. Would you? Will Miss Smith excuse us?”

The big eyes were raised to him, but Rosemary answered for her: “Of course she will.” And they went out of the room together.

“I say,” said Philip, when they were alone. “Explain. Who is she? What does it all mean?”

Rosemary, laughing, leaned against the door and said: “I picked her up in Curzon Street. Really. She’s a real pick-up. She asked me for the price of a cup of tea, and I brought her home with me. “

“But what on earth are you going to do with her?” cried Philip.

“Be nice to her,” said Rosemary quickly. “Be frightfully nice to her. Look after her. I don’t know how. We haven’t talked yet. But show her - treat her - make her feel -”

“My darling girl,” said Philip, “you’re quite mad, you know. It simply can’t be done.”

“I knew you’d say that,” retorted Rosemary. Why not? I want to. Isn’t that a reason? And besides, one’s always reading about these things.I decided-
”

“But,” said Philip slowly, and he cut the end of a cigar, “she’s so astonishingly pretty.”

“Pretty?” Rosemary was so surprised that she blushed. “Do you think so? I - I hadn’t thought about it.”

"Good Lord!" Philip struck a match. "She's absolutely lovely. Look again, my child. I was bowled over when I came into your room just now. However... I think you're making a ghastly mistake. Sorry, darling, if I'm crude and all that. But let me know if Miss Smith is going to dine with us in time for me to look up The Milliner's Gazette."

"You absurd creature!" said Rosemary, and she went out of the library, but not back to her bedroom. She went to her writing-room and sat down at her desk. Pretty! Absolutely lovely! Bowled over! Her heart beat like a heavy bell. Pretty! Lovely! She drew her check-book towards her. But no, checks would be no use, of course. She opened a drawer and took out five pound notes, looked at them, put two back, and holding the three squeezed in her hand, she went back to her bedroom.

Half an hour later Philip was still in the library, when Rosemary came in.

"I only wanted to tell you," said she, and she leaned against the door again and looked at him with her dazzled exotic gaze, "Miss Smith won't dine with us to-night."

Philip put down the paper. "Oh, what's happened? Previous engagement?"

Rosemary came over and sat down on his knee. "She insisted on going," said she, "so I gave the poor little thing a present of money- I couldn't keep her against her will, could I?" she added softly.

Rosemary had just done her hair, darkened her eyes a little and put on her pearls. She put up her hands and touched Philip's cheeks.

"Do you like me?" said she, and her tone, sweet, husky, troubled him.

"I like you awfully," he said, and he held her tighter. "Kiss me."

There was a pause.

Then Rosemary said dreamily: "I saw a fascinating little box to-day. It cost twenty-eight guineas. May I have it?"

Philip jumped her on his knee. "You may, little wasteful one," said he. But that was not really what Rosemary wanted to say.

"Philip," she whispered, and she pressed his head against her bosom, "am I pretty?"

10.2.4 Glossary

adored	:	loved passionately
antique shop	:	shop dealing in ancient things of historical interest
battered	:	broken up
blaze	:	bright flame; roaring fire
bowled over	:	easily won over; captivated
Bond Street	:	a famous shopping centre in London

carven	:	dark cave; here deep recess (of the mind)
cherub	:	one of the orders of angels depicted as a plump and winged child.
clutched	:	held tightly or eagerly
dazed	:	left in a state of shock and suspense.
dazzled	:	confused (by the beautiful variety in the shop)
devoured	:	ate up; looked wise-eyes.
Dostoevsky	:	(1821-81) great Russian novelist; author of Crime and Punishment, The Brothers Karamozov, The Idiot, etc. Dostoevsky's novels are famous for their subtle character analysis and psychological realism.
exquisitely	:	made to artistic perfection; made delicately refined
exotic	:	strange and extraordinary
glaze	:	brightness of a glassy surface; flowers
geranium	:	a plant with red, white or purple flowers
husky	:	choked with emotion; hoarse or whispery
lacquer	:	gold-coloured varnish used for wooden furniture
languid	:	lacking in energy (adjective of *languor*)
langour	:	a dreamy laziness, displaying weakness
listless	:	spiritless; tired looking
mantelpiece	:	the ornamental shelf over a fire place
muff	:	fur which keeps hands warm
Milliner's gazette	:	a journal giving details about millinery, i.e. women's headdresses, hats, etc.
Odious	:	hateful
pang	:	sharp pain
pick-up	:	a find; chance acquaintance or one picked up
plied	:	offered attractive things in order to engage
skimming	:	gliding fast and smooth
staggering	:	swayingunsteadily
stammered	:	uttered hesitantly
startled	:	drew back shocked
stuffy	:	dull and warm
stumpy	:	short and thick
tangled	:	uncombed and lying in curls
tulips	:	plants with bulbous flowers
vile	:	wicked; horrible

10.2.5 Model Explanations

a) *She was going to prove .... women were sisters.*

This extract has been taken from the story *A Cup of Tea* written by Katherine Mansfield. Mansfield is a famous story writer from New Zealand. In these lines"the writer has depicted how the females protagonist of the story Rosemary Fell behaves towards the beggar girl at the beginning of their meeting.

The beggar girl Miss Smith asks for some money so that she may have a cup of tea. Instead of giving her money, Rosemary wants to bring her

to her home and prove that rich people are kind hearted and want to help the poor. Moreover, in this case, both were women and Rosemary wants to prove that all women are like sisters.

The irony involved in these lines becomes clear when Rosemary, towards the end of the story, moves the beggar girl out of her home out of jealousy. They do not remain *sisters* but become rivals when Rosemary's husband arouses sense of jealously in her mind when he fails to make her understand his point of view about the beggar girl. These lines reflect that Rosemary is completely impractical and impulsive.

b) *Rosemary had just done her hair ..... Philip's cheeks*

This exact forms the concluding part of the story A Cup of Tea by Katherine Mansfield. Katherine Mansfield is a well story writer from New Zealand. Out of Jealousy the female protagonist of the story, story, Rosemary Fell, moves the poor beggar girls Miss Smith out of her house who she herself invited to prove that women are sisters and rich people are kind hearted and fortunate ladies should help the poor ladies.

Rosemary counbs her hair, darkens are eyes, puts her pearls and prepares herself in every sense to look pretty. After moving out the beggar girl, she approaches her husband Philip to impress him. She feels that she has been impractical in bringing the beggar girl at her home and helping her by giving bath, tea, breakfast etc. Philip can easily arouse feelings of jealously in Rosemary's mind by calling the girls "astonishingly pretty".

This extract reflects that jealously is a basic emotion in woman to whatever category, caste, religion, social status, rank or geographical area she belongs. The irony lies in the fact that Rosemary takes the beggar girl as her own rival.

10.3 Let Us Sum Up

In this unit you have studied about a short story writer from New Zealand. The short story *A Cup of Tea* is not much different from Indian stories in theme, structure and atmosphere. This incident might happen anywhere in the world. The glossary, explanations must have helped you to study the story in a better way.

10.4 Questions

1) Was Rosemary's family well-to-do?

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2) How did Rosemary buy flowers?

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3) Why did she refuse to have lilac?

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4) How did the man on the counter in Curzon Street behave with Rosemary?

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5) What did the beggar girl look like?

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6) What was her request to Rosemary?

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7) What sudden idea did Rosemary have?

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8) What was the beggar girl's apprehension?

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_____

9) What is the author's opinion about hungry people?

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_____

_____

10) What were Rosemary's feelings when the girl joined her?

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11) What did she want to prove to her?

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12) Why did Rosemary never think of warmth, softness, light, etc?

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13) How did the girl behave when Rosemary invited her to sit on her 'comfy chair'?

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14) Why is the chair described as a 'deep cradle' when the girl was pushed into it?

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15) What were Rosemary's feelings when the girl was passive as her coat was taken off?

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16) What did the girl look like after tea?

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17) What advice did Philip give to Rosemary?

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18) What did Philip mean when her remarked "Story, darling, if I am crude and all that"?

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19) How did Rosemary finally get rid of the girl?

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20) Why did Rosemary get rid to the beggar girl?

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10.5 Suggested Readings

1) *A Cup of Tea* (A Novel) by Amy Ephron.

2) *Katherine Mansfield : A Study of Her Shorter Fiction by J.F. Kobler, 1990.*

3) *Critical Essays on Katherine Mansfield ed. by L. Rhoda B. Nathan, 1993.*

10.6 Answers

1) Rosemary's family was extremely rich. The family was much well of.

2) She used to go to famous streets or even to countries to buy the things of her choice. Money was no consideration for her. She would go to Paris to buy flowers.

3) When the Shopkeeper showed her lilacs, she out rightly rejected them. In the opinion of Rosemary, the lilacs had no extraordinary shape. That is why she hated them.

4) The man of the counter of a little antique shop in Curzon street was very fond of Rosemary. He was overjoyed whenever she went there for shopping. He felt gratified. He watched the beauty of Rosemary and flattered her. He would sell his articles only to those who appreciate them and he meant Rosemary had that artistic sense.

5) The beggar girl was young, of the age of Rosemary, had big eyes but she was a little battered by weather and lack of food. She was too weak.

6) She requested Rosemary to give her some money for a cup of tea so that she might get some energy, as she was very weak and thin.

7) Rosemary though of taking that beggar girl to her own big, beautiful comfortable home. She would give her something to eat and drink; and thus later on she would narrate the incident to her rich friends and guests.

8) The poor girl though that Rosemary would take her to some police station and get her locked up for begging. She was terrified on the though to it.

9) The author comments that hungry people are easily led astray. They follow the instructions of others. The poor girl's going with Rosemary proves that.

10) Rosemary had the feeling of triumph. She felt that she would make the girl go with her, as she desired.

11) Rosemary wanted to prove that wonderful things happened in the life of a human being, that the rich and aristocratic people also had hearts and that all women, poor or rich, were like sisters. They helped each other in need.

12) As Rosemary always lived in warmth, softness and comfort of the cosy atmosphere, she did no feel that because it was much normal and routine for her.

13) She felt very uncomfortable because she was not habituated to such luxuries. She never expected that much comfort, freedom and liberty. She denied to sit on the sofa as the was too fine for her.

14) The structure of the body of the beggar girl is too thin and weak. therefore, she looked like a small being in a big thin, so sofa became a deep cradle for her.

15) Rosemary felt strange at the behavior of the beggar girl. She thought that the

beggar girl should have co-operated in her project. But the girl was so passive as Rosemary had to do al owrk for her. Rosemary felt that people should respond a little otherwise it became very dfficult for the helper to help.

16) After taking breakfast, the girl looked a little fresh. She had some life in her, it seemed. She felt drowsy also. the slight mean had marvelous effect.

17) Philip was frank and practical. He advised Rosemary to get rid of the beggar girl as soon as possible. But Rosemary did not agree to his proposal.

18) He meant that he might fall in love with a beggar girl as she looked pretty to him with dark big eyes and good shape of her body. He was not serious. He was just playing a trick to arouse jealousy in Rosemary's mind so that she might get rid of that beggar girl.

19) Rosemary gave the beggar girl three pound notes and asked her to go away. Her heart had started beating fast because of jealousy toward her.

20) Rosemary felt jealous of her. Earlier she had thought of proving that all women are sisters and she had wanted to help the beggar girl. But Philip, Rosemary's heart by praising the beauty of the beggar girl when he failed to get rid of her by directly asking Rosemary to do so. Rosemary got rid of the beggar girl out of jealousy.

10.7 Some General Questions

1. Discuss the appropriateness of the title of the story.

2. Write a character-sketch of Rosemary Fell.

3. What is the universal appeal of the story?

UNIT - 11

Rabindranath Tagore : The Castaway

Structure

11.0 Objectives
11.1 Introduction
11.2 About the Author
11.3 Reading the Text
  11.3.1 The Story : The Castaway (Text)
  11.3.2 Glossary
  11.3.3 Summary
11.4 Literary Devices
11.5 Let's Sum Up
11.6 Suggested Readings
11.7 Question and Answers

11.0 Objectives

The purpose of this unit is to convey information, cover as much ground as possible and to stimulate intelligent interest in Indian Writing in English, which besides being a distinctive literature in its own right, is also a link literature in the context of India's pluralistic literary landscape. We have done so by presenting an elaborate discussion on one of the short stories entitled 'The Castaway' written by Rabindranath Tagore.

11.1 Introduction:

While novels like **Gora** and **Binodini** impress as much by their characterization as by their moral comprehension and the ethical seriousness of their plotting, the short stories are more immediately effective, trafficking as they do with the tears in things or the sheer ecstasy of pain. A good story is a living unity by virtue of the indwelling soul; in other words, the idea that inspires and sustains the story. With Tagore's short stories, the poetic flash is the main thing; it is the poet that sees the truth of things, the story teller merely snapping the scene at the suggested angle. Quite unexpectedly the poet of nature and humanity suddenly reveals his hand, our eyes open wide and the pulses quicken as the heart beats faster.

'The Castaway' is one of the most famous stories written by Tagore. The story describes how a person undergoes a great transformation with the change in his class and company. The story is also suggestive of the fact that Indian woman is more considerate, sincere and committed in comparison to her counterpart. The story also depicts what makes a woman pour a mother's love on a poor castaway and how this castaway yearns to convince this woman that he is not a theif. Nilkanta, Kiran, Sharat and Satish are the main characters in the story and the locale is a countryside village, Chandernagore.

11.2 About the Author

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) belonged to the rich and noble family of the Tagores in Bengal. His grandfather, Dwarkanath Tagore, had been a co-worker o Raj Rammohan Roy; his father Devendranath Tagore, had been a pillar of the Brahmo Samaj Movement. Rabindranath Tagore's mother expired when he was young boy. More than being taught by school and teachers, he was taught by nature and circumstances. His vision unfolds itself in **Gitanjali**, the work which won the Nobel Prize fro literature for him in 1913. His multi-pronged genius produced lyrics, poetic plays, plays of ideas, social plays, novels, short stories, essays in criticism, philosophical essays, autobiographical fragments, letters, addresses and education dissertations. He was an actor, a producer, a musician, a painter, and an orator of extraordinary power. His contribution to Bengali literature is greater than that to English literature, but still he holds a significant place in Indoanglian poetry. of his important works are: **The Gardener** (1913), **The Crescent Moon** (1913), **Fruit Gathering** (1916), **Stray Birds** (1917), **Lover's Gift and Crossing** (1918), **Fireflies** (1928), and **The Child** (1931). Tagore sough beauty and happiness everywhere, and considered Main in relation to Nature, the Universe, and God. Love, Devotion, Friendship, Natural piety, and Childhood find room in his writings; He may properly be called the 'innovator' of prose-poems inIndo-anglian literature.

11.3 Reading the Castaway

11.3.1 The Castaway (Text)

Towards evening the storm was at its height. From the terrific downpour of rain, the crash of thunder, and the repeated flashes of lightning, you might think that a battle of the gods and demons was raging in the skies. Black clouds waved like Flags of Doom. The Ganges was flashed into a fury, and the trees of the gardens on either bank swayed from side to side with sighs and groans.

In a closed room of one of the riverside houses at Chandernagore, a husband and his wife were seated on a bed spread on the floor, intently discussing. An erthen lamp burned beside them.

The husband, Sharat was saying. "I wish you would stay on a few days more; you would then be able to return home quite strong again."

The wife, Kiran was saying: I' have quite recovered already. It will not, cannot possibly, do me any harm to go home now'.

Every married person will at once understand that the conversation was not quite so brief as I have reported it. The matter was not difficult, but the arguments for and against did not advance it towards a solution. Like a rudderless boat, the discussion kept turning round and round the same point' and at last it threatened to be overwhelmed in a flood of tears.

Sharat said: "The doctor thinks you should stop here a few days longer."

Kiran replied: 'Your doctor knows everything!'

"Well', said Sharat, 'you know that just now all sorts of illness are abroad. You would do well to stop here a month or two more'.

'And at this moment I suppose every one in this place is perfectly well!

What had happened was this: Kiran was a universal favorite with her family and neighbors, so that, when she fell seriously ill, they were al anxious. The village wiseacres thought it shameless for her husband to make so much fuss about a mere wife and even to suggest a change of air, and asked if Sharat supposed that no woman had ever ill before, or whether he had found out that the folk of the place to which he meant to take her were immortal. Did he imagine that the writ of Flate did not run there? But Sharat and his mother turned a deaf ear to them, thinking that the little life of their darling was of greater importance than the united wisdom of a village. People are wont to reason thus when danger threatens their loved once. So sharat went to chandernagore; and Kiran recovered, though she was still very weak. There was a pinched look on her face which filled the beholder with pity, andmade the heart tremble, as he thought how narrowly she had escaped death.

Kiran was fond of society and amusement; the oneliness of her riverside villa did not suit her at all. There was nothing to do, there were no interesting neighbours, and she hated to be busy all day with medicine and dieting. there was no fun in measuring doses and making fomentations. Such was the subject discussed in their closed room on this stormy evening.

So long as Kiran deigned to argue, there was a chance of a fair fight. When she ceased to reply, and with a toss of her head disconsolately looked the other way, the poor man was disarmed. He was on the point of surrendering unconditionally when a servant shouted a message through the shut door.

Sharat got up, and, opening the door, learnt that a boat had beeen upset in the storm, and that one of the occupants, a young Brahmin boy, had succeeded in swimming ashore in their garden.

Kiran was at once her own sweet self, and set to work to get out some dry clothes for the boy. She then warmed a cup of milk, and invited him to her room.

The boy had long curly hair, big expressive eyes, and no sign yet of hair on the face. Kiran, after getting him to drink some milk, asked him all about himself.

He told her that his name was Nilkanta, and that he belonged to a theatrical troupe. They were coming to play in a neighboring villa when the boat had suddenly foundered in the storm. He had no idea what had become of his companions. He was a good swimmer, and had just managed to reach the shore.

The boy stayed with them. His narrow escape form a terrible death made

Kiran take a warm interest in him. Sharat thought the boy's appearance at this moment rather a good thing, as his wife would now have something to amuse her, and might be persuaded to stay on for some time longer. Her mother-in-law, too, was pleased at the prospect of helping their Brahminguest by her kindness. And Nilkanta himself was delighted at this double escape from his master and from the other world, as well as at finding a home in this wealthy family.

But in a short while Sharat and his mother changed their opinion, and longed for his departure. The boy found a secret pleasure in smoking sharat's hookath; he would also calmly go off in pouring rain with Sharat's best silk umbrella for a stroll through the village, and make friends with all whom he met. Moreover, he had got hold of a mongrel village dog which he patted so recklessly that it came indoors with muddy paws, and left tokens of its visit on Sharat's spotless bed. Then he gathered about him a devoted band of boys of all sorts and sizes, and the result was that not a solitary mango in the neighborhood had a chance of ripening that season.

There is no doubt that Kiran had a hand in spoiling the boy. Sharat often warned her about it, but she would not listen to him. she made a dandy of him with Sharat's cast off clothes, and gave him new ones too. and because she felt drawn towards him, and had curiosity to know more about him, she was constantly calling him to her own room. After her bath and midday meal Kiran would be seated on the bedstead with her betel-leaf box by her side; and while her maid combed and dried her hair, Nikanta would sit in front and recite pieces out of his repertory with appropriate gesture and song, his elf-locks waving wildly. Thus the long afternoon hours passed merrily away. kiran would often try to persuade Sharat to sit with her as one of the audience, but Sharat, who had taken a cordial dislike to the by, refused, nor could Nilkanta do his part half so well when Sharat was there. His mother would sometimes be lured by the hope of hearing scacred names in the recitation; but love of her midday sleep speedily over came devotion, and she lay lapped in dreams.

The boy often got his ears boxed and pulled by Sharat, but as this was nothing to what he had been used to as a member of the troupe, he did not mind it in the least. In the short experience of the world he had come to the conclusion that, as the earth consisted of land and water, sohuman life was made of eatings and beatings and that the beatings largely predominated.

It was hard to tell Nikanta's age. If it was about fourteen or fifteen, then his face was too old for his years if seventeen or eighteen, then it wass too young. The fact was that, joining the theatrical band when very young, he had played the parts of Radhika, damayanti, sita, and bidya's companion. A thoughtful providence so arranged things that he grew to the exact stature that his manger required, and then growth ceased. Since everyone saw how small he was, and he himself felts small, he did not receive due respect for his years. Thease causes, natural and artificial, combined to make him some-

times seem immature for seventeen years, and at other times a lad of fourteen but far too knowing for seventeen. And as no sign of hair appeared on his face, the confusion became greater. Either because he worked or because heused language beyond his years, his lips puckered into lines that showed him to be old and hard; but innocence and youth shone in his large eyes. I fancy that his heart remained young, but the hot glare of publicity had been a forcing house that ripened untimely his outward aspect.

In he quiet shelter of Sharat's house and garden at chandernagore, Nature had leisure to work her way unimpeded. He had lingered in a kind of unnatural youth, but now he silently and swiftly overpasses that stage. His seventeen or eighteen years came to adequate revelation. no one observed the cage, and its first sign was the this, that when Kiran treated him like a boy, he felt ashamed. When the gay Kiran one day proposed that he should play the part of lady's companion, the idea of women's dress hurt him, though he could not say why. So now, when she called for hims to act over again his old characters, he disappeared. It never occurred to him that he was even now not much more than a lad-of-all work in a strolling company. He even made up his mind to pick up a little education form Sharat's factor. but, because Nilkanta was the pet of his master's wife, the factor could not endure the sight of him. Also, his rstless training made it impossible for him to keep his mind long engaged; presently, the alphabet did a mistry dance before his eyes. He would sit long enough with an open book on his lap, leaning against a *champak* bush beside the Ganges. The waves sighed below, boats floated past, birds flitted and twittered restlessly above. What thoughts passed through his mind as fhe looked down on the book he alone knew, if indeed he did know. He never advanced from one word to another, but the glorious thought that he was actually reading a book filled his sould with exultation. Whatever a boy went by, he lifted his book, and pretended to be reading hard, shouting at the top of his voice. But the energy dropped as soon as the audience was gone.

