UG ENG S2 02 (AEC 2)

FOUR YEAR DEGREE COURSE

(CBCS in Accordance with NEP 2020)

ALTERNATIVE ENGLISH

Second Semester

Ability Enhancement Course

UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMME

Padmanath Gohainbaruah School of Humanities

KRISHNA KANTA HANDIQUI STATE OPEN UNIVERSITY

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ALTERNATIVE ENGLISH

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COURSE INTRODUCTION: ALTERNATIVE ENGLISH

The Alternative English Course has been designed for learners not opting for the study of a subject in any Modern Indian Language (MIL) offered by the University. The Course aims to provide the learners with a broad idea on various categories or literary forms of English literature such as essays, letters, speeches, novels and travel writing. This course has two Blocks comprising eleven units in total.In the first Block, the learners will gain a comprehensive idea of several significant essays while reading through their thematic emphasis on various aspects. It also comprises a landmark speech and extracts from the Prologue of an Autobiography. The learners shall also get to read a letter by a famous writer and become familiar with the story of Creation from the Bible.The second Block consists of extracts from various significant texts, a Nobel Prize speech and a novella which have been selected in keeping with the interest of the learners and the significance of these literary works. Dwelling upon diverse aspects and varied themes, this course aims to familiarise the learners with the different shades of literature.The course comprises the following units:

Unit 1: This unit introduces the well-travelled E.P. Gee and one of his informative and interesting essays, "The Rhino of Kaziranga" which describes the habits and habitats of a unique creature that is relatively unknown to many even today. It emphasizes on 'knowledge' as the first step towards conservation of animals.

Unit 2: This unit deals with the "Story of Creation" of the Holy Bible. The learners will be able to familiarize themselves with the Biblical extract on the story of God and His creation of Mankind from their reading of the unit.

Unit 3: This unit deals with Salman Rushdie's "Imaginary Homelands", one of the popular essays that explore issues like cosmopolitanism,diasporic consciousness, etc. among others.

Unit 4: This unit deals with the "Prologue" of Bertrand Russell's *Autobiography* which is widely accepted as the most impressive and precise record of his own life. Stating the three influential factors that has shaped his life, namely, "the longing for love, the search for knowledge, and unbearable pity for the suffering of mankind", Russell writes in a simple yet elegant manner.

Unit 5: This unit discusses Matthew Arnold's essay "Literature and Science". In this essay Arnold emphasises on the interconnection between literature and science and lays down their importance in the enriching of human knowledge.

Unit 6: This unit throws light on Richard Kearney's "On Stories", an essay which deals with the significance of story-telling, as well as, the various elements of a story.

Unit 7: This unit contains the famous speech of Martin Luther King Junior "I Have a Dream" that was delivered from the steps of Lincoln Memorial, Washington on August 28, 1963, in which he called for racial equality and an end on discrimination. It was the defining moment of the American Civil Rights Movement.

Unit 8: This unit deals with one of the letters of Lord Chesterfield addressed to his son. Although Chesterfield's letters were meant to be primarily a piece of advice to his son, his letters became widely popular as they give the readers an insight into the writer's views on social manners prevalent in the eighteenth century.

Unit 9: This unit deals with an interesting section titled "A Camp in the Dark" from R. L. Stevenson's*Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes* providing the learners with one the best examples of outdoor literature.

Unit 10: This unit discusses the acceptance speech delivered by Derek Walcott while receiving the Noble Prize in Literature. His speech titled "The Antilles: Fragments of Epic Memory" is notable for its unique style and reflects his debt to his childhood experiences of growing up in an island.

Unit 11: This unit deals with Antoine de Saint Exupery's novella *The Little Prince*. It deals with fantasy and is an adult fable depicting the differences in the perception of a child from a man. The story of the novella is believed to be an inspiration from the life of the writer himself.

While going through a unit, you may also notice some text boxes, which have been included to help you know some of the difficult terms and concepts. You will also read about some relevant ideas and concepts in "LET US KNOW" along with the text. We have kept "CHECK YOUR PROGRESS" questions in each unit. These have been designed to self-check your progress of study. The answers to these questions are given at the end of the unit. We strongly advise that you answer the questions immediately after you finish reading the section in which these questions occur. We have also included a few books in the "FURTHER READING" which will be helpful for your further consultation. The books referred during the preparation of the units have been added at the end of each Block. However, this SLM is not an end in itself and the learners are strongly advised to consult the books and other resources recommended for reading.

UNIT 1 : E. P. GEE: “THE RHINO OF KAZIRANGA”

UNIT STRUCTURE

1.1 Learning Objectives

1.2 Introduction

1.3 E. P. Gee: Life and Works

1.4 Explanation of the Essay

1.5 Style and Language

1.6 Let Us Sum Up

1.7 Further Reading

1.8 Answer to Check Your Progress

1.9 Model Questions

1.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- discuss the life and works of E. P. Gee
- read the essay, “The Rhino of Kaziranga”
- discuss the essay and the techniques used by the essayist
- appreciate the wonderful wildlife of Assam, and the need for conservation of wildlife and its habitat.

1.2 INTRODUCTION

This unit aims to acquaint you with E. P. Gee, one of the most famous naturalists to have ever studied the wild life of India. Edward Pritchard Gee was a pioneer in the field of wildlife study in our country. His contribution in this area is even more remarkable when you consider the time when he lived and worked. Wildlife, conservation, and such words were neither as common nor as important in those days as they are now. Consequently, Gee had no access to the kind of infrastructure that wildlife enthusiasts have today. Inhospitable terrain, unfamiliar and often dangerous jungles, tracks rather than roads, camps far away from towns and villages, and the constant fear of disease were some of the problems Gee had to face and

overcome in the course of his passion. Thanks to the efforts of this man, Kaziranga is now the brightest jewel in the crown of Indian conservation stories. Therefore, this unit tries to detail the life and work of this great man. Besides this, the unit also sets up the learning objectives that will help you focus on the key areas dealt with in this unit.

The present essay is not meant to be a literary piece. Rather, it is a formal account of observations carried out by the author on a particular species of animal in the course of his study of the wild life of India. As such, it is meant to be informative rather than entertaining. Moreover, Gee's target readers were the scientific community rather than the students of English literature and language. It is, in fact, one of the chapters of his great book called *The Wildlife of India*. However, as you will find, Gee's language is very simple to follow. Moreover, the language he uses is free from technical words, or **jargon**. This makes the reading of his essay, or the understanding of what Gee has to say, an easy task. As students of English, the interest should lie in the technique used in such **genres** of writing and in the author's personal touch, which makes it such an interesting reading.



Jargon : words or expressions used by a particular profession and difficult for others to understand

Genres : particular type or style of literature, art, film, music etc. that one can recognize for its special features.

Besides this, the essay describes the habits and habitat of a unique creature that is relatively unknown to many even today. Rhinos, which once roamed all over the sub continent and South- East Asia, today live in a small patch of safe swampland. Unless we take an interest in the effort to help the animal to survive, we may lose this precious animal for ever. This is no far fetched idea. The Indian cheetah has become extinct; the hispid hare can no longer be seen; the pigmy hog has been pulled from the brink of extinction— but only just. That too was only because of the dedication of a small group of dedicated men. Knowledge is the first step towards conservation. Conservation is the only step towards preservation- not just of the rhino, but of you and me and all mankind.

1.3 E. P. GEE: LIFE AND WORKS

Edward Pritchard Gee was not a **litterateur** but a wildlife enthusiast. He came to India to become a tea planter, but found himself so drawn towards the fascinating wild life of this country that he devoted much more

time to studying it than to tea manufacture. In the course of his career the Government of India commissioned him to undertake a number of surveys of the wildlife of the country. As a result, Gee travelled the length and breadth of the country– from the Himalayas in the north, to the home of the Asiatic lion in the west, to the remote hills of what is now Arunachal Pradesh in the east. His main area of work was, however, eastern India. One of the most significant results of his study is his book called *The Wildlife of India*. The foreword to this book was written by Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru who, at the time of the publication of the book, was independent India's first Prime Minister. The essay you will read here is the nineteenth chapter of this book of twenty chapters which has a photograph of a rhino on the front cover.

Edward Pritchard Gee (1904-1968) was born in County Durham, England, and was educated at Durham School and at Emmanuel College, Cambridge. He came to India at the age of twenty-three in 1927 to become a tea planter and was stationed in Assam. He retired in 1959. From 1942 until 1948 he served as an officer in the Indian Army and saw service in different parts of the Burma front. He was appointed Honorary Forest Officer by the Government of Assam in 1935, and he held the post until his retirement. Later, in 1951 he was appointed a member of a Sub-Committee formed by the Government of India to frame a policy for wild life preservation in the country. The next year he was made a member of the Executive Committee of the Indian Board of Wild Life. He was also a member of the State Wild Life Boards of the states of Assam, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa.



Litterateur : professional writer.

***Stag* :** male deer.

As a member of the Survival Service Commission of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, he was asked to undertake a survey of the rhinoceros in Nepal in 1959 and 1963. He also studied the lions in Gir Forest, the Kashmir **stag** and the wild asses in Gujarat for the same organization which later appointed him a member of its National Park Systems Planning Committee.

While in Assam, Gee was taken in by the breath-taking landscape, the lush greenery and the sheer variety of life that this land supported. In the course of his career as a planter, he was stationed in tea gardens all over the state of Assam. Perhaps his stint as manager of Hatikhuli Tea

Estate was the most rewarding to this man, who had an unquenchable love for wildlife. Hatikhuli, with its proximity to Kaziranga, the home of *Unicornis*, the one horned rhino, gave this budding naturalist the ideal environs to study the wildlife of the area. Thus began a journey that took him to all the corners of this lush land, studying animals and birds in close quarters, under often inhospitable conditions, with little support save a passion that refused to give up.