Formerly he sang his songs automatically, but now their tunes stirred in his mind. Their word were of little import, and full of trifling alliteration. Even the little meaning they had was beyond his comprehension; yet when he sang the familiar songs, he felt as if transported to another world. this familiar earth and his own poor life became music, and he was transformed. That tale of goose and king's daughter flung upon the mirror of his mind a picture of surpassing beauty. It is impossible to say what he imagined he himself was, but the destitute little slave of the theatrical troupe faded from him memory.

When with evening the child of want lies down, dirty and hungry, in his squalid home, and hearts of prince and princess and fabled gold, then in the dark hovel with its dim flickering candle, his mind springs free from her bonds of poverty and misery, and walks in fresh beauty and glowing raiment, strong beyond all fear of hindrance, through that fairy realm where all is possible.

Even so, this drudge of wandering players fashioned himself and his world anew, as he moved in spirit amid his songs, The lapping water, rustling leaves, and calling birds; the helpless, the Godforsaken,her gracious, lovely face, her rosy feet as soft as flower-petals; all these by some magic became one with the music of his song. When the singing ended, the mirage faded, and Nilkanta of the stage appeared again, with his wild elf-locks. Fresh from the complaints from his neighbor, the owner of the despoiled, mango-orchard, Sharat would come and box his ears, and cuff him. the boy Nilkanta, the misleader of adoring youths went forth once more, to make ever new mischief by land and water and in the branches that are above the earth.

Shortly after advent of Nilkanta, Sharat's younger brother, Satish came to spend his college vacation with them. Kiran was hugely pleased at finding a fresh occupation. She and Satish were of the same age, and the time passed pleasantly in games and quarrels and makings-up and laughter and even tears. Suddenly she would clasp him over the eyes. From behind, with vermillionstained hand, she would write 'monkey' on his back and sometimes bolt the door on him from outside amidst peals of laughter. Satish in his turn did not take things lying down; he would take her keys and rings, he would put pepper among her betel; he would tie he to the bed when she was not looking.

Meanwhile, heaven only knows what possessed poor Nilkanta. He was suddenly filled with a bitterness when he must avenge on somebody or something. He thrashed his devoted boy-follower for no fault, and sent them away crying. He would kick his pet mongrel till it made the skies resound with its whinings. When he went out for a walk, he would litter his path with twings and leaves beaten from the roadside shrubs with his cane.

Kiran liked to see people enjoying good fare. Nilkanta had an immense capacity for eating, and never refused a good thing, however often it was offered. So Kiran liked to send for him to have his meals in her presence, and ply him with delicacies, happy in the bliss of seeing this Brahmin boy eat to satiety. After Satish's arrival she had much less spare time on her hands, and was seldom present when Nilkanta's meals were served. Before, her absence made no difference to the boy's appetite, and he would not rise till he had drained his cup of milk, and rinsed it thoroughly with water.

But now, if Kiran was not present to ask him to try this and that, he was miserable, and nothing tasted right. He would get up without eating much, and say to the serving maid in a choking voice: 'I am not hungry.' He thought in imagination that the news of his repearted refusal, 'I am not hungey', He thought in imagination that the news of his repeated refusal, 'I am not hungery', would reach Kiran, he pictured her concern, and hoped that she would send for him, and press him to eat. But nothing of the sort happened. Kiran never knew, and never sent for him; and the maid finished whatever he left. He would then put out the lamp in his room, and throw himself on his bed in the darkness, burying his head in the pillow in a paroxysm of sobs. What

was his grievance? Against whom? And from whom did he expect redress? At last, when none else came, Mother sleep soothed with her soft caresses the wounded heart of the motherless lad.

Nikanta came to the unshakable conviction that Satish was poisoning Kiran's mind against him. If Kiran was absent-minded, and had not her usual smile, he would jump to the conclusion that some trick of Satish had made her angry with him. He took to praying to the gods, with all the fevour of his hate, to make him at the next rebirth Satish, and Satish him. He had an idea that a Brahmin's wrath could never be in vain; and the more he tried to consume Satish with the fire of his curses, the more did his own heart burn within him. And upstairs he would hear Satish laughing and joking with his sister-in-law.

Nilkanta never dared openly to show his enmity to Satish. but he would contrive a hundred petty ways of causing him annoyance. When Satish went for a swim in the river, and left his soap on the steps of the bathing place, on coming back for it he would find that it had disappeared. Once he found his favourite striped tunic floating past him on the water, and thought it had been blown away by the wind.

One day Kiran, desiring to entertain Satish, sent for Nikanta for recital as usual but he stood there in gloomy silence. Quite surprised, Kiran asked him what was the matter. But he remained silent. and when again pressed by her to repeat some particular favorite piece of hers, he answered 'I don't re-member', and walked away.

Al last the time came for their return home. Everybody was busy packing up. Satish was going with them. But to Nikanta nobody said a word. The question whether he was to go or not seemed not to go or not seemed not to have occurred toanybody.

The question, as a matter of fact, had been raised by Kiran, who had proposed to take him along with them. But he husband and his mother and brooder had all objected so strenuously that she let the matter drop. A couple of days before they were to start, she sent for the boy, and with kind words adised him to go back to his own home.

So many days had he el neglected that this touch of kindness was too much for him, he burst into tears. Kiran's eyes were also brimming over. she was filled with remorse at the thought that she had created a tie of afectrion, which cold not be permanent.

But Satish was much annoyed at the blubbering of this overgrown boy. 'Why does the fool stand there howling instead of speaking?' said he. when Kiran scolded him for an unfeeling creature, he replied. 'Sister, you do not understand. You are too good and trustful. This fellow turns up from the Lord knows where, and is treated like a king. Naturally the tiger has no wish to become a mouse again. And he has evidently discovered that there is nothing like a tear or two to soften your hear.'

Nilkanta hurriedly left the spot. He felt he would like to be a knife to cut Satish to pieces; a needle to pierce him through and through; a fire to burn him to ashes. But Satish was not even scared, it was only his own heart the bled and bled.

Satish had brought with him from calcutta a grand inkstand. The inkpot was set in a mother-of-pearl boat drawn by a German-silver goose supporting a penholder. It was a great favorite of his, and he cleaned it carefully every day with an old silk handkerchief. Kiran would laugh and, tapping the silver bird's beak, would say –

Twoice-born bird ah ! wherefore stirred to wrong our royal lady?

and the usual war of words would break out between her and her brother-in-law.

The day before they were to start, the inkstand was missing, and could nowhere be found. Kiran smiled, and said : Brotehr-in-law, our goose has flown off to look for your Damayanti'.

But Satish was in a great rage. He was certainthat Nilkanta had stolen it – for several people said they had seen him prowling about the room the night before. He had the accused brought before him. Kiran also was there. 'You have stolen my inkstand, you thief,' he blurted out. 'Bring it back at once.' Nilkanta had always taken punishment from sharat, deserved or underserved, with perfect equanimity. But, whenhe was called a theif in Kiran's presence, his eyes blazed with a fierce anger, his breast swelled, andhisthroat choked. if Satish had said another word he would have flown at him like a wild cat and used his nail like claws.

Kiran was greatly distressed at the scence, and taking the boy into another room said in her sweet, kind way : 'Nilu, if you really have taken that inkstand give it to me quietly, and I shall se that no one says another word to you about it.' Big tears coursed down the boy's cheeks, till at last he hid his face in his hands, and wept bitterly. Kiran came back from he room, and said : 'I am sure Nilkanta has not taken the inkstand'. Sharat and Satish were equally positive that no other than Nilkanta could have done it.

But Kiran said determinedly: 'Never'.

Sharat wanted to cross-examine the boy, but his wife refused to allow it.

Then Satish suggested that his room and box should be searched. And Kiran said: 'If you dare do such a thing I will never, never forgive you. You shall not spy on the poor innocent boy. And as she spoke, her wonderful eyes filled with tears. That settled the matter, and effectually prevented any further molestation of Nilkanta!

Kiran's heart overflowed with pity at this attempted outrage on a homeless lad. She got two new suits of clothes and a pair of shoes, and with these and a banknote in her hand she quietly went into Nilkanta's room in the

evening. She intended to put these parting presents into his box as a surprise. The box itself had been her gift.

From her bunch of keys she selected one that fitted, and noiselessly opened the box. It was so jumbled up with odds and ends that the new clothes would not go in. So she thought she had better take everything out and pack the box for him. At first knives, tops, kite-flying reels, bamboo twigs, polished shells for peeling green mangoes, botoms of broken tumblers and such like things dear to a boy's heart were discovered. Then there came a layer of linen and then emerged the missing inkstand, goose and all!

Kiran, with hushed face, sat down helplessly with he inkstand in her hand, puzzled and wondering.

In the meantime, Nilkanta had come into the room from behind without Kiran knowing it. He had seen the whole thing, and thought that Kiran had come lthief to catch him in his thieving- and that his deed was out. How could he ever hope to convince her that he was not a thief, and that only revenge had prompted him t take the inkstand, which he meant to throw into the river at the first chance? In a weak moment he had put it in his box insted, 'He was not a thief', his heart cried out, 'not a thief! Then what was he? What could he say? He had stolen, and yet he was not a thief! He culd never explain to Kiran how grievously wrong she was in talking him for a thief; how could he bear the thought that she had tried to spy on him?

At last Kiran with a deep sigh replaced the inksand in the box, and, as if she were the thief herself, covered it up with the linen and the trinkets as they were before; and at the top she placed the presnets together with the banknote which she had brought for him.

The next day the boy was nowhere to be found. The villagers had not seen him; the police cold discover no trace of him. Said Sharat : 'Now, as a matter of curiosity, let us have a look at his box.' But Kiran was obstinate in her refusal to allow that to be done.

She had the box brought up to he own room; and taking out the inkstand alone, threw it into the river.

The whole family went home. In a day the garden became desolate. And only that starving mongrel of Nilkanta's remained prowling along the river-bank, whining and whining as if its heart would break.

11.3.2 Glossary

terrific	:	terrible
demons	:	devils
ranging	:	getting violent, angry
doom	:	ruin, death
rudderless	:	

boat	:	boat without a broad piece of wood hinged vertically
wiseacres	:	wisemen
fuss	:	unnecessary nervous agitation
beholder	:	spectator
villa	:	village
dose	:	amount of medicine to be taken at one time
fomentation	:	a process of putting warm water, clothes, lotion, etc. on a part of the body to lessen pain
deign	:	condescend, be kind or gracious enough
disconsolately	:	without hope or comfort
ashore	:	on to the shore, bank
troupe	:	company (especially of actors)
foundered	:	fillled with water and sank, caused to break dow
stroll	:	quiet, unhurried walk
calmly	:	quietly
mongrel	:	dog of mixed breed
recklessly	:	without thinking about consequences
muddly	:	full of mud
paws	:	animal's foot that has claws
dandy	:	dressed up
repertory	:	all the plays, songs, etc. witch an actor / musician has prepared to perform
lured	:	tempted
sacred	:	holy
predominated	:	became superior in numbers, strength, influence, etc.
puckered	:	drew or came together into small wrinkles
glare	:	unpleasant light
unimpeded	:	unimpeded
lingered	:	became slow in going away
redecoration	:	making known of something secret
gay	:	happy, cheerful
endure	:	suffer, undergo pain, suffering
learning	:	putting in a sloping position
exaltation	:	happiness

stirred	:	moved
trifling	:	thing or event of little importance
alliteration	:	repetition of the first sound or letter
surpassing	:	matchless
destitute	:	a person without food, clothes and other thing necessary for life.
squalid	:	dirty
hovel	:	small house or cottage
mirage	:	effect (produced by hot air condition)
faded	:	disappeared
spoiled	:	robed, plundered
cuff	:	give somebody a llight blow with open hand
adoring	:	here it means 'budding'
advent	:	event
makings up	:	compromises
contrive	:	invent, design
annoyance	:	anger, irritation
enmity	:	condition of being an enemy
whinings	:	making a high pitched sound, complaining
litter	:	make untidy
ply	:	work with (v)
delicacies	:	kinds of food
satiety	:	feeling of satisfaction
rinsed	:	washes with clean water to remove unwanted substance
appetite	:	physical desire for food
redress	:	set right again, make up for
paroxysm	:	sudden attack or outburst
grievance	:	complaint
conviction	:	firm belief
fervour	:	warmth of feeling
wrath	:	anger
strenuously	:	with great efforts, energy, power
remorse	:	repentance
blubbering	:	weeping noisily

blurted	:	told something suddenly and thoughlessly
equanimity	:	calmness of mind or temper
distressed	:	cause great pain, suffering, etc.
molestation	:	intentional trouble, suffering
grievously	:	causing grief or suffering
trinkets	:	ornaments or jewels of small value
prowling	:	going about – cautiously looking for a chance to get food.

11.3.3 Summary

The story opens with the details of a cloudy atmosphere. In a closed room at Chandranagore are sitting Sharat, the husband; and Kiran, the wife. The husband urges the wife to stay a few days more so that she may recover completely.

What had happened a few days ago was that Kiran had fallen ill. This made all the friends and relatives of Kiran very anxious, and despite the pinching remarks by the wiseacres of the village to which they have taken ea thinking that the life of their darling was moer important for them, they decided to take Kiran to Chandanagore so that she may recover completely. Kiran was fond of 'society' (company) and the loneliness of the riverside village did not suit her at all. she also hated to be busy the whole day with medicine and dieting. suddenly Sharat heard a loud shouting and opening the door learnt that a boat had been upset in the storm and one of the ocupants of the boat had succeeded in swimming ashore the garden. The name of the Brahman boy, who had been able to swim across the garden, was Nilkanta. He belonged to a theatrical troupe. Kiran took warm interest in him. Sharat thought that they boy's appearance at this moment was a good thing as it would give his wife something to amuse her and she might be persuaded to stay on for a longer period of time. Nilkanta was also delighted at his double escape-from his master and the other world. But in a shortwhile Sharat and his mother changed their opinion and longed for Nilkanta's departure. The boy was spoiled because of the generious attitude of Kiran towards him. She made the boy a dandy. sharat often warned her but she would not listen to him. After her midday meal, Kiran would sit on the bedstead and ask Nilkanta to recite pieces from his repertory with appropriate gesture and song. Nilkanta often got beatings form Sharat, and Nilkanta, in return, had come to believe that as the earth consisted of land and water similarly the human life was made up of eatings and beatings.

After the advent of Nilkanta, Sharat's younger brother, Satish had come to spend his vacation with them. Kiran found a huge pleasure at finding a fresh occupant. Satish and Kiran were of the same age, and the time passed pleasantly in games and quarrels, laughter and even tears. Meanwhile Nilkanta suddenly filled with a bitterness, which he must avenge on somebody or

something. He kicked his pet mongrel and thrashed his devoted band of boy followers for no fault. Nilkanta had his meal in the presence of Kiran. After the arrival of Satish, she had much less spare time, and was seldom present when Nilkanta's meals were served. In the absence of Kiran, nothing tasted right to him. He would get up without eating mcuh and say in a choking voice "I am not hungry". He would, then, put out the lamp in his room and throw himself on his bed in the darkness burying his head in the pillow until the mother Sleep soothed his wounded heart with her soft caresses.

Nilkanta had the unshakable conviction that Satish was poisoning Kiran's mind against him. He, therefore, longed to be Satish in the next rebirth. At last the time came for their return to their native place. Everybody was busy packing up, but to Nilkanta nobody said a word. Kiran had proposed to take him along with them but Sharat and his mother had objected to it so strrenuously that she let the matter drop. A couple of days before they were to start, he sent for the boy and advised him to go back to his home town. Both Kiran and Nilkanta became emotional and burst into tears. Sharat and Satish, however, said that the tears of the boy were "Crocodile tears" only.

Then the day before they were to start, the inkstand was missing. Satish and Sharad were of the view that Nikanta had stolen it but Kiran strongly protested. She did not even accept the idea of Satish that his room and box must be searched.

Kiran got two new suits of clothes and a pair of shoes, and with these and a banknote she quietly went into Nilkanta's room in the evening. She opened the box, and to her surprise she found amongst other things the missing inkstand also. In the meantime, Nilkanta entered the room without Kiran being aware of it. He wanted to say to Kiran that he had not committed the theft but everything was done out of malice. Kiran with a deep sigh replaced the inkstand in the box and also placed all her gifts at the top. Next day, the boy left them. Now Sharat wanted that his box must be searched but Kiran did not allow this. She took the box in her room, took out the inkstand and threw it into the river and the family went home. Only Nikanta's mongrel remained prowling along the river bank.

11.4 Liteary Devices

'The Castaway' as we have said earlier is a famous short story written by Rabindranath Tagore. The short story is a comparatively recent development in English liteature. It is not merely a greatly shortened novel. It shares, of course, the usual constituents of all fiction – plot, character and setting – but they cannot be treated with the same detail as in a novel. Sometimes one of the three elements may predominate over the other two. In other words, the writer may construct a story of plot alone, with characters and seting confined strictly to its requirenments, or of character also, with plot and seting just sufficient to display it, or of, setting alone, with plot and character as mere subsidiaries. 'The Castaway' is a story in which characters, predominate over plot and setting. Tagore's 'The Castaway', like other major stories of Tagore is remarkable for its poeticality and humanity. The following

lines from the story prove this point:

When with evening the child of want lies down, dirty and hungry in his squalid home, and hears of prince and princess and fabled gold, then in the dark hovel with its dim flickering candle, his minds springs free from her bonds of poverty and misery, and walks in fresh beauty and glowing reiment, strong beyond all fear of hindrance, through the fairy realm where all is possible.

Even so, this drudge of wandering players fashioned himself and his worls anew, as he moved in spirit amid his songs. The lapping water, rustling leaves and calling birds, the goddess who had given shelter to him, the helpless, the God-forsaken; her gracious, lovely face, her exquisite arms with their shining bangles, her rosy feet as soft as soft as flower-petals; all these by some magic became one with the music of his song. When the singing ended, the mirage faded.....

11.5 Let us Sum Up

In this unit we have thrown light on Rabindranath Tagore, a great literary figure and his contribution to the field of fiction. Besides the text of 'The Castaway', the unit consists of the difficult word meanings and its summary. The unit also discusses the Short Story as a literary genre.

11.6 Suggested Readings

1. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar : *Indian Writing in English Sterling, New Delhi.*
2. Rabindra Nath Tagore : *Gitanjali*
3. B. Prasad: *A Background to the Study of English Literature, Macmillian.*

11.7 Question and Answers

(a) Answer the following questions in two-three lines each

(i) How does Nilkanta entertain Kiran?

Ans He entertains Kiran by reciting songs from his repertory with appropriate gesture.

(ii) Name the gift items given by Kiran to Nilkanta at the time of departure.

Ans Tow new suits of clothes, a pair of shoes and a bank note were given to Nilkanta by Kiran as gift items.

(iii) What is the firm belief of Nikanta? How has he formed this conviction?

Ans. Nilkanta often got beatings from Sharat and he, in return, had come to believe that as the earth consisted of land and water, similarly the human life was made up of eatings and beatings.

(iv) Why can't Kiran take Nilkanta along with the family ?

Ans. Owing to the protest of Sharat and his mother, Kiran could not take

Nilkanta along with the family.

(v) Who is Satish ? Why is he not liked by Nilkanta ?

Ans. Satish is the younger brother of Sharat. He is not liked by Nilkanta because after the arrival of Satish, Kiran remians busy with him and is not able to spare time for Nilkanta.

(b) Answer to the following questions should not exceed 300 words.

(vi) Draw a character sketch of Nilkanta.

Ans. Nilkanta is the key figure in the story 'The Castaway' written by Rabindranath Tagore. He is the castaway and the story revolves around him and Kiran. He is a Brahmin boy. He belonged to a theatrical troupe. He was one of the occupants of the boat that had been upset in the storm, and he had been able in swimming ashore the garden. Nilkanta was delighted at his double escape – from his master and the other world.

Kiran took warm interest in him. Sharat also thought that the boy's appearance was a good thing as his wife would get a comppany now. However, in a shortwhile Sharat and his mother changed their opinion and longed for Nilkanta's departure.

Kiran's generosity towards the boy had spoiled him. She made the boy a dandy. Sharat often warned her but she would sit on the bedstead and ask Nilkanta to recite songs. After the arrival of Satish, Kiran was not able to spare much time for Nilkanta. Nothing tasted good to Nilkanta in the absence of Kiran. He would get up without eating much and say in a chocking voice "I am not hungry." At the time of departure, Kiran proposed to take Nilkanta but Sharat and his mother objected to it so much that she had to let the matter drop. A couple of days before they were to start, Kiran sent for the boy and advised him to go back to his hometown. At this both Kiran and Nilkanta became emotional and burst into tears.

Sharat did not like the boy. Nilkanta would often get beatings form Sharat and he (Nilkanta) in return had come to believe that the world was made up of eatings and beatings.

Nikanta felt a rival in Satish, the younger brother of Sharat. He believed that Satish was poisoning Kiran's mind against him. He, therefore, longed to be Satish in the next rebirth. He, out of malice, also stole the inkstand that belonged to Satish. When his theft (not actually theft but the malicious act) was discovered, he from his heart of hearts wanted to say that he had not committed the theft, but all was done out of malice for Satish.

In bried, Nilkanta represents the trained rustic foks in the story. He derives pleasure from all those activities which normally form part of a rural lower middle class boy.

UNIT - 12

Khushwant Singh : The Portrait of a Lady

Structure

12.0 Objectives
12.1 Introduction
12.2 About the Author
12.3 Reading the Text
  12.3.1 The Story : The Portrait of a Lady (Text)
  12.3.2 Glossary
  12.3.3 Summary
12.4 Model Explanations
12.5 Let's Sum Up
12.6 Suggested Readings
12.7 Questions
12.8 Answers

12.0 Objectives

The purpose of this unit is to enable you to comprehend the salient features of a prose-portrait by discussing in detail **The Portrait of a Lady** written by Khushwant Singh, a famous modern Indian writer.

12.1 Introduction

In this unit we have dealt with Khushwant Singh's **The Portrait of a Lady,** comprising an account of the author's grandmother. **Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English** defines a portrait as a painted picture, drawing or a photograph, of a person or an animal. In literature, it refers to vivid description in words (of a living being); these living beings can be imaginative also as is the case with Chaucer's portrait gallery in the **Prologue** (you will learn about this in higher classes).

12.2 About the Author

Born in 1915 in pre-Partition Punjab, Khushwant Singh, perhaps India's most widely read and controversial writer, has been witness to most of the major events in modern Indian history—from Independence and Partition to the Emergency and Operation Blue Star—and has known many of the figures who have shaped it. With clarity and candour, he writes of leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi, the terrorist Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, the talented and scandalous painter Amrita Shergil, and everyday people who became butchers during Partition. Writing of his own life, too, Khushwant Singh remains unflinchingly forthright. He records his professional triumphs and failures as a lawyer, journalist, writer and Member of Parliament; the comforts and disappointments in his marriage of over sixty years; his first, awkward sexual encounter; his phobia of ghosts and his fascination with death; the friends who betrayed him, and also those whom he failed. He has a way of

observing other people and telling a story that is almost unmatched.

12.3 Reading the Text

Now read this Prose-Portrait carefully:

12.3.1 The Portrait of a Lady (Text)

My grandmother, like everybody's grandmother, was an old woman. She had been old and wrinkled for the twenty years that I had known her. People said that she had once been young and pretty and had even had a husband, but that was hard to believe. My grandfather's portrait hung above the mantelpiece in the drawing room. He wore a big turban and loose-fitting clothes. His long, white beard covered the best part of his chest and he looked at least a hundred years old. He did not look the sort of person who would have a wife or children. He looked as if he could only have lots and lots of grandchildren. As for my grandmother being young and pretty, the thought was almost revolting. She often told us of the games she used to play as a child. That seemed quite absurd and undignified on her part and we treated it like the fables of the prophets she used to tell us.

She had always been short and fat and slightly bent. Her face was a criss-cross of wrinkles running from everywhere to everywhere. No, we were certain she had always been as we had known her. Old, so terribly old that she could not have grown older, and had stayed at the same age for twenty years. She could never have been pretty; but she was always beautiful. She hobbled about the house in spotless white with one hand resting on her waist to balance her stoop and the other telling the beads of her rosary. Her silver locks were scattered untidily over her pale, puckered face, and her lips constantly moved inaudible prayer. Yes, she was beautiful. She was like the winter landscape in the mountains, an expanse of pure white serenity breathing peace and contentment.

My grandmother and I were good friends. My parents left me with her when they went to live in the city and we were constantly together. She used to wake me up in the morning and get me ready for school. She said her morning prayer in a monotonous sing-song while she bathed and dressed me in the hope that I would listen and get to know it by heart; I listened because I loved her voice but never bothered to learn it. Then she would fetch my wooden slate which she had already washed and plastered with yellow chalk, a tiny earthen ink-pot and a red pen, tie them all in a bundle and hand it to me. After a breakfast of a thick, stale chapatti with a little butter and sugar spread on it, we went to school. She carried several stale chapattis with her for the village dogs.

My grandmother always went to school with me because the school was attached to the temple. The priest taught us the alphabet and the Morning Prayer. While the children sat in rows on either side of the verandah singing the alphabet or the prayer in a chorus, my grandmother sat inside reading

the scriptures. When we had both finished, we would talk back together. This time the village dog would meet us at the temple door. They followed us to our home growling and fighting with each other for the chapattis we threw to them.

When my parents were comfortably settled in the city, they sent for us. That was a turning point in our friendship. Although we shared the same room, my grandmother no longer came to school with me. I used to go to an English school in a motor bus. There were no dogs in the streets and she took to feeding sparrows in the courtyard of our city house.

As the years rolled by we saw less of each other. For some time she would continue to wake me up and get me ready for school. When I came back she would ask me what the teacher had taught me. I would tell her English words and little things of western science and learning, the law of gravity, Archimedes' principle, the world being round, etc. This made her unhappy. She could not help me with my lessons. She did not believe in the things they taught at the English school and was distressed that there was no teaching about God and the scriptures. One day I announced that we were being given music lessons. She was very disturbed. To her, music had lewd associations. It was the monopoly of harlots and beggars and not meant for gentlefolk. She said nothing but her silence meant disapproval. She rarely talked to me after that.

When I went up to University, I was given a room of my own. The common link of friendship was snapped. My grandmother accepted her seclusion with resignation. She rarely left her spinning wheel to talk to anyone. From sunrise to sunset she sat by her wheel spinning and reciting prayers. Only in the afternoon she relaxed for a while to feed the sparrows. While she sat in the verandah breaking the bread into little bits, hundreds of little birds collected round her creating a veritable bedlam of chirrupings. Some came and perched on her legs, others on her shoulders. Some even sat on her head. She smiled but never shooed them away. It used to be the happiest half-hour of the day for her.

When I decided to go abroad for further studies, I was sure my grandmother would be upset. I would be away for five years, and at her age one could never tell. But my grandmother could. She was not even sentimental. She came to leave at the railway station but did not talk or show any emotion. Her lips moved in prayer, her mind was lost in prayer. Her fingers were busy telling the beads of her rosary. Silently she kissed my forehead, and when I left I cherished the moist imprint as perhaps the last sign of physical contact between us.

But that was not so. After five years I came back home and was met by her at the station. She did not look a day older. She still had no time for words, and while she clasped me in her arms I could hear her reciting her prayers. Even on the first day of my arrival, her happiest moments were with her sparrows whom she fed longer and with frivolous rebukes.

In the evening a change came over her. She did not pray. She collected the women of the neighbourhood, got an old drum and started to sing. For several hours she thumped the sagging skins of the dilapidated drum and sang of the home- coming of warriors. We had to persuade her to stop to avoid overstraining. That was the first time since I had known her that she did not pray.

The next morning she was taken ill. It was a mild fever and the doctor told us that it would go. But my grandmother thought differently. She told us that her end was near. She said that, since only a few hours before the close of the last chapter of her life she had omitted to pray. She was not going to waste any more time talking to us.

We protested. But she ignored our protests. She lay peacefully in bed praying and telling her beads. Even before we could suspect, her lips stopped moving and the rosary fell from her lifeless fingers. A peaceful pallor spread on her face and we knew that she was dead.

We lifted her off the bed and as is customary, laid her on the ground and covered her with a red shroud. After a few hours of mourning we left her alone to make arrangements for her funeral. In the evening we went to her room with a crude stretcher to take her to be cremated. The sun was setting and had lit her room and verandah with a blaze of golden light. We stopped half-way in the courtyard. All over the verandah and in her room right up to where she lay dead and stiff wrapped in the red shroud, thousands of sparrows sat scattered on the floor. There was no chirruping. We felt sorry for the birds and my mother fetched some bread for them. She broke it into little crumbs, the way my grandmother used to, and threw it to them. The sparrows took no notice of the bread. When we carried my grandmother's corpse off, they flew away quietly. Next morning the sweeper swept the bread crumbs into the dustbin.

12.3.2 Glossary

Wrinkles	:	Small fold or line in the skin or on the face
Hobbled	:	Walked as when lame
Serenity	:	Seriousness, gravity
Growling	:	a low threatening sound
Lewd	:	Indecent, lustful
Harlots	:	Prostitutes
Seclusion	:	loneliness
Veritable	:	Rightly named
Bedlam	:	Asylum for mad people, scene of noisy confusion
Chirrupings	:	Series of chirps
Frivolous	:	Not serious or important, pleasure loving

Sagging	:	Sinking down in the middle water under pressure
Dilapidated	:	Falling to pieces, in a state of disrepair
Pallor	:	Paleness, especially of the face
Customary	:	In agreement with, according to traditions
Crumbs	:	Very small piece of dry food, a bit of bread or cake

12.3.3 Summary

The Portrait of a Lady deals with an account of the author's old grandmother. She was very old and wrinkled. She was fat, short and bent. She moved about the house with her rosary in her hand. She was always dressed in white. Her hair was white. Her lips always moved in prayer. She would wake up the author and prepare him for school. She went with him to school. The school was attached to the temple. While children learnt alphabet, she sat inside and read religious books. After school they came back together. She gave bread to village dogs. After sometime they went to the city. The author was now in an English school. The grandmother could not help him with his lessons. She was not contented with what he learnt there. The writer told her that he was taught music. The grandmother did not like it. For her, music was meant for prostitutes. She was unhappy because there was no religious teaching at that school. There were no stray dogs. She took to feeding sparrows.

The author then left for England for further studies. She did not feel upset. She went to the station to see him off. At the time of parting, she kissed the author. When he returned after five years, she came to the railway station to receive him. She did not look even a day older. Even now she was saying her prayer. In the evening she did not pray. She brought a drum. She called women from her neighbourhood. She sang songs to celebrate the return of her grandson. The next morning she fell ill. She lay peacefully in her bed praying. She died peacefully. Her death affected even the sparrows. They did not chirp. They ignored the crumbs thrown to them.

12.4 Model Explanations

(i) When I went————————————————to feed the sparrows.

In these lines the author describes how the grandmother would pass her time when he was given a separate room. The separate room broke the common link of friendship between the two. After this the grandmother lived alone in her room as she had accepted her loneliness quietly. She would sit at her spinning wheel reciting prayers from morning till evening. In the afternoon she would relax for a while by feeding the sparrows.

The use of the word 'snapped' is remarkable as it conveys the author's feelings that he did not want that common link of friendship to be broken.

(ii) The next morning————————————————time talking to us.

After the grandmother had celebrated the home coming of her grandson, the

next day she fell ill. She suffered from mild fever and the doctors suggested that she would be allright very soon. The grandmother, however, thought differently; she thought her end was near. She was very repentant of the fact that just a few hours before the end of her life she forgot to say her prayer. Therefore, she would waste no more of her time.

The lines speak of the religious faith of the grandmother.

12.5 Let's Sum up

In this unit we have discussed **The Portrait of a Lady** written by Khushwant Singh. Besides the text, the unit consists of difficult word meanings and the summary of the text. The unit also describes that a portrait in literature means vivid description of a living being.

12.6 Suggested Readings

1. K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar: *Indian Writing in English, Sterling*, Delhi
2. B. Prasad: *A Background to the Study of English Literature,* Macmillan

12.7 Questions

Answer the following questions :

1. Mention the three phases of the author's relationship with his grandmother before he left the country to study abroad.

_____

_____

_____

2. Mention three reasons why the author's grandmother was disturbed when he started going to the city school.

_____

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_____

3. Mention three ways in which the author's grandmother spent her days after he grew up.

_____

_____

_____

4. The author's grandmother was a religious person. What are the different ways in which we come to know this?

_____

_____

_____

5. Describe the changing relationship between the author and the grandmother.

_____

_____

_____

_____

12.8 Answers

1. (i) Childhood: When the author went to the village school and the grandmother helped him to get ready and went to school with him.

   (ii) Boyhood: When he went to the city school in a bus. Now the grandmother could no longer help him in his studies.

   (iii) Early Youth: When he went to the university and was given a separate room.

2. (i) She hated western science and learning.

   (ii) She was pained to know that there was no teaching of God and the Scriptures.

   (iii) She was allergic to music. According to her, it was not meant for gentlefolk.

3. (i) She lived in her room alone.

   (ii) She sat at her spinning wheel reciting prayers.

   (iii) In the afternoon, she would feed the sparrows for half an hour.

4. There was no chirruping. The author's mother threw some crumbs of bread to them. They took no notice of them. As soon as the grandmother's corpse was carried off, they flew away quietly.

5. The author's mother was a deeply religious lady. We come to know this through

the different ways of her behaviour. She visited the temple every morning and read scriptures. At home she always mumbled inaudible prayer and kept telling the beads of rosary. She would repeat prayers in a sing-song manner while getting the writer ready for school. She hoped that he would learn it by heart. She did not like the English school as there was no teaching of God and scriptures. Even while spinning at her spinning wheel she would recite prayers. Perhaps it was only once that she forgot to say her prayers. It was on the evening prior to her death when she felt over- excited while celebrating the arrival of her grandson with songs and beatings of drum. She continued playing and telling beads of her rosary till her last breath.

During his boyhood, the author was completely dependent on his grandmother. She was a part of his life. The turning point in their friendship came when they went to city. She could no longer accompany him to school as he went there by bus. They shared the same room but she could not help him in his studies. She would ask him what the teachers had taught. She did not believe in the things that were taught at the school. She was distressed that there was no teaching about God and scriptures. She felt offended that music was also being taught. She expressed her disapproval silently. After this she rarely talked to him. When went up to university, he was given a room of his own. This snatched the common link of friendship between the two. However, their feelings for each other did not change. They still loved each other deeply. She went to see the author off at the railway station when he was going abroad for higher studies. She showed no emotion but kissed her forehead silently. The author valued this as perhaps the last sign of physical contact between them. When the author returned after five years, she received him at the station. She clasped him in her arms. In the evening she celebrated his home coming by singing songs and beating an old drum.

UNIT - 13

R.K. Narayan : Engine Trouble

Structure

13.0 Objectives
13.1 Introduction
13.2 About the author
13.3 Reading the text
  13.3.1 The Story : Engine Trouble (Text)
  13.3.2 Glossary
  13.3.3 Summary
13.4 Literary Devices
13.5 Let us sum up
13.6 Suggested readings
13.7 Questions
13.8 Answers

13.0 Objectives

The unit aims at creating interest in you in the shortest literary genre i.e. Short Story. It shall inspires you to read Indo Anglian Literature. It also aims at acquainting you with the type of themes chosen, and techniques employed by Indian writers of English in writing short stories.

13.1 Introduction

'Engine Trouble' is a short story written by R. K. Narayan. It is taken from **'An Astrologer's Day and Other Stories**'. The Talkative Man is the narrator in the story.

There came a "Gaiety Land" in a town. The Talkative Man visited it and bought a lottery ticket. He became the winner of that day and won the road engine as a prize. His friends and relatives congratulated him on becoming the owner of the road engine. He enjoyed watching the engine initially.

The municipality authorities ordered him to remove it from the Gymkhana ground otherwise they would charge rent. To pay rent, he had to pledge ornaments of his wife.

He contacted the priest of the local temple and urged him for help. He was offered services of temple elephants. He hired some coolies and called a dismissed bus driver to steer it. Unfortunately, it ran straight into the opposite compound wall and a good length of wall was reduced to powder. As a result, he was arrested by the police.

When the Talkative Man came out of the lockup, he had many liabilities on him. He thought of leaving the town, as he could not pay his debts. A Swamiji wanted to display Yogic powers and in return was ready to move the engine but the magistrate didn't permit the Swamiji to perform the feat.

At last, Nature came to his rescue. An earthquake moved it from its place, it fell

into a well and fitted itself into it as a cork. The owner of the well thanked him as he was told to close it down by the municipality. He agreed to pay expenses that the engine had brought to him. Thus, finally he got rid of it.

The story is a humorous piece of prose. Humour blends with sadness and the story ends in a pleasant surprise.

13.2 About the Author

R. K. Narayan, one of the most famous Indo – Anglian writers, was born in 1907 in Madras and settled down in Mysore. He is famous among readers for his best novels viz. **Swami and Friends**, **Mr. Sampath, The Bachelor of Arts** and **The Guide**. He received the Sahitya Academy Award for '**The Guide**' in 1958.

R. K. Narayan has written a large number of short stories which have been collected and published in six volumes – **Dodu and Other Stories, Malgudi Days, Cyclone and Other Stories, Lawley Road and Other Stories, Astrologer's Days and Other Stories, A Horse and Two Goats.** Many of the stories in these collections were first published in the leading Madras daily, **The Hindu**. He also contributed some stories to leading American journals like **The Reporter, The New Yorker,** Vogue and others.

R. K. Narayan's stories belong to the Indian soil and are redolent of its culture. His stories depict South Indian life and his view of the world and those who live in it. Simple but fascinating plot, lively characterization, strict economy of narration and elegant simplicity of language are features of his short stories.

Narayan's stories produce one single vivid effect. They seize the attention of the reader from the outset. Narayan's purpose does not seem to be moral and didactic like that of Aesop's or Tolstoy's. However, fate does play its part in some of his stories. His stories attract both foreign and Indian students. His stories serve a good introduction to the foreigner who wants to know Indian life. Easy and Simple language of his stories presents no difficulty to the Indian students.

13.3 Reading the Text

13.3.1 Engine trouble Now read the story carefully: R. K. Narayan

There came down to our town some years ago (said the Talkative Man) a showman owning an institution called the Gaiety Land. Overnight our Gymkhana Ground became resplendent with banners and streamers and coloured lamps. From all over the district crowds poured into the show. Within a week of opening, in gate money alone they collected nearly five hundred rupees a day. Gaiety Land provided us with all sorts of fun and gambling and side-shows. For a couple of annas in each booth we could watch anything from performing parrots to crack motor-cyclists looping the loop in the Dome of Death. In addition to this there were lotteries and shooting galleries where for an anna you always stood a chance of winning a hundred rupees.

There was a particular corner of the show which was in great favour. Here for a ticket costing eight annas you stood a chance of acquiring a variety of articles-

pincushions, sewing machines, cameras or even a road-engine. On one evening they drew a ticket number 1005, and I happened to own the other half of the ticket. Glancing down the list of articles they declared that I became the owner of the road-engine..! Don't ask me how a road-engine came to be included among the prizes. It is more than I can tell you.

I looked stunned. People gathered around and gazed at me as if I were some curious animal. 'Fancy anyone becoming the owner of a road-engine..!' Some persons muttered and giggled.

It was not the sort of prize one could carry home at short notice. I asked the showman if he would help me to transport it. He merely pointed at a notice which decreed that all winners should remove the prizes immediately on drawing and by their own effort. However, they had to make an exception in my case. They agreed to keep the engine on the Gymkhana Grounds till the end of their season and then I would have to make my own arrangements to take it out. When I asked the showman if he could find me a driver he just smiled: 'The fellow who brought it here had to be paid a hundred rupees for the job and five rupees a day. I sent him away and made up my mind that if no one was going to draw it, I would just leave it to its fate. I got it down just as a novelty for the show. God..! What a bother it has proved..!'

'Can't I sell it to some municipality..?' I asked innocently. He burst into a laugh. 'As a showman I have enough troubles with the municipal people. I would rather keep out of their way.

My friends and well-wishers poured in to congratulate me on my latest acquisition. No one knew precisely how much a road-engine would fetch; all the same they felt that there was a lot of money it it. 'Even if you sell it as scrap-iron you can make a few thousands', some of my friends declared. Every day I made a trip to the Gymkhana Grounds to have a look at my engine. I grew very fond of it. I loved its shining brass parts. I stood near it and patted it affectionately, hovered about it, and returned home every day only at the close of the show. I was a poor man. I thought that after all my troubles were coming to an end. How ignorant we are..! How little did I guess that my troubles had just begun.

When the showman took down his booths and packed up, I received a notice from the municipality to attend to my road-engine. When I went there next day it looked forlorn with no one about. The ground was littered with torn streamers and paper decorations. The showman had moved on, leaving the engine where it stood. It was perfectly safe anywhere..!

I left it alone for a few days, not knowing what to do with it. I received a notice from the municipality ordering that the engine should at once be removed from the ground as otherwise they would charge rent for the occupation of the Gymkhana Ground. After deep thought I consented to pay the rent, and I paid ten rupees a month for the next three months. Dear sirs, I was a poor man. Even the house which I and my wife occupied cost me only four rupees a month. And fancy my paying ten rupees a month for the road-engine. It cut into my slender budget and I had to

pledge a jewel or two belonging to my wife..! And every day my wife was asking me what I proposed to do with this terrible property of mine and I had no answer to give her. I went up and down the town offering it for sale to all and sundry. Someone suggested that the secretary of the local cosmopolitan Club might be interested in it. When I approached him he laughed and asked what he should do with a road-engine. 'I'll dispose of it at a concession for you. You have a tennis court to be rolled every morning.' I began, and even before I saw him smile I knew it was a stupid thing to say. Next, someone suggested, 'See the Municipal Chairman. He may buy it for the municipality.' With great trepidation I went to the municipal office one day. I buttoned up my coat as I entered the Chairman's room and mentioned my business. I was prepared to give away the engine at a great concession. I started a great harangue on municipal duties, the regime of roller- but before I was done with him I knew there was greater chance of my selling it to some child on the roadside for playing with.