Flora and fauna **:** plants and animals.
Primates **:** monkeys.

Travelling throughout the length and breadth of the subcontinent, Gee was possibly the first of the naturalists to document, for the first time ever, the immense variety of **flora and fauna** in the subcontinent. The trail led all over the Indian subcontinent; but it was in Assam that Gee was to receive immortality. At Manas, a stretch of forest that covers an area from Assam to the neighbouring Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan, he discovered a unique species of **primates** that were golden in colour— except for their black faces. Thus, the world came to know about the Golden Langur, and, in honour of its discoverer, named it *Presbytis Geei* (pronounced *press-bite-issjee-aiee*), or Gee's Golden Langur.



LET US KNOW

You will be interested to know that *Presbytis Geei*, or Gee's Golden Langur, is found only in the border area of India and Bhutan in the wildlife sanctuary we know as Manas. This beautiful creature is covered with a golden coloured fur that looks exceptionally beautiful when the sun shines from behind the animal. It has a black face and a long tail. You can see this beautiful langur at the Guwahati zoo.

Interestingly, in the course of his study of wildlife, he managed to make quite a few converts. Prominent among them was Dr. Robin Bannerjee, a doctor attached to the Hatikhuli Tea Estate, who was an avid hunter. Dr. Bannerjee used to fondly recollect how he was lured away from the gun to the camera when Gee *Sahib* showed him how 'kills with the camera gave you your trophy, but kept the creature alive'.

His travels through the length and breadth of India left Gee with a

wealth of information about the wildlife of this part of the world, which resulted in his one and only book- *The Wildlife of India.* The important thing here, however, is that before Gee, no one had ever bothered themselves with the rich bio- diversity of the region. Perhaps, had it not been for E. P. Gee the world would never have honoured the likes of his followers like Padmashree Dr. Robin Banerjee. Perhaps, Kaziranga would never have been a World Heritage Site, and perhaps the rhino of Kaziranga would have been extinct by now.

A man who travelled through Europe, the U.S.A., Canada, East Africa and Asia, chiefly to study and photograph the diverse wildlife, Mr. Gee won several awards for his photographs of birds and animals in the Nature Division of the Federation of Indian Photography. His films have been screened in many places of the world, some of them on BBC Television. Many of his illustrated articles were published in such journals as *The Field, Country Life, Natural History* in the U.S.A., and, in India, in *The Statesman* and *The Illustrated Weekly of India.*

E. P. Gee never wrote as a litterateur. For him, his primary business was that of a naturalist. Yet strange are the ways of history. We are born to an age where the health of the planet is in such danger that all disciplines must come together if we are ever to save the planet. Consequently, the Gee of conservation must also serve as the Gee of English Literature. For it is only when the two become one, can we hope to spread the message of conservation to all human beings and, in the course, save our planet.



LET US KNOW

Dr. Robin Bannerjee's bungalow at Golaghat in Assam has been converted to a museum by the Vivekananda Kendra to whom he willed the property.

It has a fabulous collection of photographs of wildlife, dolls from around the world, a set of priceless statuettes made from caribou antlers and a whole lot of films on wildlife that he had made- besides many more treasures. Interestingly, the dolls were gifted to him by children from around the world with whom he had interacted.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: What was E.P. Gee's occupation?

Q 2: What was E.P. Gee's discovery and where did it take place?

Q 3: What is the name given to E.P. Gee's discovery?

Q 4: Name the book written by Gee.



LET US KNOW

It is important for you to remember that this was the earliest study undertaken on the rhino in Assam. Many of Gee's observations have led to very different inferences in recent researches into the life of this amazing creature. However, Gee's work remains one of the most significant studies undertaken on the *Unicornis*, i.e. the one-horned rhinos (origin: Latin *Unicornis* from Cornu 'horn').



ACTIVITY 1.1

Select any creature that you see from your house everyday. Write an essay on it. Ideally, you should complete this activity before you read the essay.

1.4 EXPLANATION OF THE ESSAY



Haven **:** a place of safety.

E. P. Gee begins his essay with a beautiful description of Kaziranga, home of the rhino, calling it one of the last unoccupied grassy areas of the Brahmaputra valley. Bordered by the Mikir Hills (now Karbi Anglong) and the mighty Brahmaputra, Kaziranga was a **haven** for poachers until 1908. By this time the authorities realised that there were only a handful of rhinos left. Closed for shooting in that year itself, Kaziranga graduated from 'Game Sanctuary' in 1926 to 'Wild Life Sanctuary' towards the second half of the 1940s. The name 'Wild Life Sanctuary' is important. 'Game' is a word that implies animals that are shot for sport. Therefore, a game sanctuary would

have implied an area where animals are reserved to be shot by hunters-much like the 'Game Reserves' in certain parts of Africa where animals are kept for that very purpose. On the other hand, a 'Wild Life Sanctuary' implies a place where all kinds of wildlife, beasts and birds, are provided with a safe haven.

Soon after the shooting was stopped, nature reclaimed Kaziranga, reverting the place to an unknown swamp land. Practically forgotten by everyone, even forest officials did not venture into it on the plea that not even elephants could enter such an inhospitable area. Later, however, A. J. W. Milroy decided to stop the poaching and develop the place so that it could be visited by people.

Gee tells us on the basis of his conversation with the first Forest Officer to be posted at Kaziranga that it was full of poachers in the 1930s who had killed over forty rhinos for their horns. He humorously recounts how the Mikirs (nowadays called Karbi), who wore very brief loincloths with a length of cloth hanging behind, used to run away from the forest guards. Often caught by the piece of cloth hanging behind, they would chop this part off and run away. Rather humorously, Gee calls this part their 'tails'.

The author was among the very first visitors when Kaziranga was finally thrown open to visitors. He recalls how they went on the backs of two elephants and had carried two guns for self-defence. However, realizing that there was no real threat to their safety, Gee stopped carrying guns into the sanctuary (or to any other forest in India) after this. As for the rhino, Gee says that they looked 'improbable'. In fact, such is the reaction the rhino invariably draws due to its thick folds of skin that look like medieval armour, its horn and its **lumbering, dinosaur**-like looks.



Lumbering : *moving in a* slow, heavy and awkward way.

Dinosaur **:** an animal that lived millions of years ago but is extinct now.

In the early days, rhinos were quite unused to human presence. Therefore, it was not unusual for them to charge at the elephants carrying visitors. The elephants, too, were not trained to withstand the charge of a rhino. Thus, often a charging rhino would cause an elephant to turn tail and flee through the dense grass. Often, the mahouts, too, helped in the flight. So thrilling was it to be charged by rhino that Gee describes a humorous entry in the visitors' book which regrets that the only 'charge' was by the

forest department.

Later on, however, as these creatures became more used to the presence of visitors, they stopped being aggressive. Elephants, too, were trained to stand to their ground in the face of any attack. It then became clear that rhinos would charge only if they had young calves to protect. Even then, if the elephant did not **budge**, they would stop short, turn around and **trot away**.



Budge **:** move slightly
Trot away **:** to run or walk fast
Tushes **:** large incisor teeth
Wallows **:** lies or rolls about in water or mud.

Gee notes that on the rare instances where rhinos actually attack, they use their sharp lower incisor teeth and not their horns. African rhinos, on the other hand, use their horns as weapons as they have shorter jaws and weaker **'tushes'** than the Indian rhino. This is further proved by the fact that Indian rhinos do not keep on sharpening their horns as their African cousins do. If they ever rub their horns against tree trunks, it is to get rid of parasites rather than for any other reason. Gee recalls how Ralph Graham, Assistant Director of the Brookfield Zoo in Chicago, noticed his pair of Indian rhino rubbing their horns. His simple solution of applying medicated mud to the horns caused the parasites to die—and the animals stopped rubbing their horns. Mud is a close ally of the rhino in the wild. During the daytime it **wallows** in mud to keep away parasites and to stop flies from laying eggs in the folds of their skin.

Gee then recounts an ancient myth that explains the 'armour plating' of the rhino. It is said that, once, Lord Krishna decided to use rhinos in place of elephants in battle. However, when the creature, all covered in armour for battle, was brought in, it was found to be too stupid to obey commands.

Therefore, it was sent back to the forest. Unfortunately, they forgot to take off its armour—and so it remains until this day. Historically, however, there are records of kings who have used rhinos—with tridents fixed to their horns—in battle.

It may also be that the Rhino, with its scientific name of *Rhinoceros unicornis*, is the basis for the legend of the unicorn. Belief in the rhino's ability to detect poison with its horn and its attacking elephants are similar to the beliefs surrounding the mythical unicorn. Gee considers the rhino to

be the actual 'king of the beasts'. This is so because both elephants and tigers are afraid of this creature. Tigers never dare to attack adult rhinos although, if they catch a mother off-guard, they carry off rhino calves.

The author then goes on to tell us about an incident that took place in 1886. A rhino had been shot at by a hunter and had fled wounded. Since it was evening, the hunter did not pursue the beast. Next day, following the trail, he found the wounded and bleeding rhino fighting with two tigers. Both the tigers were badly lacerated and were bleeding profusely. The hunter shot at the tigers, which fled, and then he shot the wounded rhino dead. This is a wonderful evidence of the strength, courage and agility of the Indian rhino. It is much more **agile** than an elephant and is also swifter. Elephants cannot run. They merely shuffle along at a fast pace and are unable to cross any ditch that is more than six feet wide. This is so because six feet is the maximum length of its stride.



Agile **:** able to move quickly and easily.

Exterminate **:** killed; wiped out.

There are a total of five species of rhino still surviving in the world. Two of them—the Great African Black and the Great African White—are two horned. Three more species are Asian and the numbers of all five species are rapidly dwindling. In size, the African white is the largest, followed by the Indian. In former times, all the three Asian species used to be found in India. However, the Javan lesser one horned rhino, that used to be found in the Sunderbans, was **exterminated** in around 1900, whereas the Sumatran two- horned rhino, once found in the Mizo hills, was exterminated in around 1935. Of all these species, two are grazers and they both ensure that their calves walk in front of them. Gee feels that this is a precautionary measure against tigers or lions in grassland.

Gee next tries to understand why rhinos have failed to survive except when provided strict protection. Although some believe the creature to be short sighted and hard of hearing, Gee thinks that these animals are somewhat slow- witted and **foolhardy**. Where other animals run for cover when threatened, rhinos do not. Instead, they often charge—thereby exposing themselves further. Besides, their habit of depositing dung regularly at a fixed place makes them easy prey for anyone choosing to hunt them.



Foolhardy **:** one that takes unnecessary risk.

Gee also notes that these dung heaps are not markers of 'territory'.

Rhinos move from one place to another in search of good grazing. Therefore, they do not have any strict territory. Like the Nilgai and some other **antelopes**, rhinos use whatever dung-heap they come upon.

Rhinos are solitary creatures. Even when many of them use the same mud wallow, they come separately and leave separately. As for the sounds this creature makes, Gee has noticed a roar or **bellow**, a **grunt**, a snort, and a whistle.

A unique kind of behaviour has been noticed in old Indian rhinos. Sometimes old rhinos leave the sanctuary and stray close to human habitation. Here they are usually protected by loving villagers and become almost half-tame. Two of the more famous of such rhinos were lovingly nicknamed *Boora*

Goonda and *Kan Kata* by the villagers. They were welcome tourist attractions, too. Often, visitors who did not spot any rhinos in the sanctuary would satisfy themselves by watching these old ones from a close distance.



Antelope **:** an African or Asian animal like a deer that runs very fast.

Bellow **:** a shout in a loud, deep voice

Grunt **:** a short low sound in the throat made by animals like pigs.

Stockade **:** an enclosure formed with wooden parts.

Rhinos from Kaziranga have been sent to zoos around the world. To capture the animal, a pit is first dug in the middle of a frequently used path. It is camouflaged with twigs, leaves and grass. When a rhino falls into the pit, it is captured and then removed into a **stockade.** In the beginning, captured rhinos can be vicious and savage. But once it realizes that there is no danger, it becomes surprisingly docile. Gee recollects how one such captured rhino used to lick his hand whenever it got the chance. Some of these captured rhinos have successfully bred in zoos.

Speaking about the mating habits of rhinos Gee says that rhino cows come into season every forty-six to forty-eight days. During this period they must be served by a bull that must also be in the **rut**. After this, a long gestation of over sixteen months follows. Gee also says that an adult rhino pursuing another usually means a cow pursuing a reluctant bull. (Other naturalists have, however claimed that it is usually a bull trying to catch up with a cow).



Rut **:** the time of year when male animals become sexually active.

The author fondly recollects how he has been a constant visitor of Kaziranga ever since it opened; how he has visited it in different seasons; how Kaziranga wears a different garb each season. He closes the piece

with a couple of lines that are so very poetic in tone and texture that one is convinced of Gee's boundless love for this bit of paradise on earth.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 5: What is the difference between a game sanctuary and a wild life sanctuary?

.....

.....

Q 6: Why do Indian rhinos rub their horn against tree trunks?

.....

Q 7: Why does Gee consider the rhino to be the actual 'king of beasts'?

.....

Q 8: How many species of rhino are still surviving? What are they?

.....

Q 9: How is a rhino captured?

.....

1.5 STYLE AND LANGUAGE

Let us not forget that E. P. Gee never thought of himself as a professional writer. He was a wild-life enthusiast who was trying to record the marvellous and breath-taking drama of nature that Kaziranga was displaying every day. As a result, it would be futile to look for those techniques that are usually used by men of letters, in the work of this naturalist. It would be well for us to remind ourselves that Gee is first and foremost an observer of nature, and that he writes his experiences down only because there is no other way of recording them. Thus, what we should look for—first and foremost—is a simple directness of expression of a man who is bent on recording experience. *Secondly*, since Gee is writing in his native language, that is English, one notices that the **exhilaration** of being witness to something magnificent is communicated in simple language- direct from the heart- rather than in any universally recognized **contrived** mode,



Exhilaration : joy; happiness; euphoria.

Contrived: forced; artificial.

prescribed for particular effect. In fact, you will notice a tendency to use **anecdotes** and **ruminations** in a manner that is very much 'conversational'. In other words, none of the usually accepted techniques prescribed in the world of letters is to be found in the work of E. P. Gee.



Anecdotes **:** a short entertaining story about a real incident or person.

Rumination **:** thinking deeply about something.

Weaned **:** influenced him to give up

Revelling **:** getting great pleasure from

Tomes **:** books especially large and serious ones.

E. P. Gee writes in a rather loose and simple fashion that seems rather removed from the terse, clipped style one expects in factual reporting. This is probably due to the fact that Gee never writes as a scientist or a naturalist writing for other such technical people. Instead, his style emerges from the genuine love for and wonder at the amazing diversity of flora and fauna he discovered in India—a discovery that **weaned** him away from his perceived calling of a tea-planter to a committed observer of wild life. He is a man speaking to men, **reveling** in the joy of the bounty of nature and bent more on communicating this joy to his fellow human beings than on writing scholarly **tomes** on his beloved wild life.

Consequently, Gee writes in a style that can easily be appreciated by scholar and layman alike. He avoids cumbersome words and expressions and sticks to a lucid, easy prose that flows as spontaneously as conversation over afternoon tea and cakes at the *Sahib's* bungalow overlooking the swamps where the rhinos wallow beyond the tea shrubs. Besides, he has an easy sense of humour that often shows him the funny side of things. (In one of the chapters in his book, for instance, where he talks about the birds that the people of the North East keep as pets, he talks about a hill mynah that he once kept in his bungalow. These birds are wonderful mimics and can mimic human voices exceedingly well. He humorously recounts how his servants would often bring him tea or his horse, saddled and ready, without his having issued any order. His sheer joy at his servants being made fools of by the mynah is so contagious that the reader can hardly help grinning as he reads).

Besides this, doubtless due to the sincerity of his passion, there is an immediacy of experience that is communicated in such a manner that the reader is drawn into a near-participation of the event described. It is almost as though we are wading silently through the swamps with the author, and, just beyond the curtain of elephant grass, we can actually hear the

snorting of a wallowing rhino. This immediacy of felt experience is possible only when the medium of communication—i.e. the language used—is at the same time simple and direct as well as shorn of any pretensions towards scholarly writing.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 10: Comment on Gee's style of writing.

.....

Q 11: What is the humourous incident regarding the mynah that Gee has mentioned in his book?

.....



1.6 LET US SUM UP

From your reading you will come to learn about the life and work of one of the pioneers in the field of wild-life in India, Edward Pritchard Gee. This will make you realize how very important the task of conservation is for us. It should also strike you how this man was so ahead of his times to understand the importance of wild-life and habitat conservation.

The essay itself must have made you thoroughly acquainted with that magnificent character—the one horned rhino of Assam—and its home, Kaziranga, of which the Assamese are justifiably so proud. You would learn everything about the creature—from myths about it to the demand for it in zoos worldwide; from its habits to its habitat; from its attitude towards humans to its heroic defence against tigers, and much more.

You will also learn to appreciate E.P. Gee's style of writing though he was not a professional writer. It is a simple, lucid prose so effectively used by the writer to give the readers wealth of information on rhino and its habitat.



1.7 FURTHER READING

1) Not much material is available on E. P. Gee, and even Wikipedia on the Internet has only a single sentence entry on 'E. P. Gee'. Gee's own book, *The Wildlife of India*, has some information on the man on the inner flap of the cover page. For more inputs on the rhino in Kaziranga, *Indian Wildlife* by Rajesh Bedi and Ramesh Bedi is a very good source with a good write-up and spectacular photographs.



1.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: A tea planter and wildlife enthusiast.

Ans to Q No 2: A unique species of primates that had golden bodies with black faces.

Ans to Q No 3: Golden Langur or Gee's Golden Langur.

Ans to Q No 4: *The Wildlife of India.*

Ans to Q No 5: A place where beasts and birds and all kinds of wildlife are provided with a safe haven is known as a wild life sanctuary.

A place or area where animals are reserved to be shot by hunters is a game sanctuary.

Ans to Q No 6: To get rid of parasites.

Ans to Q No 7: Because both elephants and tigers are afraid of rhinoceros.

Ans to Q No 8: A total of five species of rhino. One among their species is the Great African Black and another one is the Great African White two horned rhinoceros.

Ans to Q No 9: A pit is dug in middle of a frequently used path camouflaged with twigs, leaves and grass.

Ans to Q No 10: Gee writes in a style that can be easily appreciated by scholar and layman, by avoiding cumbersome words and expressions.

Ans to Q No 11: Mynah birds which can mimic human beings had fooled the servants in his bungalow.



1.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q 1: What does Gee have to say about Kaziranga before it was officially opened for visitors?

Q 2: Give, after E. P. Gee, an account of the Mikirs in and around Kaziranga in the early days.