I saw the priest of the local temple and managed to gain his sympathy. He offered me the services of his temple elephant. I also engaged fifty coolies to push the engine from behind. You may be sure this drained all my resources. The coolies wanted eight annas per head and the temple elephant cost me seven rupees a day and I had to give it one feed. My plan was to take the engine out of the Gymkhana and then down the road to a field half a furlong off. The field was owned by a friend. He would not mind if I kept the engine there for a couple of months, when I could go to Madras and find a customer for it.

I also took into service one Joseph, a dismissed bus-driver, who said that although he knew nothing of road-rollers he could nevertheless steer one if it was somehow kept in motion.

It was a fine sight: the temple elephant yoked to the engine by means of stout ropes, with fifty determined men pushing it from behind, and my friend Joseph sitting in the driving seat. A huge crowd stood around and watched in great glee. The engine began to move. It seemed to me the greatest moment in my life. When it came out of the Gymkhana and reached the road it began to behave in a strange manner. Instead of going straight down the road it showed a tendency to wobble and move zig-zag. The elephant dragged it one way, Joseph turned the wheel for all he was worth without any idea of where he was going, and fifty men behind it clung to it in every possible manner and pushed it just where they liked. As a result of all this confused dragging the engine ran straight into the opposite compound wald and reduced a good length of it to powder. At this the crowd let out a joyous yell. The elephant, disliking the behaviour of the crowd, trumpeted loudly, strained and snapped its ropes and kicked down a further length of the wall. The fifty men fled in panic, the crowd created a pandemonium. Someone slapped me in the face-it was the owner of the compound wall. The police came on the scene and marched me off.

When I was released from the lock-up, I found the following consequences awaiting me: (1) Several yards of compound wall to be built by me; (2) Wages of fifty men who ran away. They would not explain how thay were entitled to the wages when they had not done their job; (3) Joseph's fee for steering the engine over the wall;

(4) Cost of medicine for treating the knee of the temple elephant which had received some injuries while kicking down the wall. Here again the temple authorities would not listen when I pointed out that I didn't engage an elephant to break a wall; (5) Last, but not the least, the demand to move the engine out of its present station.

Sirs, I was a poor man. I really could not find any means of paying these bills. When I went home my wife asked : What is this I hear about you everywhere..? I took the opportunity to explain my difficulttes. She took it as a hint that I was again asking for her jewels, and she lost her temper and cried that she would write to her father to come and take her away.

I was at my wits' end. People smiled at me when they met me in the streets. I was seriously wondering why I should not run away to my village. I decided to encourage my wife to write to her father and arrange for her exit. Not a soul was going to know what my plans were. I was going to put off my creditors and disappear one fine night.

At this point came an unexpected relief in the shape of a swamiji. One fine evening under the distinguished patronage of our Municipal Chairman a show was held in our small town hall. It was a free performance and the hall was packed with people. I sat in the gallery. Spell-bound, we witnessed the Swamiji's yogic feats. He bit off glass tumblers and ate them with contentment; he lay on spike boards; gargled and drank all kinds of acids; licked white-hot iron rods; chewed and swallowed sharp nails; stopped his heart-beat, and buried himself underground. We sat there and watched him in stupefaction. At the end of it all he got up and delivered a speech in which he declared that he was carrying on his master's message to the people in this manner. His performance was the more remarkable because he had nothing to gain by all this extraordinary meal except the satisfaction of serving humanity, and now he said he was coming to the very masterpiece and the last act. He looked at the municipal Chairman and asked: 'Have you a road-engine.? I would like to have it driven over my chest.' The Chairman looked abashed and felt ashamed to acknowledge that he had none. The Swamiji insisted, 'I must have a road-engine.'

The Municipal Chairman tried to put him off by saying 'There is no driver.' The Swamiji replied, 'Don't worry about it. My assistant has been trained to handle any kind of road-engine.' At this point I stood up in the gallery and shouted, 'Don't ask him for an engine. Ask me. . .' In a moment I was on the stage and became as important a person as the fire-eater himself. I was pleased with the recognition I now received from all quarters. The Municipal Chairman went into the background.

In return for lending him the engine he would drive it where I wanted. Though I felt inclined to ask for a money contribution I know it would be useless to expect it from one who was on missionary work.

Soon the whole gathering was at the compound wall opposite the Gymkhana. Swamiji's assistant was an expert in handling engines. In a short while my engine stood steaming up proudly. It was a gratifying sight. The Swamiji called for two pillows, placed one near his head and the other at his feet. He gave detailed instructions as to how the engine should be run over him. He made a chalk mark

on his chest and said, 'It must go exactly on this; not an inch this way or that.' The engine hissed and suddenly became unhappy and morose. This seemed to be a terrible thing to be doing. The Swamiji lay down on the pillows and said, 'when I say "OM", drive it on.' He closed his eyes. The crowd watched tensely. I looked at the whole show in absolute rapture-after all, the road-engine was going to get on the move.

At this point a police inspector came into the crowd with a brown envelope in his hand. He held up his hand, beckoned to the Swamiji's assistant, and said : 'I am sorry I have to tell you that you can't go on with this. The magistrate has issued an order prohibiting the engine from running over him.' The Swamiji picked himself up. There was a lot of commotion. The Swamiji became indignant. 'I have done it in hundreds of places already and nobody questioned me about it. Nobody can stop me from doing what I like. It's my master's order to demonstrate the power of the yoga to the people of this country, and who can question me.?

'A magistrate can', said the police inspector, and held up the order. 'What business is it of yours or his to interfere in this manner.? 'I don't know all that; this is his order. He permits you to do everything except swallow potassium cyanide and run this engine over your chest. You are free to do whatever you like outside our jurisdiction.'

'I am leaving this cursed place this very minute,' the Swamiji said in great rage, and started to go, followed by his assistant. I gripped his assistants arm and said, 'You have steamed it up. Why not take it over to that field and then go.' He glared at me, shook off my hand and muttered, 'With my guru so unhappy, how dare you ask me to drive.? He went away. I muttered, 'You can't drive it except over his chest, I suppose..?

I made preparations to leave the town in a couple of days, leaving the engine to its fate, with all its commitments. However, Nature came to my rescue in an unexpected manner. You may have heard of the earthquake of that year which destroyed whole towns in Northern India. There was a reverberation of it in our town, too. We were thrown out of our beds that night, and doors and windows rattled.

Next morning I went to take a last look at my engine before leaving the town. I could hardly believe my eyes. The engine was not there. I looked about and raised a hue and cry. Search parties went round. And the engine was found in a disused well near by, with its back up. I prayed to heaven to save me from fresh complications. But the owner of the house when he came round and saw what had happened, laughed heartily and beamed at me: 'You have done me a service. It was the dirtiest water on earth in that well and the municipality was sending notice to close it, week after week. I was dreading the cost of closing, but your engine fits it like a cork. Just leave it there.'

'But, but. . . .'

'There are no "buts". I will withdraw all complaints and charges against you, and

build that broken wall myself, but only leave the thing there.'

'That's hardly enough.' I mentioned a few other expenses that this engine had brought on me. He agreed to pay for all that.

When I again passed that way some months later I peeped over the wall. I found the mouth of the well neatly cemented up. I heaved a sigh of great relief.

13.3.2 Glossary :

Talkative Man	:	Narrator in the story
Resplendent	:	Brilliant
To make up one's mind	:	To decide
Forlorn	:	Forsaken
Littered	:	Made untidy
harangue	:	loud speech
Glee	:	enjoyment
Wobble	:	move unsteadily
Pandemonium	:	utter confusion
Stupefaction	:	loss of sensibility
Abashed	:	confused
Morose	:	sullen
Indignant	:	angry
Glared	:	looked fiercely
Reverberation	:	echo

13.3.3 Summary :

R.K. Narayan's **Engine Trouble** is considered to be one of the most humourous pieces of prose in Indo-Anglian literature. The Talkative Man is the narrator in the story. Narayan has beautifully depicted the troubles of the Talkative Man after winning a road engine as a lottery prize at the 'Gaiety land' in his village. The Talkative Man thought that the prize would relieve him of his financial crisis. But, soon he realized that the engine was a bundle of problems for him. He tried to sell it but all in vain. He had to pledge jewel of his wife to pay rent of the Gymkhana ground. His efforts to move it from its place resulted into his imprisonment. Finally, nature came to his rescue and he got rid of it.

13.4 Literary Devices

The literary device of Irony is employed by R. K. Narayan in the story Engine Trouble. Irony denotes a sense of dissimulation or difference between what is asserted and what actually is the case.

The Talkative Man won a road engine as a lottery prize. He thought that it would

change his fate. But it proved a bundle of misfortunes for him.

13.5 Let's Sum Up

The story presents a funny situation of a common man who is ambitious and wishes to become affluent. But the situation transforms him into a man with bundles of troubles. The end leaves the reader with the ghasto that at last the man is relieved of his ill-fated victory.

13.6 Suggested Readings

1. R. K. Narayan - An Astrologer's Day and other stories
2. R. K. Narayan - The Guide

13.7 Questions

1. Where was located the Gaiety land ?

_____

2. What was the cost of a lottery ticket ?

_____

3. For what did the showman agree to ?

_____

4. What notice did he receive from the municipality ?

_____

5. Whom did he contact for sale of the engine ?

_____

6. What service did the priest offer ?

_____

7. How many coolies did he engage ?

_____

8. What was Joseph ?

_____

9. Who slapped the Talkative Man ?

_____

10. Where was the show of Swamiji held ?

_____

11. On what condition did the Talkative Man agree to lend the road engine ?

12. Where did the Swamiji place two pillows ?

13. What order had the magistrate issued ?

14. What did the Talkative Man decide at last ?

15. Where was the engine found next morning ?

Answer in four to five lines each.

16. Describe the 'Gaiety land'.

17. How did the friends and well wishers react when the Talkative Man won a road engine?

18. How did the Talkative Man plan to move the engine from the Gymkhana grounds ?

19. Mention the consequences awaiting the story letter he when came out of the lock - up?

20. Why did the road engine not run over the Swamiji ?

21. How did the nature rescue the Talkative Man ?

Answer in 300 words.

22. How the Talkative man became owner of the Road Engine and how he got rid of it? Discuss.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

13.8 Answers

1. The Gaiety land was on the Gymkhana ground of the town.
2. The cost of a lottery ticket was eight annas.
3. The showman agreed to keep the engine on the Gymkhana ground till the end of their season.
4. He received a notice from the municipality ordering that the engine should at once be removed otherwise they would charge rent.
5. He contacted the secretary of the local Cosmopolitan Club and the Municipal chairman for the sale of the engine.
6. The priest offered the services of his temple elephant.
7. He engaged fifty coolies to push the engine from behind.
8. Joseph was a dismissed bus driver.
9. The owner of the compound wall slapped the Talkative Man.
10. The show of Swamiji was held in a town hall.
11. The Talkative Man agreed to lend the road engine on the condition that he would drive it where he wanted him to.
12. The Swamiji placed one pillow near his head and the other at his feet.
13. The magistrate had issued an order prohibiting the engine from running over Swamiji.
14. The Talkative Man decided at last to leave the town in a couple of days.
15. Next morning the engine was found in a nearby disused well.
16. The Gaiety land was an institution owned by a showman which had come to the town. It was on the Gymkhana grounds. All over the ground there were banners, streamers and coloured lamps. People poured into the show from all over the district. People were provided all sorts of fun and side shows. People could watch performing parrots, motor cyclists in the Dome of Death for a couple of annas. Besides this, there were lotteries and shooting galleries where people could have chance of winning a hundred rupees for an anna.
17. When the Talkative Man won a road engine, the friends and well wishers were pleased. They poured into congratulate him on his latest acquisition. They said

that it would bring him a lot of money. They said that as scrap iron also, it would earn him a few thousands.

18. The Talkative Man met the priest of the local temple. The priest offered him the services of the temple elephants. He also engaged fifty coolies to push the engine from behind. He contacted Joseph, a dismissed bus driver, to steer it. Thus, he planned to move it from the Gymkhana ground to the field owned by his friend.

19. When the story teller came out of the lock up, he had many liabilities on him. He had to rebuild the damaged wall, pay the wages of fifty coolies, pay Joseph for his services, pay the medical expenses of treating the injured leg of the elephant and to remove the engine from its present station.

20. The Swamiji was to run over the road engine over his chest to display the power of Yoga. But before the feat was performed, the local police inspector issued him the order of the magistrate prohibiting the feat.

21. The road engine had brought troubles to the talkative man. He wanted to get rid of it. One night due to an earth quake, the engine moved on its own and fitted in a disused well like a cork. The owner of the well welcomed. Thus, nature rescued the talkative man.

22. R. K. Narayan is one of the best known of Indian authors in English. He is remarkable for his insight into the life of middle and lower classes in India and his sympathetic portrayal of it in his stories. His style is simple, direct and natural. 'Engine Trouble' is a very humorous story, taken from **An Astrologer's Day and Other Stories**. R. K. Narayan has vividly depicted the troubles of a common man after winning a road engine as a lottery prize. Its title suggests that it is the story of an engine that is in need of repair. But the story is really about the troubles, which a road engine gave to its owner.

    There came the Gaiety land in a town of the Talkative Man. It provided them with all sorts of fun and gambling and sideshows. There was the Dome of Death and the lottery stall. The man bought a ticket of lottery numbered 1005 and he was declared the winner that day and became the owner of the road engine. His friends congratulated him for becoming the owner of a road engine. The showman agreed to keep the engine on the Gymkhana grounds till the end of their season. The man met the municipal authorities and the secretary of the club to sell it out but no one showed any interest. The municipality ordered him to remove it from the ground otherwise they would charge him rent. To pay rent, he had to pledge a jeweler belonging to his wife.

    At last, the Talkative Man decided to move it from its place with the help of the priest of the local temple. The priest offered him services of his temple elephant. He engaged fifty coolies to push if from behind and a dismissed bus driver to steer it. He decided to put it in the field of his friend. A huge crowd gathered to watch it. The engine came out of the Gymkhana ground and ran straight into the opposite compound wall. It reduced a good length of it to

powder. The owner of the compound wall slapped him in the face and the police marched him off.

When he was released from the lock up, he found several consequences awaiting him. He had to build up the compound wall, to pay wages of fifty coolies, Joseph's fee, medical treatment of the knee of the temple elephant and above all to move the engine out of its present station. The man was in great difficulties. His wife threatened him to leave his house.

At this point, an unexpected relief came in the shape of a Swamiji. He wished to perform an unimaginable act. He wished to roll over his chest the road engine. His assistant was trained to move any kind of engine. The Talkative Man was pleased and decided to lend him the engine. In return, he demanded that the assistant would drive it where he wanted. People gathered to watch the Yogic feats of Swamiji. But the magistrate issued an order prohibiting Swamiji to do it inside their jurisdiction. The Swamiji got angry and went away in great rage.

One day, suddenly Nature came to his rescue in an unexpected manner. An earthquake moved the engine from its place and fitted in a disused well like a cork. The owner of the well agreed to pay expenses that the engine had brought to him. He agreed to withdraw all complaints and charges against him. Thus, the Talkative Man finally got rid of it.

The story is very interesting and humorous. The narrative technique of R. K. Narayan makes it more palatable. Narayan is really a master of creating fun and laughter from ordinary daily life situations.

UNIT - 14

O'Henry : The Gift of the Magi

Structure

14.0 Objectives
14.1 Introduction
14.2 About the author
14.3 Reading the text
14.3.1 The Story : The Gift of the Magi (Text)
14.3.2 Glossary
14.3.3 Summary
14.4 Literary Devices
14.5 Let's sum up
14.6 Suggested readings
14.7 Questions
14.8 Answers

14.0 Objectives

The purpose of this unit is to to develop interest in you in short stories of O'Henry. It aims at acquainting you with the Biblical references which form a part of this story. The unit shall also enable you to recognize new interpretations in the old symbols.

14.1 Introduction

The life was harder than the hardest for the common low stratum people in England the beginning of the 20th century. The story under the symbolic reference of the Magi relates how a young, loving but poor couple finds it difficult to please each other with the appropriate Christmas gift. The wife sacrifices her most attractive hair, by selling it to get a gold chain for her husband's gold watch. The husband sells the gold watch to buy a set of combs for his wife's long and beautiful hair. Though the story expresses deep love for each other, it results into a pathetic situation stealing away the joy of the Christmas.

14.2 About the Author

The pen-name O' Henry is actually William Sydney Porter (1862-1910). The writer was sentenced to imprisonment for embezzlement. He wrote more than three hundred stories which are collected in volumes like **Cabbages and Kings**, **The Four Millions** and **The Voice of the City**. He goes deep into the life of the lower stratum of society and describes them with remarkable sympathy and understanding because he had lived with them for most part of his life. He has humour but at times humour turns into extremely tragic ending like in the story of 'The Gift of the Magi' – O' Henry's stories are remarkable for the most unimaginable twist of surprise ending. He is one of the masters of the modern short story writers.

14.3 Reading the text

Read the story carefully:

14.3.1 The Gift of Magi

One dollar and eight-seven cents. That was all. and sixty cents of it was in pennies. Pennies saved one and two at a time by bulldozing the grocer and the vegetable man and the butcher until one's cheeks burned with the silent imputation of parsimony that such close dealing implied. Three times Della counted it. One dollar and eighty-seven cents. And the next day would be Christmas.

There was clearly nothing left to do but flop down on the shabby little couch and howl, So Della did it, which instigates the moral reflection that life is made up of sobs, sniffles, and smiles, with sniffles predominating.

While the mistress of the home is gradually subsiding from the first stage to the second, take a look at the home. A furnished flat at $8 per week. it did not exactly beggar description, but it certainly had that word on the lookout for the mendicancy squad.

In the vestibule below was a letter- box into which no letter would go, and an electric button from which no mortal finger could coax ring. Also appertaining thereunto was a card bearing the name Mr. James Dillingham Young.

The Dillingham had been flung to the breeze during a former period of prosperity when its possessor was being paid $30 per week. Now when the income was shrunk to $20, the letters of Dillingham looked blurred, as though they were, thinking seriously of contracting to a modest and unassuming D. But whenever Mr. James Dillingham Young came home and reached his flat above he was called Jim and greatly hugged by Mrs. James Dillingham Young, already introduced to you as Della which is all very good.

Della finished her cry and attended to her cheeks with a powder rag. She stood by the window and looked out dully at a grey cat walking a grey fence in a grey backyard. Tomorrow would be Christmas Day, and she had only $1.87 with which to buy Jim a present. She had been saving every penny she could for months, with this result. Twenty dollars a week doesn't go far. Expenses had been greater than she had calculated. They always are. Only $1.87 to buy a present for Jim. Her Jim. Many a happy hour she had spent planning for something nice for him. Some- thing fine and rate and sterling – something just a little bit near to being worthy of the honour of being owned by Jim.

There was pier-glass between the windows of the room. Perhaps you have seen a pier- glass in a $8 flat. A very thin and very agile person may, by observing his reflection in a rapid sequence of longitudinal strips, obtain a fairly accurate conception of his looks. Della, being slender, had mastered the art.

Suddenly she whirled from the window and stood before the glass. Her eyes were shining brilliantly, but her face had lost its colour within twenty seconds. Rapidly she pulled down her hair and let it fall to its full length.

Now, there were two possessions of the James Dillingham Youngs in which they both took a mighty pride. One was Jim's gold watch that had been his father's and his grandfather's, the other was Della's hair. Had the Queen of Sheba lived in the flat across the airshaft, Della would have let her hair hang out of the window some day to dry just to depreciate Her Majesty's jewels and gifts. Had King Solomon been the janitor, with all his treasures piled up in the basement, Jim would have pulled out his watch every time he passed, just to see him pluck at his beard from envy.

So now Della's beautiful hair fell about her, rippling and shining like a cascade of brown waters. It reached below her knees and made itself almost a garment for her. And then she did it up again nervously and quickly. Once she faltered for a minute and stood still while a tear or two splashed on the worn red carpet.

On went her old brown jacket; on went her old brown hat. With whirl of skirts and with the brilliant sparkle still in her eyes, she fluttered out of the door and down the stairs to the street. Where she stopped the sign read: Mme sofronie, Hair Goods of All Kinds. One flight up Della ran, and collected herself, panting, Madame, large, too white, chilly hardly looked the "Sofronie".

'Will you buy my hair?' asked Della. 'I buy hair' said Madame. ' Take yer hat off and let's have a sight at the looks of it. '.

Down rippled the brown cascade.

'Twenty dollars, said madame, lifting the mass with a practised hand.

'Give it to me quick, said Della.

Oh, and the next two hours tripped by on rosy wings. Forget the hashed metaphor. She was ransacking the stores for Jims's present.

She found it at last. It surely had been made for Jim and no one else. There was no other like it in any of the stores, and she had turned all of them inside out. It was platinum fob chain, simple and chaste in design, properly proclaiming its value by substance alone and not by meretricious ornamentation- as all good things should do. It was even worthy of the watch. As soon as she saw it she knew that it must be Jim's. It was like him. Quietness and value- the description applied to both. Twenty- one dollars they took from her for it, and she hurried home with the 87 cents. With that chain on his watch Jim might be properly anxious about the time in any company. Grand as the watch was, he sometimes looked at it on the sly on account of the old leather strap that he used in place of a chain.