Q 3: Write in your own words the myth that explains the unique appearance of the rhino and explain how and why they were used in ancient battles.

Q 4: What insight does the essay provide into the mating habits of the rhino?

Q 5: Recounting, after Gee, the anecdote of the wounded rhino, examine whether this beast can truly lay claim to being 'King of the Beasts'.

Q 6: Attempt to draw a list of expressions, anecdotes and statements that display the sense of humour of the writer.

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UNIT 2 : THE KING JAMES BIBLE: THE STORY OF CREATION

UNIT STRUCTURE

2.1 Learning Objectives

2.2 Introduction

2.3 The Story of Creation

2.4 Major Themes

2.5 Style and Language

2.6 Let Us Sum Up

2.7 Further Reading

2.8 Answers to Check Your Progress

2.9 Model Questions

2.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- list the two major divisions of the Bible
- share your understanding of the 'story of creation'
- point out the major themes from the 'story of creation'
- explain the style of King James' Bible.

2.2 INTRODUCTION

The Bible is the Holy Book of Christianity. The word "Bible" is derived from Greek Word "Biblia", which means "Books". The Bible consists of two parts—'The Old Testament' and the 'The New Testament'. The Old Testament contains the Holy Scriptures of the Hebrews or the Jews written by anonymous Hebrew authors incorporating the Traditions and Teachings of The Jewish Prophets before the Birth of Jesus Christ. The New Testament solely concerns the Life and Teachings of Christ and His Apostle. Let us discuss the story of Man's Creation as represented in the Bible.

2.3 THE STORY OF CREATION

The Old Testament, originally in Hebrew, begins with Torah or Law—the five Books of Moses, namely Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. It is known as Pentateuch in the New Revised Standard Version, now used by the Roman Catholics. The next Twelve Books in (sixteen books in NRSV) starting from Joshua to Esther deals with the History of the Jewish People. The next Five Books of KJV (seven Books in NRSV) namely Job, Psalms, Proverbs, The Ecclesiastes and The Song of Solomon (also Wisdom of Solomon and Sirach in NRSV) can be classified as Wisdom and Poetry and the rest Seventeen Books (Eighteen Books in NRSV) are Prophesies, starting with Prophet Isaiah to Prophet Malachi. There are total 39 Books in King James Version (43 Books in NRSV).

The New Testament consists of Four Gospels namely Mathew, Mark, Luke and John. Gospel is derived from the Anglo-Saxon 'godspell' meaning good news. So Gospel means Good News preached by Jesus Christ. Other than the Gospel there are The Acts of the Apostles (History), Fourteen Pauline Letters (Letter Written by St. Paul) and Seven Catholic Letters and the Apocalypse or the Revelation. Thus The New Testament consists of 27 Books. King James Holy Bible consists of 66 collected Books. However, the Catholic edition of New Revised Standard Version of the Bible consists of 73 Books.

The Bible basically deals with the theme of God, His Works of Creation, Provisions, Judgement, Deliverance, His Covenant, and His Promises. The Bible sees what happens to humankind in the light of God's Nature, Righteousness, Faithfulness, Mercy and Love. The Book of Genesis is one of the best examples where Divine and human relationship is best explained. God's Creation, man's estrangement from God's Mercy and the promise of redemption is shown in this book.

The Bible is a salvation history. It deals with Creation of mankind, man's failure and Committing Sin, Punishment, Reconciliation and Covenant Mankind. In the Bible, everything was created in Fiat. Among the Creation humans were the supreme (Gen: 1:26-30). The Bible reveals that Holy

Trinity Created Man in His own image and likeness and endowed with the power to reign over all other animals.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: What are the two parts of the Bible?

Q 2: What are the five books of Moses in the Old Testament?

Q 3: How many books do the New Testament consist of?

Q 4: What are the general themes of the Bible?

2.4 MAJOR THEMES

Some of the themes that emerge from the Story of Creation in the Bible are as discussed below:

Concept of God in Bible :

Gospel according to John tells—"In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God."(John: 1:1-2) In the same way The Book of Genesis tells that the Word created everything. The Concept of Holy Trinity or 'Three in One God' is thus revealed in the Bible. When God created Man He said, "Let us make humankind in our Image after our likeness..." (Gen: 1:26). The use of pronouns 'us' and 'our' indicates that the creator is not a single persona.The Concept of Holy Trinity is ratified in 'The New Testament'. Jesus Christ promised the Holy Spirit to His disciples (John 14: 15-17). So in the Holy Trinity there is The Father, The Son (Jesus) and The Holy Spirit.

There are two accounts of creation story in The Bible. Genesis Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 deal with these themes. Among His creation Humankind is created with utmost care and concern on the sixth day of the week. Genesis1: 27 says, "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them." Again Chapter 2:7 says, "And the Lord God formed man of the dust, of the ground and breathed into his nostrils He breath of Life and man became a living Soul." According to the Bible Eve was created from Adam's rib. The meaning of woman in Bible is 'taken out of man' (Gen: 2:23).

Man's Fall and God's Judgement :

John Milton in his Invocation to the "Paradise Lost" talks about man's first fall into sin. So the first sin committed by man was disobedience. Eve ate the forbidden fruit of knowledge. The punishment was that they lost Eden, Paradise on earth and a curse came upon mankind. Labour pain came to women and Adam was cursed—"in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life." As a result death came to mankind. The Serpent who deceived Eve was cursed too- "Upon your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life."(Gen: 3:14-21).

Thus from that day Adam and Eve lost the Garden of Eden. Wickedness of mankind multiplied. Cain murdered his own brother Abel (Gen: 4:8-9). When the wickedness of mankind multiplied God punished them. The Great Flood at the time of Noah is one such example. God was furious upon mankind for their wickedness. He determined to end wickedness from the face of the earth. So He killed the entire humanity with the great Flood or the deluge except the family of Noah who at that time was found righteous at the sight of God.

There are such other narrations in the Bible regarding God's Judgement. When wickedness of mankind in Sodom and Gomorrah increased He punished them (Gen: 19:12-29). Israelites were also punished and enslaved to the Egyptians for their wickedness. The tower of Babel is another occasion where God had to interfere in human activities. According to the Bible the many languages we have today was created at Shinar, the tower of Babel.

The Bible is often regarded as a Salvation History. It deals with God- Man relationship; God's Blessing upon mankind, man's failure to respond to His Love and subsequent punishment. Many Covenants made between God and Man is like a constant effort on the part of Creator to strengthen His relationship with His Creation. God made Covenant with Noah and promised not to destroy mankind with deluge (Gen: 9:1-17).God made Covenant with

Abraham, Moses and the Final Covenant was made by Jesus Christ in The New Testament.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 5: Which two chapters deal with the Story of Creation?

Q 6: Explain the concept of Holy Trinity in the Bible.

Q 7: What do women mean in the Bible?

Q 8: What did John Milton talk about in his Invocation to *Paradise Lost*?

Q 9: How did God punish mankind for their wickedness?

2.5 STYLE AND LANGUAGE

The King James Bible (1611) played an important role in moulding the English nation. It has become the principal book of English religion and the cultural promotion within and outside England. Its language became not just the mechanism for religious expression but also an inseparable example of a predominantly Anglo-Saxon culture. The Bible is filled with so many stories and moral teachings. The English translations of Bible starting with Lollard or Wycliff's Bible (1382),'The New Testament' by William Tyndale (1526), preceding King James Bible were circulated freely. The Mystery plays and the Morality plays are directly influenced by such translated forms of the Bible.

King James' Bible is easy to read and to interpret. The sentences are very poetical filled with diction. Adam's joy after seeing Eve is very poetic,

"This is now bone of my bones,
And flesh of my flesh,
She shall be called woman,
Because she was taken out of man." (Gen: 2:23)

Again in Genesis Chapter 3:15

"I will put enemity between Thee and the Woman,
And between thy seed and herseed. It shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel."

The King James Bible uses the Anglo Saxon dialect. Words such

as thou, thine, thy, thee, shalt are very often used in the Bible. This is an implication of the Anglo-Saxon influence during King James' time.The Bible uses 'parables' and stories as means to instruct and impart moral lessons. The use of symbolism plays an important role in ratifying God's Covenant with man. The most visible symbol used to ratify God's Covenants is the rainbow that we see after rainfall. God promised not to destroy mankind with flood and as a symbol he created the rainbow. That is why after the rainfall the rainbow appears as a sign of new hope.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q10: Describe the significance of King James' Bible.

Q11: Give examples showing the influence of Anglo-Saxon dialect in King James' Bible.

Q12: Write a note on the use of symbolism in the Bible.



2.6 LET US SUM UP

After reading the unit, you have become familiar with King James' Bible. You are now aware that the Bible consists of two parts: The Old Testament and The New Testament. By now, you have become familiar with the Story of Creation of mankind as well as about the Holy Trinity. The use of symbols in the Bible standas proof of God's Covenant with Man. You are also acquainted with the influence of Anglo-Saxon dialect in King James' Bible. You must be able to find out by now that the Bible uses 'parables' and stories as means to instruct and impart moral lessons.



2.7 FURTHER READING

1) The Bible: Authorized King James Version (Oxford World's Classics)



2.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: The Bible consists of two parts—'The Old Testament' and the 'The New Testament'. The Old Testament contains the Holy Scriptures of the Hebrews or the Jews written by anonymous Hebrew authors incorporating the traditions and teachings of the Jewish Prophets before the birth of Jesus Christ. The New Testament solely concerns the life and teachings of Christ and His Apostles.

Ans to Q No 2: Genesis , Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

Ans to Q No 3: The New Testament consists of Four Gospels namely Mathew, Mark, Luke and John.

Ans to Q No 4: The Bible basically deals with the theme of God, His Works of Creation, Provisions, Judgement, Deliverance, His Covenant, and His Promises. The Bible sees what happens to humankind in the light of God's Nature, Righteousness, Faithfulness, Mercy and Love. The Book of Genesis is one of the best examples where divine and human relationship is best explained.

Ans to Q No 5: There are two accounts of creation story in the Bible. Genesis Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 deal with these themes.

Ans to Q No 6: The concept of Holy Trinity or 'Three in One God' is revealed in the Bible. When God created Man He said, "Let us make humankind in our Image after our likeness..." (Gen: 1:26). The use of pronouns 'us' and 'our' indicates that the creator is not a single person. The concept of Holy Trinity is ratified in 'The New Testament'. Jesus Christ promised the Holy Spirit to His disciples (John 14: 15-17). So in the Holy Trinity there is The Father, The Son (Jesus) and The Holy Spirit.

Ans to Q No 7: The meaning of woman in Bible is 'taken out of man'.

Ans to Q No 8: John Milton in his Invocation to the "Paradise Lost" talks about man's first fall into sin. So the first sin committed by man was disobedience. Eve ate the forbidden fruit of knowledge. The

punishment was that they lost Eden, the Paradise on earth and a curse came upon mankind.

Ans to Q No 9: When the wickedness of mankind multiplied God punished them. The Great Flood at the time of Noah is one such example. God was furious on mankind for their wickedness. He was determined to end wickedness from the face of the earth. So, He destroyed the entire humanity through the deluge except the family of Noah who at that time were found righteous in the eyes of God.

Ans to Q No 10: The King James Bible (1611) played an important role in moulding the English nation. It became the principle book of English religion and the cultural promotion within and outside England. Its language became not just the mechanism for religious expression but also an inseparable example of a predominantly Anglo-Saxon way of life.

Ans to Q No 11: The King James Bible uses the Anglo Saxon dialect. Words such as thou, thine, thy, thee, shalt are very often used in the Bible. This is an implication of the Anglo-Saxon influence during King James's time.

Ans to Q No 12: The use of symbolism plays an important role in ratifying God's Covenant with man. The most visible symbol used to ratify God's Covenants is the rainbow that we see after rainfall. God promised not to destroy mankind with flood and as a symbol he created the rainbow. That's why after the rainfall the rainbow appears as a sign of new hope.



2.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q 1: Discuss the story of creation as mentioned in King James' Bible.

Q 2: Write notes on The Old Testament and The New Testament.

Q 3: Describe the language of the King James' Bible.

Q 4: Write a note on the themes of the King James' Bible.

Q 5: Discuss the significance of the King James' Bible in England.

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UNIT 3 : SALMAN RUSHDIE: "IMAGINARY HOMELANDS"

UNIT STRUCTURE

3.1 Learning Objectives

3.2 Introduction

3.3 Salman Rushdie: Life and Works

3.4 Explanation of the Text

3.5 Major Themes

3.6 Style and Language

3.7 Let Us Sum Up

3.8 Further Reading

3.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

3.10 Model Questions

3.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going though this unit you will be able to:

- explain the life of Rushdie and appreciate his works
- list the significant contributions of Rushdie
- describe the essay "Imaginary Homelands"
- discuss the major themes of the essay
- analyse the style of the essay.

3.2 INTRODUCTION

This unit introduces you to one of the most famous twentieth century novelists and essayists, Salman Rushdie and his essay titled "Imaginary Homelands".You will be acquainted with the life and works of Rushdie through this unit. It will be followed by a discussion of the essay and a focus on the significant themes that Rushdie has thrown light into the essay. This unit also provides you ideas about the exuberant writing style of Rushdie whose skillful handling of language is worth mentioning. To begin with, let us now discuss in greater details the life and contribution of this famous writer.

3.3 SALMAN RUSHDIE: LIFE AND WORKS

Salman Rushdie was born in Bombay on 19 June, 1947. He began his studies at Cathedral and John Connor School in Mumbai. At fourteen, he was sent to Rugby School, a public school in Warwickshire, England. His Rugby experience was largely miserable; he found the atmosphere racist and unfriendly. In 1965, he joined King's College, Cambridge for higher studies, where he studied history. Here, he found the student body far more open and diverse and easy to assimilate. He involved himself in theatre through the Cambridge Footlights Club, in which he shared space with the likes of Germaine Greer and David Hare. Even while he was in England, his parents had moved from Bombay to Karachi in 1964, seventeen years after Partition. One of the reasons cited by Rushdie for the move is that the family started feeling insecure in Bombay due to anti-Muslim prejudice. His father's properties were taken over by the government as evacuee properties. Rushdie was strongly opposed to the move; with the selling off of 'Windsor Villa', the house where he spent his childhood by his father, he writes, he "felt an abyss open beneath [his] feet". He could never relate to Pakistan as a 'home', he always felt a sense of belonging to India, Bombay in particular. To borrow a line from *Midnight's Children*, "it was not 'my' country – or not then. Not my country, although I stayed in it– as refugee, not citizen". He says in an interview that *Midnight's Children* originated with a long time idea of writing a novel about Bombay, Bombay in the [19]50s and [19]60s. On the other hand, Pakistan became, in both *Midnight's Children* and *Shame*, "a bleak and unforgiving place in contrast to the wonderfully various and endlessly recreated India".

After Cambridge, Rushdie returned to Pakistan for a brief stay. He started working for Pakistan's television service in Karachi, which was none too happy due to its censorious atmosphere. A screening of Edward Albee's *Zoo Story* that he produced and acted in had to be cut because it mentioned 'pork' and referred to God as a 'coloured queen'. An article he had written for a small magazine was suppressed without any explanation by the press. He went back to England, took British citizenship, and tried a career, first in

acting, then in writing, but eventually joined an advertising agency– Ogilvy and Mather– as a copywriter. He produced his first novel *Grimus* (1975) during his employment at the firm.

It was his second book *Midnight's Children* (1981) that made him famous overnight. It went on to win the Booker Prize in 1981 as well as the James Tait Black Prize, and rose to the status of a literary masterpiece both in and outside India. When Rushdie toured the country in 1983, hundreds of people flocked to see him. Within a year, publishers claimed, the novel had sold 4000 copies in hardcover and 45000 in paperback, quite unprecedented figures for an Indian English novelist.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Why did Rushdie's family move from Bombay to Karachi?

Q 2: What was the name of the house where Rushdie spent his childhood?

Q 3: Why was the reason of Rushdie's unhappy career in the television service of Karachi?

Q 4: Which literary work made Salman Rushdie world famous?

Some of his works include: *Shame*, published in 1983; Rushdie's first full- length work of non-fiction, *The Jaguar Smile: A Nicaraguan Journey*, a travelogue based on his Nicaraguan experience was published in 1987; *The Satanic Verses*, published in 1988 uses Magic Realism and became a 1988 Booker finalist and won the 1988 Whitbread Award for novel of the year; *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* (1990) which won the Writer's Guild Award. Meanwhile, *Midnight's Children* was declared the 'Booker of Bookers' in 1993, the best book in 25 years of Booker history. During this time he also published a collection of essays, *Imaginary Homelands* (1991). The British Film Institute pamphlet *The Wizard of Oz* was published in 1992.A short story

collection by Rushdie *East, West* appeared in 1994.Then in 1995, he published his fifth novel, *The Moor's Last Sigh*, which went on to win the

Whitbread Prize for the best novel of that year and the Aristeion Prize in 1996 besides being short listed for the Man Booker Prize for 1995. Rushdie's sixth novel *The Ground Beneath her Feet* was published in 2000. It is based on the Orpheus-Eurydice myth with rock music replacing Orpheus's lyre. His seventh novel is *Fury* published in 2001. The least-known of Rushdie's novels, *Fury* is the story of a Cambridge educated millionaire from Bombay. In 2005, Rushdie produced his eighth novel, *Shalimar the Clown*. This was followed by his ninth novel, *The Enchantress of Florence* in 2008. In 2010, Rushdie produced *Luka and the Fire of Life*, a sequel to *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*.

His latest work *Joseph Anton-A Memoir* (2012) is an extraordinarily frank and honest account of his life after the *fatwa,* a story of how a writer was forced underground, moving from house to house, with the constant presence of an armed police protection team. Published in September, 2015, *Two Years Eight Months and Twenty-Eight Nights* is his latest novel. He has co-edited *Mirrorwork*, an anthology of contemporary Indian writings. He has also co-edited the anthology of *The Best American Short Stories* of 2008.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 5: Name the travelogue by Rushdie based on his Nicaraguan experience.

Q 6: Name the latest novel by Salman Rushdie.