When Della reached home her intoxication gave way a little to prudence and reason. She got out her curling irons and lighted the gas and went to work repairing the ravages made by generosity added to love. Which is always a tremendous task, dear friends-a mammoth task.

Within forty minutes her head was covered with tiny, close-lying curls that made her look wonderfully like a truant schoolboy. She looked at her reflection in the mirror long, carefully, and critically.

'If Jim doesn't kill me,' she said to herself, 'before he takes a second look at me, he'll say I look like a Coney island chorus girl. But what could I do- oh, what could I do with a dollar and eighty-seven cents?'

At 7 o'clock the coffee was made and the fryingpan was on the back of the stove, hot and ready to cook the chops.

Jim was never late. Della doubled the fob chain in her hand and sat on the corner of the table near the door that he always entered. Then she heard his step on the stairway down on the first flight, and she turned white for just a moment. She had a habit of saying little silent prayers about the simplest everyday things, and now she whispered; Please, God, make him think I am still pretty.

The door opened and jim stepped in and closed it. He looked thin and very serious. Poor fellow, he was only twenty- two- and to be burdened with a family! He needed a new overcoat and he was without gloves.

Jim stepped inside the door, as immovable as a setter at the scent of quail. His eyes were fixed on Della, and there was an expression in them that she could not read, and it terrified her. It was not anger, not surprise, nor disapproval, nor horror, not any of the sentiments that she had been prepared for. He simply stared at her fixedly with that peculiar expression on his face.

Della wriggled off the table and went for him.

Jim, darling, she cried don't, look at me that way. I had my hair cut off and sold it because I couldn't have lived through Christmas without giving you a present. It'II grow out again- you won't mind. will you ? I just had to do it. My hair grows awfully fast. Say " Merry Christmas " Jim, and let's be happy. You don't know what a nice- what a beautiful, nice gift I've got for you.'

'You' ve cut off your hair ? asked Jim, laboriously, as if he had not arrived at that patent fact yet, even after the hardest mental labour.

'Cut it off and sold it, said Della. ' Don't you like me just as well, anyhow ? I'm me without my hair, ain't I ?

Jim looked about the room curiously.

'You say your hair is gone ? he said, with an air almost of idiocy.

'You needn't look for it, said Della, It's sold. I tell you- sold and gone, too. It's Christmas Eve, boy. Be good to me, for it went for you. May be the hairs of my head were numbered, she went on with a sudden servious sweetness but nobody could ever count my love for you, Shall I put the chops on, Jim ?

Out of his trance Jim seemed quickly to wake. He enfolded his Della. For ten seconds let us regard with discreet scrutiny some inconsequential objects in the other direction. Eight dollars a week or a million a year- what is the difference ? A mathematician or a wit would give you the wrong answer. The Magi brought valuable gifts, but that was not among them. This dark assertion will be illuminated later on.

Jim drew a package from his overcoat pocket and threw it upon the table.

Don't make any mistake, Dell, he said, about me. I don't think there's anything in the way of a haircut or a shave or a shampoo that could make me like my girl any less. But if you'll unwrap that package you may see why had me going a while at first.

White fingers and nimble tore at the string and paper. And then, an ecstatic scream of joy, and then, alas! a quick feminine change to hysterical tears and wails, necessitating the immediate employment of all the comforting powers of the lord of the flat.

For there lay 'The Combs - the set of combs, side and back, that Della had worshipped for long in a Broadway window. Beutiful combs, pure tortoiseshell, with jewelled rims-just the shade to wear in the beautiful vanished hair. They were expensive combs, she knew, and her heart had simply craved and yearned over them without the least hope of possession. And now, they were hers, but the tresses that should have adorned the coveted adornments were gone.'

But she hugged them to her bosom, and at length she was able to look up with dim eyes and a smile and say; "My hair grows so fast, Jim!"

And then Della leaped up like a little singed cat and cried, "Oh. oh!"

Jim had not yet seen his beautiful present. She held it out to him eagerly upon her open palm. The dull precious metal seemed to flash with a reflection of her bright and ardent spirit.

"Isn't it a dandy, Jim? I hunted all over town to find it. You'll have to look at the time a hundred times a day now. Give me your watch. I want to see how it looks on it."

Instead of obeying, Jim tumbled down on the couch and put his hands under the back of his head and smiled.

"Dell", said he, "Let's put our Christmas presents away and keep'em awhile. They're too nice to use just at present. I sold the watch to get the money

to buy your combs. And now suppose you put the chops on."

The Magi, as you know, were wise men-wonderfully wise men-who brought gifts to the Babe in the manger. They invited the art of giving Christmas presents. Being wise, their gifts were no doubt wise ones, possibly bearing the privilege of exchange in case of duplication. And here I have lamely related to you the uneventful chronicle of two foolish children in a flat who most unwisely sacrificed for each other the greatest treasures of their house. But in a last word to the wise of these days let it be said that of all who give gifts these two were the wisest. Of all who give and receive gifts, such as they are wisest. Everywhere they are wisest. They are the Magi.

14.3.2 Glossary

Butcher	:	a person who kills animals and sells meat
Imputation	:	Accusation
Vestibule	:	Lobby
Agile	:	Active
Janitor	:	Care taker of a buiding
Cascade	:	Waterfall
Magi	:	Three wise men from the East who brought gifts to Babe Christ
Ardent	:	Intense

14.3.3 Summary

The Gift of the Magi, one of the most celebrated stories of O' Henry is a very interesting story. It depicts a strange incident that takes place in the life of a poor young couple. Jim and Della sell their proudest possessions to buy Christmas gifts for each other. Della has sacrificed her long and beautiful hair to buy a platinum fob chain for Jim. And Jim, too, sacrifices the gold watch to buy a set of combs for Della's hair. What an unbelievable co-incidence it was! The writer suggests that we should not consider them to be fools but, they were the Magi, who gifted the Babe in the manger.

14.4 Literary Devices

O' Henry uses literary devices like simile, metaphor, personification in his short stories. In the story 'The Gift of the Magi' Henry employs the literary device of simile.

Simile is a figure of speech in which one thing is likened to another. It is an explicit comparison recognizable through the use of words 'like' or 'as'.

In the story 'The Gift of the Magi', you will find the simile used in the following sentences:

1. Della's beautiful hair fell about her, rippling and shining like a cascade of brown waters.
2. Within forty minutes her head was covered with tiny, close lying curls that made her look wonderfully like a truant school boy.

3. He will say I look like a Coney Island chorus girl.
4. Della leaped up like a singed cat.

14.5 Let's Sum Up

The story begins with Della counting her one dollar eighty-seven pence. The development makes you feel the seriousness of the Christmas gifts and at last the concealed secret is revealed, and it proves the title Magi to be true and apt.

14.6 Suggested Readings

1. O' Henry - Cabbages and Kings
2. O' Henry - The Four Millions
3. O' Henry - The voice of the City

14.7 Questions

1. What did Della do after counting money ?

_____

2. Where was a letter box ?

_____

3. What did Dell do when Jim returned from office ?

_____

4. How much amount did Della have on the eve of Christmas ?

_____

5. What did Della do before the glass ?

_____

6. Whom did Della consult ?

_____

7. How much money did Della get from Mme. Sofronie ?

_____

8. What did Della buy for Jim ?

_____

9. What was the cost of a fob chain ?

_____

10. How did Della look like ?

_____

11. Where did Della sit waiting for Jim ?

_____

12. How old was Jim ?

_____

13. Where did Jim throw a package ?

_____

14. What did the package contain ?

_____

15. Why did Della ask for Jim's watch ?

_____

16. How did Jim buy a gift for Della ?

_____

Answer in four or five lines each

17. How did Della save $1.87 ?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

18. Why did Della decide to sell her hair ?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

19. What gift had Jim bought for Della ? How did he buy it ?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

20. What does the end of the story mean ?

_____

_____

_____

Answer in 300 words

21. Summarise the story in your own words :

14.8 Answers

1. After counting money, Della flopped down on the shabby little couch and howled.
2. A letter box was in the vestibule below.
3. When Jim returned from his office, Della used to hug him and called him 'Jim'.
4. Della had only $1.87 on the Christmas eve.
5. Della pulled down her hair before the glass.
6. Della consulted Mme. Sofronie.
7. Della got twenty dollars from Mme. Sofronie.
8. Della bought platinum fob chain for Jim.
9. The cost of a fob chain was twenty dollars.
10. Della looked like a truant school boy.

11. Della sat on the corner of the table near the door waiting for Jim.

12. Jim was only twenty two years old.

13. Jim threw a package upon the table.

14. The package contained a set of combs.

15. Della asked for Jim's watch because she wanted to see how it looked on the gift.

16. Jim bought a gift for Della by selling his gold watch.

17. Della saved $1.87 with great efforts. She used to quarrel with grocer, vegetable man and the butcher for every penny. She could save only $1.87 in a year.

18. Della decided to sell her hair because she had only $1.87 and she wanted to buy a nice Christmas gift for her Jim. As the savings was less, she decided to earn money by selling her long and beautiful hair.

19. Jim had bought a set of combs for Della. He had to sell his gold watch to get money to buy gift for Della.

20. The end of the story suggests that Jim and Della were really wise as the Magi brought gifts for the Babe in the manager. They had sacrificed their proudest possessions which shows their intense love for each other.

21. "The Gift of the Magi" is an interesting story written by William Sydney Porter who wrote under the pen name O' Henry. He is regarded as one of the masters of the modern short stories. In his stories, we find blending of humour and pathos. His stories are remarkable for sudden and unexpected ends that surprise readers. Here in the story the husband Jim and the wife Della sell their proudest possessions to buy Christmas gifts for each other, which shows their deep and selfless love. Really, they are the Magi.

    The story narrates an incident which happen in the life of a young and poor couple . Their income was only $20. They were poor but loved each other very much. They were sublime. Della had saved one dollar and eighty seven cents by bulldozing the grocer and the vagetableman. The result of her savings of the whole year was only $ 1.87. The next day would be Christmas. Both of them wanted to give Christmas gifts to each other but they had not adequate amount to buy something for each other.

    James Dillingham Young took a mighty proud for two possessions. Jim had a gold watch which he inherited from his father. The watch was very attractive which could envy even King Solomon. Della had beautiful hair reaching up to her knees, which could depreciate Queen Sheba's jewels. Their married life was sweet and these possessions were the only things which could make them proud and happy.

    Della had only $1.87 and she wanted to buy something for her Jim. An idea struck her mind and hurriedly she went down the stairs to the street and

consulted Mme sofronie. Della decided to get her hair cut and decided to sell it. She did it and got $20. Now she had $21.87. She hunted for a gift for her Jim and finally saw a fob chain which was simple and chaste in design but very valuable. She purchased it and quickly went to the house. She thought that the fob chain would definitely please Jim and he would be happy in any company.

Jim came home and knew the fact that Della had got her hair cut to buy a present for him. Then Jim drew a package from his overcoat and threw it upon the table. Della quickly opened it and, after seeing it, she had an ecstatic screen of joy and then she cried. For this present she was longing since long. But at present it was of no use. Just to please her husband she hugged the set of combs to her bosom.

Then Della showed a gift which she had brought for Jim. She requested Jim to give her his golden watch as she wanted to see how it looked on it. Jim didn't obey and tumbled down on the coach with cross hands back. He suggested Della that they should put their Christmas gifts away and enfold the truth that, he had sold his gold watch to buy a gift for Della. What an irony!

O' Henry surprised the readers at the end of the story. Though both the gifts were worthless, they were extremely precious because they suggested their ardent love for each other. Their selfless love wins the hearts of the readers. No doubt, it is a master piece by O' Henry.

UNIT - 15

Ruskin Bond : The Boy Who Broke The Bank

Structure

15.0 Objectives
15.1 Introduction
15.2 About the author
15.3 Reading the text
  15.3.1 The Story : The Boy who Broke the Bank (Text)
  15.3.2 Glossary
  15.3.3 Summary
15.4 Literary Devices
15.5 Let's sum up
15.6 Suggested readings
15.7 Questions
15.8 Answers

15.0 Objectives

This unit aims at acquainting you with human behaviour and psychology in economic uncongenial condition owing to some rumour. We intend to do this by preventing an elaborate discussion of one of Ruskin Bond's short stories.

15.1 Introduction

This unit has a short story related tocommon place subject matter. Seth Govind Ram is the owner of the Pipalnagar bank and Nathu is the sweeper in it. The beginning is very ordinary. The reader comes in contact with Nathu who is grumbling while discharging his duties as a sweeper. Suspense begins when Nathu reveals that he has not been paid his monthly salary for twenty months. The reader is wondering why that is so. There is no explanation and the story progresses with the introduction of another ordinary character named Sitaram, the son of a washer man. The story reaches its climax when the whole town is suspecting some thing fishy the bank. At last all the account holders come to the conclusion that the bank is bankrupt and couldn't return their deposits. They rush to the bank for taking away their deposits. The crowd psychology starts functioning. The manager tries his best to convince them that the bank is absolutely solvent and that all the deposits can be returned just after a day but they began to throw bricks towards the bank breaking the plate glass window of the bank. Next morning while sweeping Nathu comments, "Hooligans ! Sons of donkeys!" without having little idea that deluse was only and singly due to his unmindful comment about not getting salary for twenty months. The washer boy adds fuel to the fire and the consequences are destructive. The story comes to an exciting end putting the bank's name to shame.

15.2 About the Author

Ruskin Bond was born in 1934 in Himachal Pradesh. He went to school at Bishop

Cotton School, Simla. He started his career as a writer at 20. His first novel **The Room on the Roof** was published in 1956. This novel won him Llewellyn Rhys Memorial prize. **The Neighbour's Wife and other stories** (1968) is his fictional work. The movie 'Junoon' is based on one of his stories. He has written many books for children. He was fiction editor of **Imprint** for many years. He lived in Mussoorie for twelve years loved the mountainous environment

15.3 Reading the Text

Read the story carefully :

15.3.1 The Boy who Broke the Bank : (Text)

Nathu grumbled to himself as he swept the steps of the Pipalnagar Bank, owned by Seth Govind Ram. He used the small broom hurriedly and carelessly. and the dust. after rising in a cloud above his head settled down again on the steps. As Nathu was banging his pan against a dustbin, Sitaram, the washerman's son, passed by.

Sitaram was on his delivery round. He had a bundle of freshly pressed clothes balanced on his head.

'Don't raise such dust !' he called out to Nathu. Are you annoyed because they are still refusing to pay you an extra two rupees a month ?'

I don't wish to talk about it'. complained the sweeper boy. 'I haven't even received my regular pay. And this is the twentieth of the month. Who would think a bank would hold up a poor man's salary ? As soon as I get my money. I'm off ! Not another week I work in this place' And Nathu banged the pan against the dustbin several times, just to emphasize his point and giving himself confidence.

'Well, I wish you luck. said Sitaram. I'II keep a lookout for any jobs that might suit you. And he plodded barefoot along the road, the big bundle of clothes hiding most of his head and shoulders.

At the fourth home he visited, Sitaram heard the lady of the house mention that she was in need of a sweeper. Tying his bundle together, he said. I know of a sweeper boy who's looking for work. He can start from next month. He's with the bank just now but they aren't giving him his pay. and he wants to leave.

Is that so?' said Mrs. Srivastava. Well, tell him to come and see me tomorrow.

And Sitaram, glad that he had been of service to both a customer and his friend, hoisted his bag on his shoulders and went his way.

Mrs. Srivastava had to do some shopping. She gave instructions to the ayah about looking after the baby. and told the cook not to be late with the mid-day meal, Then she set out for the Pipalnagar market place, to make her customary tour of the cloth shops.

A large shady tamarind tree grew at one end of the bazaar, and it was here that Mrs. Srivastava found her friend Mrs. Bhushan Sheltering from the heat. Mrs. Bhushan was fanning herself with a large handkerchief. She complained of the summer, which she affirmed, was definitely the hottest in the history of Pipalnagar. She then showed Mrs. Srivastava a sample of the cloth she was going to buy. and for five minutes they discussed its shade, texture and design. Having exhausted this topic. Mrs. Srivastava said., Do you know. my dear, that Seth Govind Ram's bank can't even pay its employees. Only this morning I heard a complaint from their sweeper. who hasn't received his wages for over a month !'

Shocking ! remarked Mrs Bhushan. If they can't pay the sweeper they must be in a bad way. None of the others could be getting paid either.'

She left Mrs Srivastava at the tamarind tree and went in search of her husband. who was sitting in front of Kamal Kishore's photograph-shop. talking with the owner.

So there you are !. cried Mrs. Bhushan. I've been looking for you for almost an hour. Wheredid you disappear ?

Nowhere. replied Mr. Bhushan. Had you remained stationary in one shop. I might have found you. But you go from one shop to another, like a bee in a flower garden.

Don't start grumbling. The heat is trying enough. I don't know what's happening to Pipalnagar. Even the bank's about to go bankrupt.

What's that ? asked Kamal Kishore. sitting up suddenly. Which bank ?

Why the Pipalnagar bank of course. I hear they have stopped paying employees. Don't tell me you have an account there, Mr. Kishore ?

'No, but my neighbour has ! he exclaimed; and he called, ' Deep Chand, have you heard the latest ? The Pipalnagar Bank is about to collapse. You'd better get your money out as soon as you can !.

Deep Chand who was cutting the hair of an elderly gentleman, was so startled that his hand shook and he nicked his customer's right ear. The customer yelped with pain and distress: pain, because of the cut and distress because of the awful news he had just heard with one side of his neck still unshaven, he sped across the road to the general merchant's store where there was a telephone. He dialled Seth Govind Ram's number. The Seth was not at home. Where was he then ? The Seth was holidaying in Kashmir. Oh, was that so ? The elderly gentleman did not believe it. He hurried back to the barber's shop and told Deep Chand.

'The bird has flown ! Seth Govind Ram has left town. Definitely, it means a collapse. And then he dashed out of the shop, making a beeline for his office and cheque book.

The news spread through the bazaar with the rapidity of forest fire, From the general merchant's it travelled to the shop. circulated amongst the customers, and then spread with them in various directions, to the betel-seller, the tailor, the free vendor, the jeweller, the beggar sitting on the pavement.

Old Ganpat, the beggar had a crooked leg. He had been squatting on the pavement for years, calling for alms. In the evening someone would come with a barrow and take him away. He had never been known to walk. But now, on learning that the bank was about to collapse. Ganpat astonished everyone leaping to his feet and actually running at top speed in the direction of the bank. It soon became known that he had a thousand rupees in savings !

Men stood in groups at street corners discussing the situation. Pipalnagar seldom had a crisis, seldom or never had floods, earthquakes or drought; and the imminent crash of the Pipalangar Bank set everyone talking and speculating and rushing about in a frenzy. Some boasted of their farsightedness congratulating themselves on having already taken out their money. or on never having put any in; others speculated on the reasons for the crash, putting it all down to excesses indulged in by Seth Govind Ram. The Seth had fled the state, said one. He had fled the conntry, said a third. He had hanged himself from the tamarind tree, said a fourth, and had been found that morning by the sweeper-boy.

By noon the small bank had gone through all its ready cash. and the harassed manager was in a dilemma. Emergency funds could only be obtained from another bank, some thirty miles distant; and he wasnt't sure he could persuade the crowd to wait until then. And there was no way of contacting Seth Govind Ram on his houseboat in Kashmir.

People were turned back from the counters and told to return the following day. They did not like the sound of that. And so they gathered outside on the steps of the bank shouting "Give us our money or we'll break in !" and "Fetch the Seth. we know he's hiding in a safe deposit locker!" Mischief makers who didn't have a paisa in the bank, Joined the crowd and aggravated their mood. The manager stood at the door and tried to placate them. He declared that the bank had plenty of money but no immediate means of collecting it; he urged them to go home and come back the next day.

We want it now !' chanted some of the crowd. Now. now, now !'

And a brick hurtled through the air and crashed through the plate glass window of the Pipalnagar Bank.

Nathu arrived next morning to sweep the steps of the bank. He saw the refuse and the broken glass and the stones cluttering the steps. Raising his hands in a gesture of horror and disgust he cried : Hooligans ! Sons of donkeys ! As though it isn't bad enough to be paid late, it seems my work has also to be increased !' He smote the steps with his broom scattering the refuse.

Good morning, Nathu, said the washerman's boy getting down from his bicycle. Are you ready to take up a new job from the first of next month ? You'II have to I suppose, now that the bank is going out of business."

How's that ? said Nathu.

Haven't you heard ? Well, you'd better wait here until half the population of Pipalnagar arrives to claim their money. And he waved cheerfully- he did not have a bank account- and sped away on his cycle.

Nathu went back to sweeping the steps, muttering to himself. When he had finished his work, he sat down on the highest step. to await the arrival of the manager. He was determined to get his pay.

Who would have thought the bank would collapse !. he said to himself, and looked thoughtfully into the distance. I wonder how it could have happended...

15.3.2 Glossary

Grumbled	:	Complained angrily but not loudly
Annoyed	:	Troubled
Refuse	:	Deny
Emphasize	:	Stress
Look for	:	search for
Ayah	:	Maid servant who looks after a baby
Awful	:	dreadful
alms	:	money / food given to the poor
Wages	:	Remuneration
Startled	:	Surprised
Seldom	:	Hardly
Imminent	:	About to happen
Speculate	:	Guess
Persuade	:	Explain
Aggravate	:	Make more serious
Placate	:	Pacify
Hoisted	:	raised, lifted

15.3.3 Summary

The boy who broke the bank is a very interesting and humorous story written by Ruskin Bond. The story is about the murmuring of, Nathu (a sweeper) about irregular payment of his salary. It takes the shape of a rumour and results into the collapse of a very sound bank. The end of the story, Nathu, who is responsible for the whole episode, wonders innocently about the breaking of the bank.