3.4 EXPLANATION OF THE TEXT

Rushdie opens his essay with the description of an old photograph that hangs on the wall of his office room. It's a photograph of the old house in Bombay where he was born and spent his childhood. The photograph reminds him of a line in a novel which says that "The past is a foreign country, they do things differently there". But Rushdie sees that in his case it is the reverse which is true. For him, it is his present which is foreign, in all senses of the term. For him, it is his past that embodies a home, although,

he says, it is "a lost home in a lost city in the mists of lost time". Rushdie then goes on to describe his visit to his hometown, Bombay which is the "lost city" referred to in the previous line. He had made the visit after a quite long gap. While going through the telephone directory on an impulse, he found to his surprise as well as delight that it still contained his father's name, number and address. He took this "eerie discovery" as a sign that he was being claimed by his homeland which was trying to show him that it was not a part of his past alone, but has continued significance in his identity and being. When he went next to visit the house of his childhood, the one in the photograph mentioned previously, he was met by an overwhelming experience. His memories of his long lost home were kept alive only through photographs and the photograph of the house with him was taken in black and white. But what he now stood facing in Bombay was a piece of his memory in all its living colours. Rushdie says that that was perhaps the moment when his novel *Midnight's Children* was born. He says that it was born out of his desire to restore his past to myself, not like a black and white movie but on a grand glorious scale, like that of a movie shot in CinemaScope and Technicolor. The city of Bombay was initially a group of seven islands. In the middle of the nineteenth century, the islands were merged into a single land mass mainly through land reclamation under the supervision of the British government. Rushdie, who was born and raised in Bombay, has a special attachment to the city. He says that Bombay is a city built by foreigners upon reclaimed land. Drawing a parallel with his own case, he infers that his expatriate status almost qualifies him to the title of a foreigner. Therefore, he believes, he too has a city and a history to reclaim.

Rushdie then presumes that exiled, expatriate or emigrant writers, like him, are haunted by a sense of loss and an urge to reclaim or look back, even at the risk of getting turned into pillars of salt. The reference is to the Biblical story of the wife of Lot who was turned into a pillar of salt. In the Old Testament, Lot, a nephew of Abraham, is visited by three angels, who ask him to gather his family and flee the city of Sodom, which was slated to be destroyed along with the city of Gomorrah. They were asked not to look back towards the

cities while escaping. Following their advice, Lot left the city with his wife and daughters. However, while making the escape, Lot's wife looked back at the burning city of Sodom and she was immediately transformed into a pillar of salt. Rushdie, however, says that even if expatriate Indians do engage in the act of looking back, they are always faced by the fact that due to their physical isolation from the home country, they will only be able to capture partial or imaginary versions of their homelands. He says that he was disturbed by this dilemma while writing his novel in North London. He tried to make his description of India as imaginatively true as possible, but then again he is aware that imaginative truth is both honourable and suspect at the same time. Therefore, he does not claim authenticity for the India depicted in his novel, but admits that it is just one of the several possible versions. He says that this is why he made Saleem, the narrator of his novel *Midnight's Children* an unreliable narrator. An unreliable narrator often provides inaccurate details, which is evident to the reader. An unreliable narrator is one whose perception, interpretation, and evaluation of the matters he or she narrates do not coincide with the opinions and norms implied by the author, which the author expects the alert reader to share. Rushdie says that the mistakes of the narrator in *Midnight's Children* mirror the mistakes of the fallible memory of an expatriate writer. His vision too is fragmentary, like that of the writer writing from outside India, who, Rushdie says, has to deal in broken pieces of a mirror, some pieces of which are lost forever.

But Rushdie also points out a paradox here. He says that the broken mirror is just as valuable as a perfectly sound one. He illustrates the point with a personal experience. Before beginning *Midnight's Children*, he was trying to recall for months, as much of the Bombay, Kashmir, Delhi and Aligarh of the 1950s and 1960s as he could, for the purposes of writing his novel. Rushdie was amazed by the amount of things he could recall; bits and pieces of the sights and sounds of the Bombay of his childhood came back to him in all their vivid details even after so many years. Rushdie believes that the partial nature of these memories is the reason which made them so much more evocative for him. In archaeology, the broken pots of

the most commonplace objects from ancient times enable the reconstruction of the past, although in provisional terms. Similarly, the pieces of memories from Rushdie's past acquired immense value for him in his present and their fragmentary quality made them acquire a symbolic and spiritual significance.

The past is like a country from which every person has emigrated. But Rushdie points out that the loss of his past is felt more acutely by a writer who lives away from his homeland or writes in a language which is not native to his ancestors. His loss is made even more concrete by the fact of the rift between the place where he now lives and the place where his past lay.

At this point, Rushdie dismisses his nostalgic strain and reminds himself and the reader that the broken mirror of memory is a very handy tool to work with in the present.

Quoting from *Daniel Martin* by John Fowles, Rushdie points out the importance placed by the human world on 'whole sight' or absolute knowledge. But he points out that human beings are not capable of whole sight; they are fallible creatures who are capable of nothing more than a fractured vision. They try to make sense of the world through fragments drawn from motley sources like scraps, dogmas, childhood injuries, newspaper articles, chance remarks, old films, small victories, people hated, people loved. He says that because of the fact that our perceptions are based on such inadequate materials that we attach such supreme value to them. He says that the statement in Fowles' book is based upon what he calls the guru-illusion, the proclivity to attribute the status of a sage or a seer to a writer and to consider his words as perfect wisdom. He says that those like him, who are culturally displaced, are especially confronted by the provisional nature of all truths and certainties. In Greek mythology, Mount Olympus is believed to be the seat of the nine muses of the fine arts. Rushdie says that modern writers cannot claim to a position as lofty as Olympus. However, Rushdie considers this as rather an advantage for them, as it allows them freedom to describe the world in the way they perceive it in their daily lives.

In *Midnight's Children*, the narrator Saleem Sinai uses the metaphor of a cinema screen to illustrate how the perspective becomes narrower and reality becomes more partial as one moves closer to the actual events. He says that as the narrative of his novel moves closer to contemporary events, it fails to incorporate a wide perspective. Thus, while depicting incidents like the Emergency, he has had to deal in snippets.

While attending a conference on modern writing at New College, Oxford, Rushdie, along with other novelists were discussing the need for new ways to describe the world. And then the playwright Howard Breton came up with a rhetorical question if literature does nothing more than just describe. All the novelists were completely unsettled by the very germane point raised by Breton. Rushdie applies the question raised by Breton to the case of Indian writers in England who write about India. He asks if these writers too can do no more than merely describe from a distance the land they had left behind or if their very distance provides them the opportunity to do more with their work.

However, he says that these questions have political implications and hence they should be answered at least partially in political terms. He states that description itself is after all a political act. He cites the black American writer Richard Wright who once wrote that black and white Americans had incompatible and contesting descriptions of reality. Rushdie infers from this that the first important step towards changing the world is re-describing it. And particularly during times when the State tries to manipulate descriptions of reality to fit its own purposes, then, Rushdie says, that the creation of alternative realities of art, including the novel of memory, becomes a political act. He quotes the writer Milan Kundera who had commented that the struggle of man against power is no different than the struggle of memory against forgetting. Rushdie asserts that writers and politicians are natural rivals. Both keep trying to make the world in their own images and both fight for the same territory. Rushdie considers the novel as one way of challenging the official, politicians' version of truth. He uses the 'State truth' about the war in Bangladesh as an example; the Pakistani state has maintained that no atrocities had been committed during the civil

war in East Pakistan and the statement is corroborated by many intellectuals as well. He also cites the example of Indira Gandhi's denial of many atrocities committed during the Emergency, like forced sterilisations.

Rushdie believes that literature can and perhaps must expose the truth concealed by official facts. But he has doubts whether expatriate writers like him are completely capable of carrying out this role or if they are at all entitled to speak on the matters of a country and society from which they are thousands of miles away. He answers his own questions by saying that a book is not justified by the writer's right to speak on a certain matter but on the quality of the work that he has produced. He points out that many books arising out of direct experience may turn out quite ordinary while extraordinary work has been produced by authors writing from a distance. He says that certain themes cannot be reserved for certain groups only in literature. And as far as risks are concerned, he says, the real risk of the work is taken in the course of composing the work, in attempting to make it an excellent work of art. He says that books prove their worth when they stretch themselves to the limits of what it is possible to achieve and when the author dares to artistically reach out for those limits.

Defending the case of Indian writers in England, Rushdie sums up the main argument underlying G. V. Desani's book *All About H Hatter*. The book seems to proclaim the irreversibility of the fact of the migrations that took place in the fifties and sixties of the twentieth century. Rushdie asserts that the expatriate community will not accept their exclusion from any part of their heritage, and that they have a right to lay claim both to English culture as well as the culture of their home country.

Rushdie makes a clarification about the slightly defensive note in his last few remarks about the work and entitlements of expatriate Indian writers. He says that the expatriate writers suffer from a certain amount of guilt whenever they look back at their country. He says that there are moments when they regret having moved away from their homeland and it makes them feel like post-lapsarian men and women, those who have been expelled from Paradise. He says that they are Hindus who have crossed the forbidden black water and Muslims who eat the forbidden pork. They

now belong partly to the West and their identity has become plural and partial at the same time. However, he also highlights the benefit that their position affords them. He says that if one of the agendas of literature is to find new angles at which to enter reality, the distance of these writers from their home countries provides them with such angles.

Rushdie explains that the angle at which his novel *Midnight's Children* enters its subject matter is from the point of view of a secular man. He says that one of the things he liked and still likes about India is its non-sectarian philosophy. He further says that he was not brought up in a narrowly Muslim environment and he does not consider Hindu culture to be either an alien entity or superior to Islamic heritage. He believes that it has something to do with the cosmopolitan and secular nature of the city of Bombay, where he grew up. In *Midnight's Children*, the protagonist Saleem Sinai makes an eclectic use of material from various sources. Rushdie believes it may not have been as easy for him to do this had he been writing the book in India instead of from outside it.

Rushdie then goes on to clarify another criticism made against *Midnight's Children*; the book is accused of portraying a pessimistic image of India. But he claims that he does not see the book as despairing or nihilistic. That may appear to be the point of view of the narrator, but it is not necessarily the view of the author. He says that his aim was to create a tension between the form and content of the narrative in his book. He says that the story does lead to a despairing end, but the book has been designed to echo the Indian talent for non-stop self-generation. The multitudinous form of the narrative, he says, stands for the infinite possibilities of the Indian society and he considers this as an optimistic counterweight to Saleem's personal tragedy.

Rushdie then goes on to explain that not all Indian writers in England hail from India, some of them are Pakistani, some Bangladeshi and even West, East or South African. Thus, the word 'Indian' has come to stand for a rather loose concept. He says that in the future Indo-British fiction is going to be produced as much from London, Birmingham or Yorkshire as from Delhi or Bombay.

Rushdie then comes to the issue of the dispute over the use of the English language among postcolonial writers. Rushdie calls for a change in the attitude towards the English language. Addressing the prolonged debate over the appropriateness of the English language to Indian themes, Rushdie admits that the language cannot be used for Indian purposes in the form in which it was used by the colonisers or native speakers, and therefore, he says, it needs refashioning to adapt it to Indian themes and experiences. He says that the writers who do use English do so in spite of their ambiguity towards it or perhaps because of it. He thinks that they perhaps find in the linguistic struggle traces of the tug of cultures within themselves and of the influences on their societies. He believes that in a way, conquering the English language might complete the project of achieving freedom for the postcolonial man.

However, he soon realizes that the British Indian writer does not have the option of rejecting the English language anyway. For the British Indian child, English is the language he or she will grow up speaking, perhaps as the first language. He believes that the English language has central importance in the forging of the British Indian identity and must be embraced in spite of everything. He calls the expatriate person a 'translated man'. But he does not want to believe that translation only leads to loss, but insists that something is also gained in the process.

Rushdie explains how being an Indian writer residing outside the country always poses problems of definition and identity. They are faced with questions like how to preserve their culture without falling into the trap of becoming too narrow in outlook, how to think about bringing in changes within the community and that too without risking being swamped by British culture, what could be the spiritual or practical consequences of blocking out Western ideas and practices and the single existential question that subsumes all the other questions: how are they to live in the world. Rushdie does not wish to prescribe any answers to these questions. His purpose is to highlight the issues that need to be considered.

He then talks about the relationship between the British Indian writer and the majority white culture which surrounds him. He says that like many

other Bombay-raised middle-class children of his generation, he grew up with a certain romantic idea of England. He was extremely enthusiastic about going to England in his teens. And he admits that it has not entirely let him down, although he knows that is only because of his hailing from a privileged social class, his unnaturally fair skin and his British accent. He knows that without these advantages, it would have been a very different story for him because the real England is not as romantic as the image he had in mind before arriving. However, Rushdie says that many white Britons refuse to own up the fact and insist that the romantic image is the reality. He then recounts an incident when a professional humourist made a culturally insensitive comment in a live radio programme with him and tried to justify their racial prejudices against brown people. Rushdie's intention is to show the blatant prevalence of racism in British society.

Citing the African American writer Richard Wright, Rushdie explains that black and white depictions of society are no longer compatible. In other words, different cultures have different ways of understanding and describing the world. One way of dealing with the problem, he says, is the mixing of fantasy and naturalism in art. But irrespective of the technique, he says that Indian writers outside the country are capable of bringing in a kind of double perspective into their work. They are not capable of providing 'whole sight' but they can offer this stereoscopic vision instead.

However, Rushdie also warns the Indian English writer to look out for the danger of succumbing to a ghetto mentality, of limiting themselves within narrowly defined cultural boundaries. And this, he says, leads to the question of identifying the audience for whom one is writing. He states that in his own case, he has never had a particular set of readers in mind. But in the case of *Midnight's Children* he admits that he would have considered the book a failure had it not received the kind of appreciation it did from the readers in the subcontinent, irrespective of what response it had generated among Western readers. Thus, he says that along with the African American writer Ralph Ellison, he writes for people who can identify with his work as well as anyone else his work is able to reach. He also calls for a broad approach as far as selection of theme is concerned. He says that apart

from the literary tradition of their mother country, Indian writers in England can also lay claim to the tradition of immigrant writers in England like Swift, Conrad and Marx. But he also points out that the novel itself has turned into a very international form in literature and writing novels inevitably makes one an international writer. He believes that one of the most pleasant freedoms enjoyed by the literary migrant is that he can pick his own set of literary predecessors. His own chosen forebearers include Gogol, Cervantes, Kafka, Melville and Machado de Assis – a list that includes writers from multiple linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

In the conclusion of his essay, he alludes to a section from the novel *The Dean's December* by Saul Bellow. In the novel, the central character hears a dog barking wildly and he imagines that through his barking the dog is protesting against the limits of his experiences as a dog and perhaps praying for the universe to open up a little more. Rushdie knows that the writer is using the dog only as a metaphor for the human individual and says that the desire of the dog to experience a broader universe is the desire of every Indian English writer in England.

3.5 MAJOR THEMES

The major themes of the essay are as discussed below :

Cosmopolitanism :

Cosmpolitanism is an ideology which proposes that all human beings are equal citizens of a single human community encompassing the entire world or cosmos. One who adheres to this philosophy is called a cosmopolitan person. In a cosmopolitan community, people belonging to different cultural or national backgrounds enjoy equal membership and live in a relationship of mutual respect. At the heart of the philosophy of cosmopolitanism is the idea of accommodating difference and respect for the 'Other'.

Throughout the essay, Rushdie keeps addressing the issue of the ambiguous identity of the Indian English writer. He believes that the multiple heritages that the migrant writer is heir to enables him to occupy a cultural

space, which is not defined by narrow cultural differences but enables the co- existence of multiple cultures in a cosmopolitan spirit.

Diasporic Consciousness :

The term diaspora originates from an ancient Greek word that means 'to scatter about' or 'to disperse'. In current usage the term refers to a group of people who have voluntarily migrated or been forcefully dislocated from their homeland. A diasporic community perceives itself as a community in exile; it maintains cultural and political ties with the homeland and generally harbours hopes of returning. Salman Rushdie identifies himself as a person belonging to the Indian diaspora and his literary works manifest elements of a diasporic consciousness.

One of the foundational concerns in the essay "Imaginary Homelands" is Rushdie's desire to reclaim his 'homeland' through his literary exercises : "It may be that writers in my position, exiles or emigrants or expatriates, are haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back, even at the risk of being mutated into pillars of salt". He talks about the intense sense of loss faced by a writer who is out-of-country and out-of-language, which, he says, "is made more concrete for him by the physical fact of discontinuity, of his present being in a different place from his past, of his being 'elsewhere'". A person from a diasporic community constantly feels alienated from the host culture, but he is also alienated from his home culture. This leads to a sense of identity crisis among the diasporic population.

However, Rushdie likes to see in this ambiguity of culture and identity a particular advantage to the diasporic writer; he believes that geographical and cultural isolation can provide them with previously unexplored angles of entering literature. He says that the position of migrant writers is that of "translated men" but he believes that while something does get lost in translation, other things are gained in the process.

Literature and Memory :

In the beginning of his essay "Imaginary Homelands", Rushdie explains how his visit to his ancestral house in Bombay led to being born in him a desire to reclaim his past through a literary project, and since his

past, as he saw it, was inseparable from the Bombay and India of his past, his project would involve a reclaiming of the city and the country too. This is how, he says, his novel *Midnight's Children* was born. But Rushdie also admits that the process of looking back contains its own dangers; he says that the fact of the physical alienation of diasporic writers from India hinders them from reclaiming an authentic version of India or Bombay. Instead, they will end up creating fictions, "not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands, Indias of the mind".

He says that the Indian writer who writes from outside India has to deal with the world of his homeland in fragments, like pieces of a broken mirror, "some of whose fragments have been irretrievably lost". However, he also highlights the fact that the fragments of memory are not any less valuable for that matter. He says that the partial nature of his personal memories of India rendered them more evocative, in his words, "fragmentation made trivial things seem like symbols, and the mundane acquired numinous qualities". He does not recommend dismissing the broken glass as a mere mirror of nostalgia, but considers it a useful tool with which to work in the present.

Post-Colonialism :

Postcolonialism or Post-Colonialism is the study of the effects of colonisation on cultures and societies around the world. In the words of

M. H. Abrams, it refers to the critical analysis of the history, culture, literature, and modes of discourse that are specific to the former colonies of England, Spain, France, and other European imperial powers.Salman Rushdie generally writes from a conscious postcolonial and diasporic position.

In "Imaginary Homelands", he deals at some length with the issue of one crucial colonial legacy as far as literature is concerned "the use of the English language in postcolonial societies". Postcolonial societies have constantly displayed ambivalence towards the continued use of the English language. Rushdie says that the Indian writers who do use English do so in spite of their ambiguous feelings towards it, or even perhaps because of it. In fact, the language used by Rushdie in his fictional works is not the standard

or 'correct' English, but it is flavoured with local coinages and idioms which better expresses the experiences of the societies of the subcontinent.

Nationalism :

Salman Rushdie often engages with ideas of the nation and nationalism in his fictional works. In simple terms, nationalism can be defined as a desire by

a large group of people (such as people who share the same culture, history, language, etc.) to form a separate and independent nation of their own (Merriam Webster). Thinkers since Ernest Renan in the nineteenth century have argued that nations are not 'natural' entities. In his influential book *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1983) Benedict Anderson puts forward a theory about the constructed nature of nations. He defines the nation as "an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign". He calls it an 'imagined community' because the members of such a community will never know each of the other members personally, and yet, they assume an affinity with the other members through a popular mental image of solidarity. Rushdie is also aware of the contemporary critiques of the concepts of nation and nationalism. It is significant that he chooses to call his essay "Imaginary Homelands". It is because of the imagined nature of the nation that it is possible to have multiple versions of a single nation. Rushdie says that the India that he has tried to recreate in *Midnight's Children* was his version of India, "a version and no more than one version of all the hundred millions of possible versions".