15.4 Literary Devices

Suspense and humour are of the prominent literary devices employed by Ruskin Bond in the story 'The Boy Who Broke The Bank'. Suspense is one of the distinctive features of detective fiction.

Surpense refers to a state of uncertainty anticipation and curiosity as to the out come of a story or play or any kind of narrative in verse or prose.

In this story, suspense is not created for the readers because the readers know an unintentional murmuring of Nathu, a bank sweeper. It is created for the characters belonging to the story. The characters in the story do not know the real cause of non-payment of Nathu's salary. This leads them to think otherwise. All are misled and a sound bank collapsed. Ruskin Bond also employs humour, which emerges out of misunderstanding.

15.5 Let's Sum Up

In this s tory we have presented on elaborate discussion on Rushin Bond's The Boy who Broke the Bank'. We have also tried to hint at the significance of temporal and spatial components in the development of the story.

15.6 Suggested Readings

1. Ruskin Bond ; The Room on the Roof
2. Ruskin Bond ; The Neighbour's Wife and Other Stories

15.7 Questions

1. Who owned the Pipalnagar bank ?

   _____

2. What was Nathu ?

   _____

3. Who was Sitaram ?

   _____

4. What did the sweeper boy complain ?

   _____

5. Who was in the of a sweeper ?

   _____

6. Where was Mrs. Bhushan ?

   _____

7. Where was Mr. Bhushan ?

   _____

8. How did old Ganpat astonish everyone ?

   _____

9. What did manager declare and urge ?

_____

10. What did Nathu find the next morning ?

_____

Answer in four or five lines each.

11. What was Nathu' work in the Pipalnagar Bank ? What did he speak to Sitaram?

_____

_____

_____

_____

12. What did Sitaram tell Mrs. Srivastava ?

_____

_____

_____

_____

13. What did Ganpat do on hearing the news regarding the Pipalnagar bank ?

_____

_____

_____

_____

14. Why could the manager not arrange for the emergency funds ?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Answer in 300 words.

15. Human behaviour depicted in 'The Boy who Broke the Bank' :

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

15.8 Answers

1. Seth Govind Ram owned the Pipalnagar bank.
2. Nathu was a sweeper in the Pipalnagar bank.
3. Sitaram was a washer man's son.
4. The sweeper boy complained that he hadn't received his regular pay for the last twenty months.
5. Mrs. Srivastav was in the need of a sweeper.
6. Mrs. Bhushan was sheltering from the heat under a large shady tamarind tree.
7. Mr. Bhushan was sitting in front of Kamal Kishor's photograph shop.
8. Old Ganpat had a crooked leg. He had never been known to walk. He astonished every one by leaping up to his feet and running at top speed in the direction of the bank.
9. The manager declared that the bank had plenty of money and urged people to go home and come back the next day.
10. Nathu found the refuse and broken glasses and stones cluttering the steps next morning.
11. Nathu was the sweeper of Pipalnagar Bank. He used to sweep the steps of the bank daily. He told Sitaram that he had not been paid his regular salary till the twentieth of the month. He said that he would leave the job after getting the salary.
12. Sitaram told Mrs. Srivastava that he knew a sweeper who was looking for work and could start from the following month. The sweeper wanted to leave the present job in a bank because he had not been paid his regular salary.
13. Old Ganpat was a beggar. He had a crooked leg. No one had ever seen him walking. When he heard the news regarding the Pipalnagar Bank, he suddenly got up and ran to the bank to withdraw his savings of Rs. 1000/-.
14. The manager could not arrange for the emergency funds because it had to be got from another bank which was some thirty miles a way.
15. 'The Boy Who Broke the Bank' is a very interesting and humorous story written by Ruskin Bond. The story relates to the murmuring of a sweeper boy Nathu about irregular payment of his salary, which later results into the breaking of a very sound bank. All events of the story arouse laughter among the readers.

    The story is about Seth Govind Ram's bank at Pipalangar town. The bank is financially very sound and has won the trust of most of the residents of the town. It has many depositors from the town. Nathu is a sweeper in the bank. One day, while sweeping the steps of the bank, he grumbles about the irregular payment of his salary by the bank authorities. Sitaram, the washerman's son, who passes by, talks to Nathu and learns about Nathu's complaints.Nathu tells him that he was planning to leave the job as soon as he gets his salary.

Sitaram in his loose talk with Mrs. Srivastava, who is looking for a sweeper, talks to her about Nathu, and adds that bank could not pay its employees. Mrs. Srivastava is a talkative lady. She misunderstands Sitaram's statement and starts believing that the Piplangar bank was on the verge of bankruptcy. She meets Mrs. Bhushan in the market She informs Mrs.Buhshan about the weak position of the bank. She goes to the market and tells her husband immediately about the exaggerated news of the bank. Her news shocks Kamal Kishore the photographer; Deep Chand, the barber; bank's customer and many others in the market. Deep Chand is so startled that he injures his customer while shaving. His customer tries to contact Govindram on phone, but as Govind Ram is enjoying his vacation at Kashmir, he is unavailable. This strengthens the rumour and it spreads like a wild fire in the entire town of Pipalnagar.

Naturally, all the account holders and the depositors flock near the bank premises and demand their money back. Everyone tries to analyze the condition in his or her own way. Those who had no money in the bank considered themselves to be wise. Some said that Govin Ram had left the mother country. By noon, all the cash was exausted in the bank. The harassed manager tried to request the people to wait for a day so that he might manage for the emergency funds from another bank, but none is ready to accept the proposal. People want their amount there and then. He tries to assure people of the sound condition of the bank, and also adds that the bank has plenty of amount, but it will take time to collect the money, but none believes in him. Some mischief mongers among the crowd excite people and start stoning the bank building and break the glasses. Thus, a sound bank is broken unfortunately.

The following day when Nathu goes to the bank for his duty, he finds a lot of broken glasses and stones on the steps of the bank. He murmurs angrily that the bank authorities were not paying him regularly on one hand and were also increasing his work. Sitaram comes and tells Nathu that he must accept the new job as the bank is already closed. Nathu is quite surprised to hear the news. He says "how could it happen?" At the end of the story, we find Nathu murmuring on the bank steps that nobody would ever have thought that the bank would collapse. For him the event is a mystery.

Thus, humour dominates the story. The description of Mrs. Bhushan talking to her husband, the customer running with one side unshaved, and the beggar Ganpat, running with a crooked log etc. create a sea of laughter. The end of the story has the climax of humour, when Nathu, who is responsible for the whole episode, wonders innocently about the breaking of the bank. The writer has portrayed all the characters so nicely that the readers get a live picture of an Indian town under the spell of a rumour. The story entertains the readers.

UNIT - 16

Chinua Achebe : Marriage is a Private Affair

Structure

16.0 Objectives
16.1 Introduction
16.2 About the Author
16.3 Reading the text
16.3.1 The Story : Marriage is a Private Affair (Text)
16.3.2 Glossary
16.3.3 Summary
16.4 Let's Sum Up
16.5 Suggested Readings
16.6 Questions
16.7 Answers

16.0 Objectives

The purpose of this unit is to stimulate interest in you in the field of African Literature as well as to convey information about it. African Literature as a part of New Literature has won wide acclaim in the recent years. You will also appreciate it after going through the elaborate discussion related to one of the short stories entitled 'Marriage is a Private Affair' written by Chinua Achebe.

16.1 Introduction

In the emerging trends in field of New Literature, the works of African writers have been greatly appreciated. It is observed that the concerns, cultural and emotional make-up, problems etc. of African people are much different from that of the other continents. Keeping this in mind African Literature is being taught and studied exclusively, which has proved to be quite an interesting and unique study adding to our understanding of this literature.

'Marriage is a Private Affair' is a poignant tale about two young people in love who try to break away from social traditions and pressures. The story will give you a deep insight and understanding into the traditions and beliefs of the people of Africa where the society is divided into ethnic groups and tribes. Nene and Nnaemeka fall in love with each other unaware of the fact that their belonging to different tribes will become the greatest hindrance in their marriage. The story also depicts the superstitions prevalent in the orthodox African society. You will also observe that Achebe subtly hints at the major breakthrough being brought about by educated young Africans. Nnaemeka's father Okeke is the most interesting character of the story. You also get a glimpse of the African countryside as well as metro life in the story.

16.2 About the Author

Born in 1930 Chinua Achebe is one of the most reputed writers of fiction of African Literature. His versatile art has found expression in diverse spheres of activity as he joined the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation in 1954 and is presently working at the institute of African Studies at Nsukka. He also distinguished himself as a poet as his collection of poems, *Beware Soul Brothers,* won the commonwealth poetry prize in 1972. Achebe, today, is the central figure in the field of fiction writing. His popular novels are *Things Fall Apart* (1958), *No Longer at Ease* (1960), *Arrow of God* (1964) and *A man of the people* (1966).

16.3 Reading the text

This short story has a very easy flow. You must read it carefully and with full interest.

16.3.1 Marriage is a private affair (Text)

'Have you written to your dad yet?' asked Nene one afternoon as she sat with Nnaemeka in her room at 16 Kasanga Street, Lagos.

'No, I've been thinking about it. I think it's better to tell him when I get home on leave!'.

'But why? Your leave is such a long way off yet - six whole weeks. He should be let into our happiness now'.

Nnaemeka was silent for a while, and then began very slowly as if he groped for his words: 'I wish I were sure it would be happiness to him.'

'Of course it must,' replied Nene, a little surprised. 'Why shouldn't it?'.

'You have lived in Lagos all your life, and you know very little about people in remote parts of the country.'

'That's what you always say. But I don't believe anybody will be so unlike other people that they will be unhappy when their sons are engaged to marry'.

'Yes. They are most unhappy if the engagement is not arranged by them. In our case it's worse - you are not even an Ibo.'

This was said so seriously and so bluntly that Nene could not find speech immediately. In the cosmopolitan atmosphere of the city, it had always seemed to her something of a joke that a person's tribe could determine whom he married.

At last she said, 'You don't really mean that he will object to your marrying me simply on that account? I had always thought you Ibos were kindly disposed to other people.'

'So we are. But when it comes to marriage, well, it's not quite so simple. And this,' he added, 'is not peculiar to the Ibos. If your father were alive and lived in the heart of Ibibo-land he would be exactly like my father.'

'I don't know. But anyway, as your father is so fond of you, I'm sure he will forgive you soon enough. Come on then, be a god boy and send him

a nice lovely letter...'

'It would not be wise to break the news to him by writing. A letter will bring it upon him with a shock. I'm quite sure about that.'

'All right, honey, suit yourself. You know your father'.

As Nnaemeka walked home that evening he turned over in his mind different ways of overcoming his father's opposition, especially now that he had gone and found a girl for him. He had thought of showing his letter to Nene but decided on second thoughts not to, at least for the moment. He read it again when he got home and couldn't help smiling to himself. He remembered Ugoye quite well, an Amazon of a girl who used to beat up all the boys, himself included, on the way to the stream, a complete dunce at school.

'I have found a girl who will suit you admirably - Ugoye Nweke, the eldest daughter of our neighbour, Jacob Nweke. She has a proper Christian upbringing. When she stopped schooling some years ago, her father (a man of sound judgment) sent her to live in the house of a pastor where she has received all the training a wife could need. Her Sunday School teacher has told me that she reads her Bible very fluently. I hope we shall begin negotiations when you come home in December.'

On the second evening of his return from Lagos Nnaemeka sat with his father under a cassia tree. This was the old man's retreat where he went to read his Bible when the parching December sun had set and a fresh, reviving wind blew on the leaves.

'Father,' began Nnaemeka suddenly, 'I have come to ask for forgiveness.'

'Forgiveness? For what, my son? he asked in amazement.

'It's about this marriage question.

'Which marriage question'?

'I can't- we must- I mean it is impossible for me to marry Nweke's daughter.

'Impossibe? Why?' asked his father.

'I don't love her.'

'Nobody said you did. Why should you?' he asked.

'Marriage today is different....'

'Look here, my son,' interrupted his father, 'nothing is different. What one looks for in a wife are a good character and a Christian background'.

Nnaemeka saw there was no hope along the present line of argument.

'Moreover,' he said, 'I am engaged to marry another girl who has all of Ugoye's good qualities, and who...'

His father did not believe his ears. 'What did you say? he asked slowly and diconcertingly.

'She is a good Christian,' his son went on, 'and a teacher in a Girls' School in Lagos.'

'Teacher, did you say? If you consider that a qualification for a good wife I should like to point out to you, Nnaemeka, that no Christian woman should teach. St. Paul in his letter to the Corinthians says that women should keep silence'. He rose slowly from his seat and paced forwards and backwards. This was his pet subject, and he condemned vehemently those church leaders who encouraged women to teach in their schools. After he had spent his emotion on a long homily he at last came back to his son's engagement, in a seemingly milder tone.

'Whose daughter is she, anyway?'

'She is Nene Atang.'

'What!' All the mildness was gone again. 'Did you say Nene Atang, what does that mean?'

'Nene Atang from Calabar. She is the only girl I can marry.' This was a very rash reply and Nnaemeka expected the storm to burst. But it did not. His father merely walked away into his room. This was most unexpected and perplexed. Nnaemeka, his father's silence was infinitely more menacing than a flood of threatening speech. That night the old man did not eat.

When he sent for Nnaemeka a day later he applied all possible ways of dissuasion. But the young man's heart was hardened, and his father eventually gave him up as lost.

'I owe it to you, my son, as a duty to show you what is right and what is wrong. Whoever put this idea into your head might as well have cut your throat. It is Satan's work.' He waved his son away.

'You will change your mind, Father, when you know Nene'.

'I shall never see her,' was the reply. From that night the father scarcely spoke to his son. He did not, however, cease hoping that he would realise how serious was the danger he was heading for. Day and night he put him in his prayers.

Nnaemeka, for his own part, was very deeply affected by his father's grief. But he kept hoping that it would pass away. If it had occurred to him that never in the history of his people had a man married a woman who spoke a different tongue, he might have been less optimistic. 'It has never been heard,' was the verdict of an old man speaking a few weeks later. In that short sentence he spoke for all his people. This man had come with others to commiserate with Okeke when news went round about his son's behaviour. By that time the son had gone back to Lagos.

'It has never been heard,' said the old man again with a sad shake of his head.

'What did Our Lord say?' asked another gentleman.

'Sons shall rise against their Fathers; it is there in the Holy Book.'

'It is the beginning of the end,' said another.

The discussion thus tending to become theological Madubogwu, a highly practical man, brought it down once more to the ordinary level.

‘Have you thought of consulting a native doctor about your son?’ he asked Nnaemeka’s father.

‘He isn’t sick,’ was the reply.

‘What is he then? The boy’s mind is diseased and only a good herbalist can bring him back to his right senses. The medicine he requires is Amalile, the same that women apply with success to recapture their husband’s straying affection.’

‘Madubogwu is right,’ said another gentleman. ‘This thing calls for medicine.’

‘I shall not call in a native doctor’. Nnaemeka’s father was known to be obstinately ahead of his more superstitious neighbours in these matters. ‘I will not be another Mrs Ochuba. If my son wants to kill himself let him do it with his own hands. It is not for me to help him.’

‘She was a wicked murderess,’ said Jonathan who rarely argued with his neighbours because, he often said, they were incapable of reasoning. ‘The medicine was prepared for her husband, it was his name they called in its preparation and I am sure it would have been perfectly beneficial to him. It was wicked to put it into the herbalist’s food, and say you were only trying it out.’

Six months later, Nnaemeka was showing his young wife a short letter from his father:

‘It amazes me that you could be so unfeeling as to send me your wedding picture. I would have sent it back. But on further thought I decided just to cut off your wife and send it back to you because I have nothing to do with her. How I wish that I had nothing to do with you either.’

When Nene read through this letter and looked at the mutilated picture her eyes filled with tears, and she began to sob.

‘Don’t cry, my darling,’ said her husband. ‘He is essentially good-natured and will one day look more kindly on our marriage.’ But years passed and that one day did not come.

For eight years, Okeke would have nothing to do with his son, Nnaemeka. Only three times (when Nnaemeka asked to come home and spend his leave) did he write to him.

‘I can’t have you in my house,’ he replied on one occasion. ‘It can be of no interest to me where or how you spend your leave - or your life, for that matter.’

The prejudice against Nnaemeka’s marriage was not confined to his little village. In Lagos, especially among the people who worked there, it showed itself in a different way. Their women, when they met at their village meeting, were not hostile to Nene. Rather, they paid her such excessive deference as to make her feel she was not one of them. But as time went on, Nene gradually broke through some of this prejudice and even began to make friends among them. Slowly and grudgingly they began to admit that she kept her home much better than most of them.

The story eventually got to the little village in the heart of the Ibo country that Nnaemeka and his young wife were a most happy couple. But his father was one of the few people in the village who knew nothing about this. He always displayed so much temper whenever his son's name was mentioned that everyone avoided it in his presence. By a tremendous effort of will he had succeeded in pushing his son to the back of his mind. The strain had nearly killed him but he had perserved, and won.

Then one day he received a letter from Nene, and in spite of himself he began to glance through it perfunctorily until all of a sudden the expression on his face changed and he began to read more carefully :

..... Our two sons, from the day they learnt that they have a grandfather, have insisted on being taken to him. I find it impossible to tell them that you will not see them. I implore you to allow Nnaemeka to bring them home for a short time during his leave next month. I shall remain here in Lagos....'

The old man at once felt the resolution he had built up over so many years falling in. He was telling himself that he must not give in. He tried to steel his heart against all emotional appeals. It was a re-enactment of that other struggle. He leaned against a window and looked out. The sky was overcast with heavy black clouds and a high wind began to blow filling the air with dust and dry leaves. It was one of those rare occasions when even Nature takes a hand in a human fight. Very soon it began to rain, the first rain in the year. It came down in large sharp drops and was accompanied by the lightening and thunder which mark a change of season. Okeke was trying hard not to think of his two grandsons. But he knew he was now fighting a losing battle. He tried to hum a favourite hymn but the pattering of large raindrops on the roof broke up the tune. His mind immediately returned to the children. How could he shut his door against them? By a curious mental process he imagined them standing, sad and forsaken, under the harsh angry weather - shut out from his house.

That night he hardly slept, from remorse - and a vague fear that he might die without making it up to them.

16.3.2 Glossary

Distinguished	:	Well-known, remarkable
Grope for words	:	Search for words.
Remote	:	Far away in place.
Bluntly	:	Painly; not troubling to be polite.
Peculiar	:	Belonging exclusively, strange
Cosmopolitan	:	Free from national prejudice.
Overcome	:	Be too strong for.
Amazon	:	Strong, manlike woman.
Retreat	:	Place for quiet and rest.
Disconcertingly	:	In an upsetting manner.
Vehemently	:	Strongly

Perplexed	:	Puzzled
Menacing	:	Dangerous
Dissuasion	:	To give advice against.
Commiserate	:	Sympathize
Theology	:	Science of the nature of god.
Obstinate	:	Stubborn.
Mutilate	:	Damage by breaking, tearing or cutting.
Herbalist	:	Person who gives herbs as medicines.
Deference	:	Respect
Persevere	:	Keep on steadily, continue
Perfunctorily	:	Done as a duty, without care or interest.
Steel his heart	:	Harden his heart.
Hum	:	Make a continuous sound like that made by bees.
Forsaken	:	Give up; break away from.
Remorse	:	Deep, bitter regret for wrong doing.

16.3.3 Summary

The story opens in the city of Lagos with Nene and Nnaemeka talking over the issue of their recent engagement. Nene wants him to write a letter to his father and inform him about it but Nnaemeka wants to do it personally when he goes to his village during the vacation because he is sure that his father will not like this news. Nene has lived in Lagos since her childhood and so she doesn't know much about people in remote parts of the country. Nnaemeka is aware of the fact that just like elsewhere, in his village also a person's tribe determines whom he married that too only with the consent of his parents. He tries to explain things to Nene but she doesn't understand and leaves it to Nnaemeka.

On his way back Nnaemeka again reads out the letter he has recently recieved from his father stating that he had chosen a girl Ugoye Nweke for him. Nnaemeka has known this girl since childhood and he smiled as he thought of this naughty girl Ugoye Nweke who used to beat boys in the school. His father was happy with his choice because Ugoye had a proper christian upbringing and good character.

The story then takes a leap as Nnaemeka has come to his native village during the vacation. He asks for forgiveness from his father as it is impossible for him to marry Ugoye. He discloses to his father his relationship with Nene Atang with whom he plans to marry. His father is so shocked by this news that instead of bursting out in anger as is his nature he becomes absolutely silent.

Next day the father tries to make him understand the ill effects of marriage outside one's tribe calling it devil's work. Nnaemeka comes back with a sad heart hoping that one day his father's traditional views will change. Nnaemeka was the first in his village to marry a girl from a different tribe

and that is why his father gets concerned even though he himself doesn't believe in the superstitious beliefs like other villagers.

All the villagers gathered around Okeke and expressed concern over this strange act of his son, which they considered 'the beginning of the end'. They were sure that the boy's mind was diseased and must be treated by a herbalist. But Okeke did not believe in the superstitions prevalent in the village. The villagers discussed their local herbalist who was killed by his own medicine.

Despite all this Nnaemeka and Nene got married. The story moves further six months and they receive a letter from Okeke in which he shows his annoyance and anger by cutting the wedding picture sent by his son. He declares his rejection of Nene also. This letter hurts them terribly but Nnaemeka is still hopeful that his father's basic good nature will change his views one day.

As time passes by the Ibo friends of Nnaemeka realize that their married life is very good. They now understand that for marriage, love and understanding are required and not the same tribe. News of their being one of the most happy couple's reaches the village also. But no one dares to talk to Okeke about it. He had made great efforts to forget Nnaemeka although it had been very painful for him.

Then one day Okeke received a letter from Nene. Unwillingly he reads it. Nene informs him that he has two grandsons and both are now grown-up. Everyday they ask for their grandfather and Nene writes that she doesn't know what reply she must give to them. She earnestly requests him to allow them to meet him along with Nnaemeka during the coming vacation and that she herself would not come.

This letter greatly moves Okeke. All these years he had hardened himself but today at the thought of his grandsons his heart melts. He feels that he had done great injustice to them and now he must open the door of his house for them, in a way open his heart for them.

16.4 Let's Sum Up

In this unit we have thrown light on Chinua Achebe, a great literary figure in the field of African literature. You have also gone through the text of 'Marriage is a Private Affair' a short story by Achebe. The summary gave you the whole story in brief followed by glossary of difficult words with meaning.

16.5 Suggested Readings

1. Chinua Achebe : *Things Fall Apart*
2. Wole Soyinka : *A Dance of Forests*
3. Thiong'o Ngugi : *Decolonising the Mind: the Politics of Language in African Literature.*

16.6 Questions

(a) Answer the following questions in two-three lines each :

(i) What did Nene want Nnaemeka to do?

_____

_____

(ii) What is the name of the girl Okeke had chosen for Nnaemeka as a bride?

_____

_____

(iii) According to Nnaemeka's father what are the qualities that one looks for in a wife?

_____

_____

(iv) What did Okeke do to the wedding picture of Nene and Nnaemeka?

_____

_____

(b) Answer the following questions in 50 words each :

(i) What picture of Nene do you get from the story?

_____

_____

_____

_____

(ii) 'It is the beginning of the end'. What significance does this line have in the story?

_____

_____

_____

(c) Answer the following questions in 300-400 words :

(i) Summarize the story 'Marriage is a Private Affair'.

16.7 Answers

(a) (i) Nene wanted Nnaemeka to write a letter to his father informing him about their engagement.

(ii) The name of the girl chosen by Okeke for Nnaemeka is Ugoye Nweke.

(iii) Nnaemeka's father believed that two qualities one looks for in a wife are a good character and a christian background.

(iv) Okeke mutilated the wedding picture of Nene and Nnaemeka and sent it back to Nnaemeka.

(b) (i) Nene is a good girl with feelings of sincere love for Nnaemeka. She has great understanding for him and doesn't force him to write a letter to his father as he is unwilling. She proves to be a good wife and strongly adjusts herself the Ibo-community. She is sensitive and has great respect for Okeke. It is due to her sensible and emotional letter to Okeke that he finally accepts them back in his life.

(ii) Nnaemeka's marriage to Nene was unexpected by the Ibo-people because it had never happened before and it was considered to be a devil's work. The illiterate and superstitious villagers believed that this was the beginning of the end of the world as it was written in the Bible that sons shall rise against their father.

(c) (i) Refer to point 16.3.3.

UNIT-17

Amitav Ghosh : The Ghat of the Only World

Structure

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17.0 Objectives

The objective of this unit is to enable you to comprehend the sensation and sentimentality of a kashmiri expatriate, Aga Shahid Ali, living in America. We also intend to tell you by giving you the hints that like a true patriot Aga Shahid Ali was hurt by the mounting violence in the Valley of Kashmir. During the course of your studying the unit you would also be able to know that Shahid's outlook was ecumenical; he did not believe in mixing up politics with religion.

17.1 Introduction

Agha Shahid Ali, a teacher and poet, was an expatriate from Kashmir. The writer met Shahid at Brooklyn in 2000. He was suffering from cancer and knew that he was dying. He asked the author to write something about him after he had died. Amitav Ghosh pays him glowing tributes in this write-up.

17.2 About the Author

Amitav **Ghosh** was born in Calcutta in 1956. He grew up in Bangladesh (then East Pakistan), Sri Lanka, Iran and India. After graduating from the University of Delhi, he went to Oxford to study Social Anthropology and received a Master of Philosophy and a Ph. D in 1982. In 1980, he went to Egypt to do field work in the fellaheen village of Lataifa. The work he did there resulted in **In an Antique Land (IAAL** 1993). **Ghosh** has been a journalist and published his first novel, **The Circle of Reason** in 1986, and his second, **The Shadow Lines** in 1988,. Since then, he has published**, The Calcutta Chromosome,** and **The Glass Palace**, done fieldwork in Cambodia, lived in Delhi and written for a number of publications. He currently lives in New York and teaches at Columbia University.

17.3 Reading the Text

Now read the text carefully:

17.3.1 The Ghat of the Only World (Text)

The first time that Agha Shahid Ali spoke to me about his approaching death was on 25th April 2001. The conversation began routinely. I had telephoned to remind him that we had been invited to a friend's house for lunch and that I was going to come by his apartment to pick him up. Although he had been under treatment for cancer for some fourteen months, Shahid was still on his feet and perfectly lucid, except for his occasional lapses of memory. I heard him thumbing through his engagement book and suddenly he said: 'oh dear. I can't see a thing.' There was a brief pause and then he added: 'I hope this doesn't mean that I 'm dying…'

Although Shahid and I had talked a great deal over the last many weeks, I had never before heard him touch on the subject of death. I did not know how to respond: his voice was completely at odds with the content of what he had just said, light to the point of jocularity. I mumbled something innocuous: 'No Shahid- of course not. You will be fine.' He cut me short. In a tone of voice that was at once quizzical and direct, he said: 'When it happens I hope you'll write something about me.'

I was shocked into silence and a long moment passed before I could bring myself to say the things that people say on such occasions. 'Shahid you'll be fine: you have to be strong…'

From the window of my study I could see a corner of the building in which he lived, some eight blocks away. It was just a few month since he moved there: he had been living a few miles away, in Manhattan, when he had a sudden blackout in February2000. After tests revealed that he had a malignant brain tumour, he decided to move to Brooklyn, to be close to his youngest sister, Sameetah, who teaches at the Pratt Institute—a few blocks away from the street I live.

Shahid ignored my reassurances. He began to laugh and it was then that I realized that he was dead serious. I understood that he was entrusting me with a quite specific charge: he wanted me to remember him not through the spoken recitatives of memory and friendship, but through the written word. Shahid knew too well that for those writers for whom things became real only in the process of writing, there is an inbuilt resistance to dealing with loss and bereavement. He knew that my instincts would have led me to search for reasons to avoid writing about his death: I would have told myself that I was not a poet; that our friendship was of recent date; that there were many others who knew him much better and would be writing from greater understanding and knowledge. All this Shahid had guessed and he had decided to shut off those routes while there was still time.

'You must write about me.'

Clear though it was that this imperative would have to be acknowledged, I could think of nothing to say: what are the words in which one promises a friend that one will write about him after his death? Finally, I said: 'Shahid, I will: I'll do the best I can'.

By the end of the conversation I knew exactly what I had to do. I picked up my pen, noted the date, and wrote down everything I remembered of that conversation. This I continued to do for the next few months: it is this record that has made it possible for me to fulfill the pledge I made that day.

I knew Shahid's work long before I met him. *His 1997 Collection*, *The Country Without a Post Office*, had made a powerful impression on me. His voice was like none I had ever heard before, at once lyrical and fiercely disciplined, engaged yet deeply inward. Not for him the mock-casual almost prose of so much contemporary poetry: his was a voice that was not ashamed to speak in a bardic register. I knew of no one else who would even conceive of publishing a line like 'Mad heart, be brave.'

In 1998, I quoted a line from *The Country Without a Post Office* in an article that touched briefly on Kashmir. At that time all I knew about Shahid was that he was from Srinagar and had studied in Delhi. I had been at Delhi University myself, but although our time there had briefly overlapped, we had never met. We had friends in common however, and one of them put me in touch with Shahid. In 1998 and 1999 we had several conversations on the phone and even met a couple of times. But we were no more than acquaintances until he moved to Brooklyn the next year. Once we were in the same neighbourhood, we began to meet for occasional meals and quickly discovered that we had a great deal in common. By this time of course Shahid's condition was already serious, yet his illness did not impede the progress of our friendship. We found that we had a huge roster of common friends in India, America and elsewhere; we discovered a shared love of rogan josh, Roshanara Begum and Kishore Kumar; a mutual indifference to cricket and an equal attachment to old Bombay films. Because of Shahid's condition even the most trivial exchanges had a special charge and urgency: the inescapable poignance of talking about food and half forgotten figures from the past with a man who knew himself to be dying, was multiplied, in this instance, by the knowledge that this man was also a poet who had achieved greatness –perhaps the only such that I shall ever know as a friend.

One afternoon, the writer Suketu Mehta, who also lives in Brooklyn, joined us for lunch. Together we hatched a plan for an adda—by definition, a gathering that has no agenda, other than conviviality. Shahid was enthusiastic and we began to meet regularly. From time to time other writers would join us. On one occasion a crew arrived with a television camera. Shahid was not in the least bit put out: 'I 'm so shameless; I just love the camera.'

Shahid had a sorcerer's ability to transmute the mundane into the magical. Once I accompanied Iqbal, his brother, and Hena, his sister, on a trip to fetch him home from hospital. This was on 21 May: by that time he had

already been through several unsuccessful operations. Now he was back in hospital to undergo a surgical procedure that was intended to relieve the pressure on his brain. His head was shaved and the shape of the tumour was visible upon his bare scalp, its edges outlined by metal sutures. When it was time to leave the ward a blue-uniformed hospital escort arrived with a wheelchair. Shahid waved him away, declaring that he was strong enough to walk out of the hospital on his own. But he was groggier than he had thought and his knees buckled after no more than a few steps. Iqbal went running off to bring back the wheelchair while the rest of us stood in the corridor, holding him upright. At that time leaning against the cheerless hospital wall, a kind of rapture descended on Shahid. When the hospital orderly returned with the wheelchair Shahid gave him a beaming smile and asked where he was from. 'Ecuador' the man said, and Shahid clapped his hands gleefully together, 'Spanish!' he cried at the top of his voice. I always wanted to learn Spanish. Just to read Lorca'

Shahid's gregariousness had no limit: there was never an evening when there wasn't a party in his living room. 'I love it that so many people are here,' he told me once. 'I love it that people come and there's always food. I love this spirit of festivity; it means that I don't have time to be depressed.'

His apartment was a spacious and airy split-level, on the seventh floor of a newly renovated building. There was a cavernous study on the top floor and a wide terrace that provided a magnificent view of the Manhattan skyline, across the East river. Shahid loved this view of the Brooklyn waterfront slipping, like a ghat into the East river, under the glittering lights of Manhattan.

The journey from the foyer of Shahid's building to his door was a voyage between continents: on the way up the rich fragrance of rogan josh and haak would invade the dour, grey interior of the elevator; against the background of the songs and voices that were always echoing out of his apartment, even the ringing of the doorbell had an oddly musical sound. Suddenly Shahid would appear, flinging open the door, releasing a great cloud of heeng into the frosty New York air, 'Oh, how nice,' he would cry, clapping his hands, 'how nice that you've come to see your little Mos-lem!' Invariably, there'd be some half dozen or more people gathered inside—poets, students, writer, relatives—and in the kitchen someone would always be cooking or making tea. Almost to the very end, even as his life was being consumed by his disease, he was the centre of a perpetual carnival, an endless mela of talk, laughter, food and, of course, poetry.

No matter how many people there were, Shahid was never so distracted as to lose track of the progress of the evening's meal. From time to time he would interrupt himself to shout directions to whoever was in the kitchen: 'yes, now, add the dahi now.' Even when his eyesight was falling, he could tell from the smell alone, exactly which stage the rogan josh had reached. And when things went exactly as they should, he would sniff the air' and cry out loud: 'Aha! Khana ka kya mahak hai!'

Shahid was legendary for his prowess in the kitchen, frequently spending days over the planning and preparation of a dinner party. It was through one such party, given while he was in Arizona, that he met James Merrill, the poet who was to radically alter the direction of his poetry: it was after this encounter that he began to experiment with strict, metrical patterns and verse forms. No one had a greater influence on Shahid's poetry than James Merrill: indeed, in the poem in which he most explicitly prefigured his own death, 'I Dream I Am At the Ghat of the Only World,' he awarded the envoy to Merrill: SHAHID, HUSH. THIS IS ME, JAMES. THE LOVED ONE ALWAYS LEAVES.

Shahid placed great store on authenticity and exactitude in cooking and would tolerate no deviation from traditional methods and recipes: for those who took short cuts, he had only pity. He had a special passion for the food of his region, one variant of it in particular: 'Kashmiri food in the Pandit style'. I asked him once why this was so important to him and he explained that it was because of a recurrent dream, in which all the Pandits had vanished from the valley of Kashmir and their food had become extinct. This was a nightmare that haunted him and he returned to it again and again, in his conversation and poetry.

At a certain point I lost track of you.

You needed me. You needed to perfect me;

In your absence you polished me into the Enemy.

Your history gets in the way of my memory.

———————————— what would not have been possible in the world?

Once, in conversation, he told me that he also loved Bengali food. I protested, 'But Shahid, you've never been even to Calcutta'.

'No', he said, 'But we had friends who used to bring us that food. When you ate it you could see that there were so many things that you didn't know about, everywhere in the country….'

What I say is: why can't you be happy with the cuisines and the clothes and the music and all these wonderful things?' He paused and added softly, 'At least here we have been able to make a space where we can all come together because of the good things.'

Of many 'good things' in which he took pleasure, none was more dear to him than the music of Begum Akhtar. He had met the great ghazal singer when he was in his teens, through a friend, and she had become an abiding presence and influence in his life. Shahid had a fund of stories about her sharpness in repartee.

Shahid was himself no mean practitioner of repartee. On one famous occasion, at Barcelona airport, he was stopped by a security guard just as he was

about to board a plane. The guard, a woman, asked: 'What do you do?'

"I'm a poet,' Shahid answered.

'What were you doing in Spain?'

'Writing poetry.'

No matter what the question, Shahid worked poetry into his answer. Finally the exasperated woman asked: 'Are you carrying anything that could be dangerous to the other passengers?' At this Shahid clapped a hand to his chest and cried: 'Only my heart.'

This was one of his great Wildean moments, and it was to occasion the poem 'Barcelona Airport'. He treasured these moments: 'I long for people to give me an opportunity to answer questions' he told me once. On 7 May I had the good fortune to be with him when one such opportunity presented itself. Shahid was teaching at Manhattan' Baruch College in the Spring semester of 2000 and this was to be his last class—indeed the last he was ever to teach. The class was to be a short one for he had an appointment at the hospital immediately afterwards. I had heard a great deal about the brilliance of Shahid's teaching, but this was the first and only time that I was to see him perform in a classroom. It was evident from the moment we walked in that the students adored him: they had printed the magazine and dedicated the issue to him. Shahid for his part was not in the least subdued by the sadness of the occasion. From beginning to end, he was a sparkling diva, Akhtar incarnate, brimming with laughter and nakhra. When an Indian student walked in late, he greeted her with the cry; 'Ah my little subcotinental has arrived.' Clasping his hands, he feigned a swoon. 'It stirs such a tide of patriotism in me to behold another South Asian.'

His time at Penn State he remembered with unmitigated pleasure: 'I grew as a reader, I grew as a poet, I grew as a lover.' He fell in with a vibrant group of graduate students. Many of whom were Indian. This was, he often said, the happiest time of his life. Later Shahid moved to Arizona to take a degree in creative writing. This in turn was followed by a series of jobs in colleges and universities: Hamilton College, The University of Massachusetts at Amherst, and finally the University of Utah in Salt Lake City, where he was appointed professor in 1999. He was on leave from Utah, doing a brief stint at New York University, when he had his first blackout in February 2000.

After 1975, when he moved to Pennsylvania, Shahid lived mainly in America. His brother was already there and they were later joined by their two sisters. But Shahid's parents continued to live in Srinagar and it was his custom to spend the summer months with them there every year: 'I always move in my heart between sad countries.' Travelling between United States and India he was thus an intermittent but first-hand witness (Shahid) to the mounting violence that seized the region from the late 1980s onwards:

It was '89, the stones were not far, signs of change everywhere (Kashmir would soon be in literal flames).....

The steady deterioration of the political situation in Kashmir—the violence and counter-violence –had a powerful effect on him. In time it became one of the central subjects of his work: indeed, it could be said that it was in writing of Kashmir that he created his finest work. The irony of this is that Shahid was not by inclination a political poet. I heard him say once: 'If you are from a difficult place and that's all you have to write about then you should stop writing. You have to respect your art, your form—that is just as important as what you write about.'

Anguished as he was about Kashmir's destiny, Shahid resolutely refused to embrace the role of victim that could so easily have been his. Had he done so, he could no doubt have easily become a fixture on talk shows and news programmes. But Shahid never had any doubt about his calling: he was a poet, schooled in the fierce and unforgiving art of language. Although respectful of religion, he remained a firm believer in the separation of politics and religious practices.

Shahid's gaze was not political in the sense of being framed in terms of policy and solutions. In the broadest sense, his vision tended always towards the inclusive and ecumenical, an outlook that he credited to his upbringing. He spoke often of a time in his childhood when he had been seized by the desire to create a small Hindu temple in his room in Srinagar. He was initially hesitant to tell his parents, but when he did they responded with an enthusiasm equal to his own. His mother bought him murtis and other accoutrements and for a while he was assiduous in conducting pujas at this shrine. This was a favourite story. 'Whenever People talk to me about Muslim fanaticism' he said to me once, 'I tell them how my mother helped me make a temple in my room.'

I once remarked to Shahid that he was the closest that Kashmir had to a national poet. He shot back: 'A national poet, maybe. But not a nationalist poet; please note that. In the title poem of *The Country Without a Post office*, a poet returns to Kashmir to find the keeper of a fallen minaret:

Nothing will remain, everything's finished,

I see his voice again: This is a shrine

of words. You'll find your letters to me. And mine to

you. Come son and tear open these vanished envelopes…

This is an archive. I've found the remains

of his voice, that map of longings with no limit.

In this figuring of his homeland, he himself became one of the images that were spinning around the dark point of stillness—both Shahid and Shahid, witness and martyr—his destiny inextricably linked with Kashmir's, each prefigured by the other.

I will die, in autumn, in Kashmir,

and the shadowed routine of each vein

will almost be news, the blood censored

for the Saffron Sun and the Times of Rain…

Among my notes is a record of a telephone conversation on 5May. The day before he had gone to the hospital for an important test: a scan that was expected to reveal whether or not the course of chemotherapy that he was then undergoing had had the desired effect. All other alternative therapies and courses of treatment had been put off until this report.

Then scan was scheduled for 2.30 in the afternoon. I called his number several times in the late afternoon and early evening—there was no response. I called again the next morning and this time he answered. There were no preambles. He said, 'Listen Amitav, the news is not good at all. Basically they are going to stop all my medicines now—the chemotherapy and so on. They give me a year or less. They'd suspected that I was not responding well because of the way I look. They will give me some radiation a little later. But they said there was not much hope.'

Dazed, staring blankly at my desk, I said: 'What will you do now Shahid?'

'I would like to go back to Kashmir to die.' His voice was quiet and untroubled. 'Now I have to get my passport, settle my will and all that. I don't want to leave a mess for my siblings. But after that I would like to go to Kashmir. It's still such a feudal system there and there will be so much support—and my father is there too. Anyway, I don't want my siblings to have to make the journey afterwards, like we had to with my mother.'

Later because of logistical and other reasons, he changed his mind about returning to Kashmir: he was content to be laid to rest in Northampton, in the vicinity of Amherst, a town sacred to the memory of his beloved Emily Dickinson. But I do not think it was an accident that his mind turned to Kashmir in speaking of death. Already, in his poetic imagery, death, Kashmir, and Shahid/Shahid had become so closely overlaid as to be inseparable, like old photographs that have melted together in the rain.

Yes, I remember it

the day I'll die, I broadcast the crimson

so long of that sky, its spread air,

its rushing dyes, and a piece of earth

bleeding, apart from the shore, as we went

on the way I'll die, post the guards, and he,

keeper of the world's last saffron, rowed me

on an island the size of a grave. On

two yards he rowed me into the sunset,

past all pain. On everyone's lips was news

of my death but only that beloved couplet,

broken on his:

'If there is a paradise on earth

It is this, it is this, it is this.'

The last time I saw Shahid was on 27 October, at his brother's house in Amherst. He was intermittently able to converse and there were moments when we talked just as we had in the past. He was aware, as he had long been, of his approaching end and he had made peace with it. I saw no trace of anguish or conflict: surrounded by the love of his family and friends, he was calm, contented, at peace. He had said to me once, 'I love to think that I'll meet my mother in the afterlife, if there is an afterlife.' I had the sense that as the end neared, this was his supreme consolation. He died peacefully, in his sleep, at 2a.m. on 8 December.

Now, in his absence, I am amazed that so brief a friendship has resulted in so vast a void. Often, when I walk into my living room, I remember his presence there, particularly on the night when he read us his farewell to the world: 'I Dream I Am At the Ghat of Only World….'

17.3.2 Glossary

Quizzical	:	questioning and teasing
Malignant	:	(here) harmful to life
Recitatives	:	style of music between singing and talking
Bereavement	:	loss or sorrow
Bardic	:	a poetic style
Sorcerer	:	magician
Transmute	:	change
Mundane	:	worldly, physical
Lorca	:	Spain's most deeply appreciated and highly revered poet.
Gregariousness	:	life in groups or societies
Cavernous	:	like a cave, deepset
Foyer	:	large space in a theatre for the use of audience during intervals
Dour	:	severe, stern, obstinate
Carnival	:	public merrymaking and feasting
Sniff	:	draw air in through the nose
Legendary	:	(here) famous, known
Prowess	:	valour, unusual skill

Metrical	:	composed in metre
Authenticity	:	quality of being genuine
Exactitude	:	correctness
Deviation	:	turning aside or away, difference
Recipes	:	directions for preparing a cake, a dish of food
Repartee	:	witty, clever retort
Exasperated	:	irritated, produced ill feeling in
Swoon	:	faint, fainting fit
Vibrant	:	thrilling
Subdued	:	overcame, brought under control
Unmitigated	:	severe, opposite of mitigated
Ecumenical	:	involving or uniting members of different religions
Accoutrements	:	other things that were needed for the activity
Assiduous	:	taking care that everything is done
Inextricably	:	that cannot be solved
Chemotherapy	:	treatment of disease by drugs that attack microbes
Radiation	:	the sending out of energy, heat, etc in rays
Dazed	:	made somebody feel stupid or unable to think clearly
Mess	:	state of confusion, disorder
Siblings	:	one of two or more persons having the same parents
Crimson	:	deep red
Intermittently	:	pausing or stopping at intervals

17.3.3 Summary

Agha Ali Shahid, an expatriate from Kashmir, moved to Pennsylvania in 1975 and after that he lived mainly in America. Shahid's parents continued to live in Srinagar and it was his custom to spend the summer months with them every year. He was an intermittent but firsthand witness to the mounting violence that seized the region from late 1980s onwards.

Shahid regarded his time at the Pennsylvania state as the happiest time of his life. Later he moved to Arizona to take a degree in creative writing. This in turn was followed by a series of jobs in colleges and universities; he was on leave from Utah when he had his first blackout in February 2000.

The writer, Amitav Ghosh, had known Shahid's work long before he met him. He became intimate with Shahid when he moved to Brooklyn in 2000. By this time Shahid's condition was already serious, yet his illness did not hamper their friendship or Shahid's interest, i.e. his love for music, poetry, good conversation, etc.

Shahid was gregarious by nature. There wasn't any evening when there was no party in his living room. He had the sorcerer's ability to transmute the mundane into the magical. He was a poet who had achieved greatness. He knew that he was dying. Even the most trivial exchanges with him had a special charge and urgency. He was a lover of good food.

Shahid loved repartee. The author recalls Shahid's witty exchanges with a security guard at Barcelona airport. He worked poetry into his answer. He had a prophetic vision. The nightmare that all the Pandits had vanished from the valley of Kashmir and their food had become extinct haunted him.

Shahid spoke to the author about his approaching death for the first time on 25 April2001. He wanted the author to write something about him after his death. In spite of several unsuccessful operations he had not lost his glee. On 7 May, 2001 Shahid had an important scan. The doctors gave him a year or less. They had stopped all medicines and chemotherapy. Shahid wanted to go back to Kashmir to die, but had to change his mind. He was content to be laid in Northampton, in Amherst town. He died peacefully, in his sleep, at 2 a.m. on 8 December. The author feels his presence even in his own living room. He feels amazed that so brief a friendship has resulted in so vast a void.

17.4 Some Model Explanations

1. Shahid's gregariousness————————————time to be depressed.

   This extract from *The Ghat of the Only world* tells us about Agha Shahid Ali's liking for living in groups. Shahid was such a person that he would invite people to his house and arrange parties. The author says that there used to be a party everyday in his living room. Shahid had once told the author that he loved to see the people, food and festivity in his house. This spirit of festivity prevented him from falling a victim to depression.

   The word 'gregariousness' means 'living in groups or societies'.

2. Shahid's gaze was ————————————————to his upbringing.

   The extract from *The Ghat of the Only World* by Amitav Ghosh tells us that Shahid's views regarding the solution of the Kashmir problem were not political. He never argued that policy should be framed to unite the people politically. His vision tended to be inclusive and ecumenical, i.e. he always believed in involving or uniting members of different religions. This outlook, Shahid used to say, was the result of his upbringing.

   Shahid implemented this on himself, says the writer, by constructing a Hindu temple in his house.

17.5 Let's Sum Up

In this unit we have presented an elaborate discussion of a prose piece written by Amitav Ghosh to keep his promise to a dying man, an expatriate from Kashmir,

Agha Shahid Ali. To facilitate your comprehension of the text in a proper a way, some model explanations, besides the glossary, have also been presented.

17.6 Suggested Readings

1. Amitav Ghosh : *The Calcutta Chromosome*, 2001
2. Amitav Ghosh : *The Glass Palace,* 2002.

17.7 Questions

Answer the following questions:

1. What impressions of Shahid do you gather from this prose piece?

2. How do Shahid and the writer react to the knowledge that Shahid is going to die?

3. Look up the dictionary for the meaning of the word 'Diaspora'. What do you know about Indian Diaspora?

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17.8 Answers

1. Agha Shahid Ali appears to be a sensitive soul. Though a Kashmiri expatriate in America, he always thought of Kashmir and was hurt by the mounting violence in the valley. Though he was not a political poet, his finest work relates to writings about Kashmir. Shahid's outlook was ecumenical. He did not believe in mixing up politics and religion.

   Shahid was born in Kashmir and had studied in Delhi. Later he migrated to America and served there in various colleges and universities. He was a fine scholar and brilliant teacher. His students loved and respected him. He taught his last class on 7 May 2000 at Manhattan's Baruch College. He loved music, clothes and cuisines. He loved the music of Begum Akhtar, Kishore Kumar and Bombay films. He was witty and loved repartee. When asked if he was carrying anything dangerous to other passengers, he replied "only my heart". He suffered from cancer and knew well about his approaching death. This did not diminish his love for life and friends. He enjoyed the company of friends. He bore his sufferings patiently and died peacefully. He requested the author to write something about him after his demise.

2. Shahid and the writer react differently to the knowledge that the latter is going to die. Shahid had a sudden blackout in February 2000. Tests revealed that he had a malignant brain tumour. It was on25 April 2001 that Shahid spoke to the writer about his approaching death. He had been under treatment for cancer for some fourteen months. Shahid was still on his feet and perfectly lucid. The writer was shocked into silence. Then he tried to offer reassurances. Shahid ignored them and began to laugh. Despite his physical weakness, Shahid would smile and laugh gleefully. Even when his eyesight was failing him, he could tell from the smell alone, which stage the rogan josh had reached and issued instructions. Shahid accepted his inevitable death boldly. The writer felt dazed and stared blankly as Shahid disclosed to him what the doctors had said.

Shahid had made peace with his approaching death. There was no trace of anguish or conflict on his face. The author felt shocked and overawed by the gradual decay and ultimate end of his dear friend, Shahid.

3. The dictionary defines 'Diaspora' as the movement of people from any nation or group away from their own country to live and work in other countries. This movement may be for a short period or may extend to permanent abode in the foreign country. Many Indians migrate to advanced countries for education, research and jobs.

   This piece gives us a brief glimpse of the Indian Diaspora in America. It mentions only a few members: Shahid, his brother Iqbal, his sisters Hena and Sameetah, writers Suketu Mehta and Amitav Ghosh. The other members are not mentioned by name.

   The Indian Diaspora retains their love for everything belonging to their motherland—be it food, films, music or poetry. They do feel concerned about the socio-political affairs prevailing back at home. They visit their motherland occasionally and have a desire to be laid to rest there. In short, they possess

UNIT - 18

Brooker T. Washington : My Struggle for an Education

Structure

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18.1 Introduction
18.2 About the Author
18.3 Reading the text
  18.3.1 The Story : My Struggle for an Education (Text)
  18.3.2 Glossary
  18.3.3 Summary
18.4 Let's Sum Up
18.5 Suggested Readings
18.6 Questions
18.7 Answers

18.0 Objectives

Just as you observed a shift in your study in unit 17 by the reading of an African short story in this unit also you will read an autobiographical sketch written by an African-American writer belonging to the times when the dark clouds of slavery had shrouded humanity. The purpose of this unit is to enable you to understand how Broker T. Washington fought against the policy of discrimination based on colour.

18.1 Introduction

The life and struggle of black Americans has been a major concern for people all around the world. Many black American have written a great deal about the hardships faced by these people. Your reading of this short story here will make an interesting study and give you a vivid picture of the struggle of the black people.

In the story 'My struggle for an Education' Brooker T. Washington gives a moving account of the difficulties he faced to find a place in a school. At the age of sixteen he had to face lots of troubles and hardships in order to get admission in a school. Racial discrimination was prevalent and blacks were not given the right to education. Washington makes a tremendous effort to prove to the administration of the school that the colour of his skin in no way determines his lack of capability.

18.2 About the Author

Brooker T. Washington (1856-1915) was one of the best-known black American educators and racial leaders. He founded the Tuskegee Institute for black students. He did a great deal for the upliftment of the blacks by helping them realize the value of education. The has also written a lot on the issue of slavery. His autobiographical works are : *The Story of My Life and Work, Up from Slavery, My Larger Education.*

18.3 Reading the text

The story is an autobiographical account of the life of Brooker T. Washington. Here he narrates the episode of his life, when he was sixteen years old. He was working in a coal mine where he developed an urge to be educated in a good school. The story relates to his struggle to prove his capability in a racially discriminated society to get education. You must read it with interest.

18.3.1 My Struggle for an Education (Text)

One day, while at work in the coal mine, I happened to overhear two miners talking about a great school for coloured people somewhere in Virginia. This was the first time that I had ever heard anything about any kind of school or college that was more pretentious than the little coloured school in our town.

As they went on describing the school, it seemed to me that it must be the greatest place on earth. Not even Heaven presented more attractions for me at that time than did the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Insitute in Virginia, about which these men were talking. I resolved at once to go to that school, although I had no idea where it was, or how many miles away, or how I was going to reach it. I was on fire constantly with one ambition, and that was to go to Hampton. This thought was with me day and night.

In the Fall of 1872, I determined to make an effort to get there. My mother was troubled with a grave fear that I was starting out on a 'wild-goose chase'. At any rate, I got only a half-hearted consent from her that I might start. I had very little money with which to buy clothes and pay my travelling expenses. My brother John helped me all that he could; but, of course, that was not a great deal.

Finally the great day came, and I started for Hampton. I had only a small cheap satchel that contained the few articles of clothing I could get. My mother at the time was rather weak and broken in health. I hardly expected to see her again, and thus our parting was all the more sad. She, however, was very brave through it all.

The distance from Malden to Hampton is about five hundred miles. By walking, begging rides both in wagons and in the cars, in some way, after a number of days, I reached the city of Richmond, Virginia, about eighty-two miles from Hampton. When I reached there, tired, hungry, and dirty, it was late in the night.

I had never been in a large city, and this rather added to my misery. When I reached Richmond, I was completely out of money. I had not a single acquaintance in the place; and, being unused to city ways, I did not known where to go. I asked at several places for lodging, but they all wanted money and that was what I did not have. Knowing nothing else better to do, I walked the streets.

I must have walked the streets till after midnight. At last I became so exhausted that I could walk no longer. I was tired, I was hungry, I was everything but discouraged. Just, about the time when I reached extreme physical exhaustion, I came upon a portion of a street where the board sidewalk was considerably elevated. I waited for a few minutes till I was sure that no passers-by could see me and then crept under the sidewalk and lay for the night on the ground, with my satchel of clothing for a pillow. Nearly all night I could hear the tramp of feet over my head.

The next morning I found myself somewhat refreshed, but I was extremely hungry. As soon as it became light enough for me to see my surroundings, I noticed that I was near a large ship. It seemed to be unloading a cargo of pig iron. I went at once to the vessel in order to get money for food. The captain, a white man, who seemed to be kind-hearted, consented. I worked long enough to earn money for my breakfast; and it seems to me, as I remember it now, to have been about the best breakfast that I have ever eaten.

My work pleased the captain so well that he told me I could continue working for a small amount per day. This I was very glad to do. I continued working on this vessel for a number of days. After buying food with my small wages there was not much left to pay my way to Hampton. In order to economize in every way possible, I continued to sleep under the sidewalk.

When I had saved enough money with which to reach Hampton, I thanked the captain of the vessel for his kindness, and started again. Without any unusual occurrence I reached Hampton, with a surplus of exactly fifty cents with which to begin my education. The first sight of the large, three-story, brick school building seemed to have rewarded me for all that I had undergone in order to reach the place. The sight of it seemed to give me new life.

As soon as possible after reaching the grounds of the Hampton Institute, I presented myself before the head teacher for assignment to a class. Having been so long without proper food, a bath, and change of clothing, I did not, of course, make a very favourable impression upon her. I could see at once that there were doubts in her mind about the wisdom of admitting me as a student. For some time she did not refuse to admit me, neither did she decide in my favour. I continued to linger about her, and to impress her in all the ways I could with my worthiness. In the meantime I saw her admitting other students, and that added greatly to my discomfort. I felt, deep down in my heart, that I could do as well as they, if I could only get a chance to show what was in me.

After some hours had passed, the head teacher said to me, “The adjoining recitation room needs sweeping. Take the broom and sweep it”.

It occurred to me at once that here was my chance. Never did I receive an order with more delight.

I swept the recitation room three times. Then I got a dusting cloth, and I dusted it four times. All the woodwork around the walls, every bench, table and desk, I went over four times with my dusting cloth. Besides, every piece of furniture had been moved and every closet and corner in the room had been thoroughly cleaned. I had the feeling that in a large measure my future depended upon the impression I made upon the teacher in the cleaning of that room. When I was through, I reported to the head teacher. She was a “Yankee” woman who knew just where to look for dirt. She went into the room and inspected the floor and closets; then she took her handkerchief and rubbed it on the woodwork about the walls, and over the table and benches. When she was unable to find one bit of dirt on the floor, or a particle of dust on any of the furniture, she quietly remarked, “I guess you will do to enter

this institution".

I was one of the happiest souls on earth. The sweeping of that room was my college examination. I have passed several examinations since then, but I have always felt that this was the best one I ever passed.....

18.3.2 Glossary

Overhear	:	hear by chance
Coloured	:	of the Negro race.
Virginia	:	State just north of the deep south in America
Pretentious	:	claiming great merit; (here) sounding important
Resolved	:	decided
Constantly	:	continuously
Ambition	:	strong desire.
Fall	:	(here) autumn
Effort	:	strong or vigorous attempt.
Grave	:	serious (as in 'a grave mistake).
Wild-goose chase	:	a useless and foolish action or enterprise.
At any rate	:	in any case.
Half-hearted	:	without much enthusiasm.
Consent	:	permission (agreement)
Satchel	:	bag for carrying articles (e.g. books for school).
Parting	:	separation
Acquaintance	:	person whom one has met a few times; someone known.
Lodging	:	room or rooms rented to live in.
Exhausted	:	tired out.
Portion	:	part.
Sidewalk	:	'pavement' in Britain; path at the side of a street for persons on foot. A board sidewalk is constructed by planking-long, flat pieces of wood.
Considerably	:	a great deal.
Elevated	:	raised higher.
Passers-by	:	people walking that way.
Tramp	:	Sound of (heavy) footsteps
Refreshed	:	strengthened; made to feel fresh again.
Surroundings	:	everything arond a place or about it.

Cargo	:	goods carried in a ship or aircraft
Pig iron	:	crude iron that is refined to produce steel.
Vessel	:	ship; large boat
Unload	:	remove cargo from (ship)
Wage	:	payment for work.
Economize	:	cut down expenses
Surplus	:	(here) money saved (after satisfying need)
Fifty cents	:	half a dollar
Undergo	:	experience; go through
Assignment	:	something given to do; (here) placement for admission to a class
Favourable	:	helpful.
Linger	:	(here) stay near
Worthiness	:	being worthy; having merit
Discomfort	:	uneasiness (of mind or body)
Adjoining	:	next or nearest
Recitation	:	repeating lessons or passages learnt by heart.
Delight	:	joy or pleasure
Closet	:	Here cupboard, cabinet, etc., for utensils or clothing
In a large measure	:	to a great extent; in a big way.
Yankee	:	a native of one of the Northern States.
Particles	:	smallest possible quantity.
Soul	:	(here) person; a human being.
Autobiography	:	story of the facts of one's own life.

18.3.3 Summary

In this autographical sketch story Brooker T. Washington presents an account of a significant event of his life. He used to work in a coal mine where he happened to know about a very good school in Virginia. This school was far more good than the one in his own town. The name of this school was the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute in Virginia. Hearing that these people appreciate it so much he at once made up his mind to go to that school although he knew nothing about its location.

In the autumn of 1872 with a reluntant permission from his mother he started for Hampton with very little money and a small bag with few clothes. As his mother was very ill, the parting became very sad. He walked and begged rides and in a number of days reached a large city Richmond about eighty-two miles away from Hampton. He was completely out of money, hungry,

exhausted but not discouraged. Having no place to go he crept under a raised platform on a pavement.

Next day he got-up refreshed but hungry and started to look for some work as he was very hungry. He saw a cargo ship unloading pig-iron. The kind-hearted captain of the ship gave him work and he finally earned his breakfast for the day. Due to his good work the captain asked him to continue work. He still slept under the sidewalk and finally managed to save money to reach Hampton. The sight of the school building seemed to him a reward for the hardship he faced. But here he could not make a favourable impression on his teacher as he had been without proper food, rest, bath and change of clothing. The teacher did not refuse admittance neither did she decide in favour. She kept giving admission to other students which troubled him all the more. He desperately wanted a chance to prove his worth and he got it when the teacher finally asked him to clean the recitation room. He swept and dusted the room several times as he knew that his future depended upon it. The teacher came and inspected the room minutely and could not find a bit of dirt. She finally admitted him to the school. He was extremely happy and all through his life considered the cleaning of that room the best examination he ever passed.

18.4 Let's sum up

In this unit you have come to know about the hardships the black or the coloured people had to undergo during the times of slavery. The story of Washington's efforts to get into a good school is quite interesting. He stayed without food and money with extreme physical exhaustion, swept and cleaned the room without getting discouraged in order to get education. His struggle for education is very inspirational. The summary has given you the whole story in brief followed by a glossary of difficult words.

18.5 Suggested Readings

1. M.K. Gandhi : *My Experiments with Truth*
2. Brooker T. Washington : *Up from Slavery.*
3. Goh Sin Tub : *One Singapore : 65 stories by a Singaporean*

18.6 Questions

(a) Answer the following questions in two-three lines each :

(i) What made the parting of Washintgon and his mother all the more sadder?

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_____

(ii) Where did he spend his nights in Richmond and how?

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_____

(iii) What added to Washington's discomfort while he waited for admission?

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(iv) Why did it take the author several days to reach Richmond?

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(v) Why did the author think that his first breakfast in Richmond was the best he had ever eaten?

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(b) Answer the following questions in 50 words each :

(i) Briefly enlist the qualities of the author.

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(ii) Washington found Richmond difficult for few reasons. Give three of these reasons.

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(c) Answer the following question in 200 words :

(i) What did the author do in Richmond? Discuss.

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18.7 Answers

(a) (i) As Washington's mother was very weak and ill they did not expect to see each other again; that is why the parting was all the more sadder.

(ii) He spent the nights under a sidewalk on a raised platform using his satchel as a pillow.

(iii) While he waited for admission, the teacher was admitting other students to the school. This added to Washington discomfort.

(iv) It took Washington several days to reach Richmond as he had no money. He had to walk and depend largely on free rides.

(v) The author's first breakfast in Richmond was the best he had ever eaten because this was for the first time he worked and earned his breakfast.

(b) (i) Washington was a very hard working boy. He had a strong will power and determination. He loved his mother dearly. He had great courage. Whatever he did, he made efforts to do it with perfection. He was a boy who never got discouraged in the worst of situations.

(ii) Washington found Richmond difficult because of the following reasons:

- He was hungry and completely out of money when he reached there and could not buy his breakfast.
- He had no acquaintance in Richmond and so he had no place to spend his nights.
- He had walked and taken free rides to reach Richmond which had left him very exhausted.

(iii) When Washington first met the head teacher he did not give a good impression because he had been so long without proper food, a bath and change of clothing.

(c) (i) On reaching Richmond, Washington faced lots of difficulties. He was completely out of money and had no money to buy his breakfast. After wandering till midnight he found a raised platform on a pavement and spent his nights there as long as he stayed at Richmond. He saw a cargo ship unloading pig iron and requested the captain for work. The captain allowed him and gave him wages after a day's work. With this money he bought his breakfast and considered it the best one he ever had. The captain was impressed by his hardwork and asked him to continue working. For many days Washington worked on the ship, spent little money on his breakfast, continued to sleep under the povement and saved enough money to reach Hampton. This is the hard work, perseverance and struggle of Washington in Richmond.