Post-modern Literature :

Postmodernism is seen as a continuation as well as a revolt against Modernist approaches to literature and tries to offer a challenge to the elitism of modernist 'high art' by recourse to the models of 'mass culture'drawn from various sources such as film, television, newspaper cartoons, and popular music. Salman Rushdie displays this postmodernist tendency in his works by constantly diluting the distinction between 'high art' and 'low art' in his creative works. In "Imaginary Homelands", he describes memory as a "shaky edifice" which is built out of "scraps, dogmas, childhood injuries,

newspaper articles, chance remarks, old films, small victories, people hated, people loved…"

In "Imaginary Homelands" he tries to offer his explanation of the need to mingle fantasy and reality in literature. He says that in the multicultural environment of the society today, fantasy or the mingling of fantasy and naturalism is one way of dealing with the issue of presenting a competent description of the complex modern society. He says that the technique offers writers "a way of echoing in the form of our work the issues faced by all of us: how to build a new, 'modern' world out of an old, legend-haunted civilization, an old culture which we have brought into the heart of a newer one".

3.6 STYLE AND LANGUAGE

Salman Rushdie is known for his exuberant style of writing and a playful, highly experimental use of language in his fictional works. However, we find none of that in this essay. Written in 1981, he wrote this essay shortly after the publication and grand success of his second novel *Midnight's Children*. The essay makes use of simple,lively and lucid prose. The essay is very allusive; he uses logical arguments with examples drawn from his as well as other writers' works to illustrate his points. Rushdie is basically trying to address questions and issues faced by the Indian writer who writes in English and resides outside his home country.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 7: What are the major themes of the essay?

Q 8: Write a note on Rushdie's style.



3.7 LET US SUM UP

After reading this unit, you have become familiar with Salman Rushdie, one of the leading writers to have fascinated his readers worldwide.

Prior to his profession as a writer, he tried in acting also. You have learnt about the life of Rushdie after reading the unit and have become familiar with his major works including novels like *Grimus, Midnight's Children, The Satanic Verses, Haroun and the Sea of Stories, East West, The Moor's Last Sigh*, etc. You are also familiar with the essay "Imaginary Homelands" and the significant themes that the essay reflected. Well known for his brilliant handling of language, Rushdie wrote the essay in an allusive and logical way. This essay is noted for the use of simple, lively and lucid prose.



3.8 FURTHER READING

1) Rushdie, Salman. (2010). *Imaginary Homelands: Essay and Criticism (1981-1991)*. Vintage Books: London.
Website: www.salmanrushdie.com



3.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: One of the reasons cited by Rushdie for the move is that the family started feeling insecure in Bombay due to anti-Muslim prejudice. His father's properties were taken over by the government as evacuee properties.

Ans to Q No 2: 'Windsor Villa'.

Ans to Q No 3: Due to its censorious atmosphere, he was unhappy. A screening of Edward Albee's *Zoo Story* that he produced and acted in had to be cut because it mentioned 'pork' and referred to God as a 'coloured queen'.

Ans to Q No 4: It was his second book *Midnight's Children* (1981) that made him famous overnight.

Ans to Q No 5: *The Jaguar Smile: A Nicaraguan Journey.*

Ans to Q No 6: *Two Years Eight Months and Twenty-Eight Nights.*

Ans to Q No 7: Nationalism, Post-Colonialism, Literature and Memory, Cosmopolitanism, etc.

Ans to Q No 8: Salman Rushdie is known for his exuberant style of writing and a playful, highly experimental use of language in his fictional works.



3.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q 1: Give a detailed explanation of the essay titled "Imaginary Homelands" by Salman Rushdie.

Q 2: Write a note on the following topics:

a. Salman Rushdie's Novels

b. Imaginary Homelands

Q 3: What are the major themes of the essay "Imaginary Homelands"?

Q 4: Write short notes on:

a. Diaspora

b. Post-Colonialism

c. Postmodernism

Q 5: Give a sketch of Rushdie's notion of diasporic consciousness?

Q 6: Show after Salman Rushdie, how is literature related to memory?

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UNIT 4 : BERTRAND RUSSELL: "PROLOGUE" TO RUSSELL'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY

UNIT STRUCTURE

4.1 Learning Objectives

4.2 Introduction

4.3 Bertrand Russell: Life and Works

4.4 Text of the "Prologue"

4.4.1 Explanation of the "Prologue"

4.5 Major Themes

4.6 Style and Language

4.7 Let Us Sum Up

4.8 Further Reading

4.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

4.10 Model Questions

4.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through the unit, you will be able to:

- gain a brief idea on the life and works of Bertrand Russell
- grasp the content and summary of the Prologue to Russell's autobiography
- highlight some of the major themes that are evident in the Prologue
- discuss the use of style and language
- appreciate the text of the Prologue in its totality.

4.2 INTRODUCTION

Bertrand Russell (18th May, 1872 – 2nd February, 1970) was a British philosopher, logician, an important social reformer and an essayist. He is best remembered for his contribution to mathematical logic, epistemology and analytic philosophy. Amongst other honours, he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1950. Let us gain a brief idea about the life and works of Russell.

4.3 BERTRAND RUSSELL: LIFE AND WORKS

Bertrand Arthur William Russell, third Earl Russell, was born on 18th of May, 1872 in Monmouthshire, England. His father was Viscount Amberley whose father Lord John Russell was the first Earl Russell. Bertrand Russell's mother was the daughter of the second Lord Stanley of Alderley and John Stuart Mill was his godfather. Russell lost both his parents when he was very young and he was brought up under the care of his grandmother, Lady Russell. Russell was initially educated at home and later in 1890 won a mathematical scholarship to Trinity College, Cambridge.

By 1893, he had shifted to Philosophy from Mathematics and in 1894 received first class honours. He published the first of his numerous books in 1896 and it was a work on *German Social Democracy*. Russell was a Fellow of Trinity College from 1895 to 1901 and held the post of lecturer in Philosophy there from 1910 to 1916 when he was dismissed from Trinity for his staunch pacifism and for writing a leaflet against the Word War I. He was jailed for six months and it was in prison that he wrote his *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy* (1919) and began working on his later book *Analysis of Mind* (1921). Although occupied mainly with mathematics and logic in the early part of his life, Russell had a keen interest in politics and contested a by-election in 1907 unsuccessfully as the candidate of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies. He then stood as a Labour Candidate for Chelsea in the General Elections of 1922 and 1923 and lost both times.

In 1924, he travelled to the United States as the first of his many lecture tours and in 1927 with the help of his second wife, opened a school near Petersfield where he employed his theories of education. He dedicated the most of the next decade to social and political journalism and held many professorships all over America and returned to England in 1944 and was re- elected as a Fellow at Trinity. Russell upheld Pacifism throughout his life but had renounced it at the event of the outbreak of the World War II. He was also a major figure in the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament.

Russell continued writing after the war on various topics and

published many books including two collections of short stories. He succeeded his brother to the Earldom in 1931 and was awarded the Order of Merit in 1949. Russell's contributions to society, specifically in the fields of mathematics and philosophy, are immense and it would be easier to discuss them divided into sections.

Russell started his career as a Mathematician and later shifted to Philosophy primarily because of his desire to find a reason for believing in the truth of Mathematics. The fundamental idealist doctrine which believes that what is known is conditioned by the knowing of it made an impress on Russell as this denied any objective validity to mathematical properties. Russell thus sought to reduce mathematics to logic which involved "the analysis of the fundamental terms of mathematics in purely logical terms" and then to elaborate a logical system that would be "adequate to furnish the premises from which the propositions of mathematics could be deduced". This was carried out in his books *Principles of Mathematics* (1903) and *Principia Mathematica* (1910-13).



A.N. Whitehead: English mathematician and philosopher (February 1861 – December 1947)

Principia Mathematica marks an important event in the development of symbolic logic as it marked a breach with Aristotelian logic due the greater generality of Russell (and **Whitehead**)'s system and their endeavour to make it "rigorously formal". Other systems of logic that have developed since and that claim to be more rigorous still build upon Russell and Whitehead's work.

Russell wanted to incorporate his logic into his theory of knowledge and in *The Problems of Philosophy* (1912) he tried to distinguish what he called 'knowledge by description' and 'knowledge by acquaintance' taking as his basic propositions only those things with which we are directly "acquainted" which meant that if one is acquainted with an object it followed that the object really existed and "had the properties that it was apprehended as having". On the other hand, the existence of objects and its properties that are only known through descriptions he regarded as problematic. Russell's other important works regarding this are *Our Knowledge of the External World* (1914) and his two essays in *Mysticism and Logic* (1918).

Russell continued his work after the First World War and under the



Atomism: Philosophical belief originating in the 20thC that believed that the world consists of atoms or 'ultimate logical facts' that cannot be broken down any further.

influence of his student Wittgenstein, developed and put forward the basis of the doctrine of Logical **Atomism**. He further went on to develop this theory in his later works such as *Inquiry into Meaning and Truth* (1940) and his last important philosophical work *Human Knowledge: Its Scope and Limits* (1948). Russell's most famous book was *A History of Western Philosophy* (1945), a bestseller which provided financial security to Russell for the rest of his life.

Russell's work from a purely philosophical point of view reveals that his work in the domains of ethical and political philosophy does not compare to his work in logic and the theory of knowledge. He remained an advocate of liberty in the sphere of education and politics. Although, Russell often changed his philosophical views, his approach to philosophy remained consistent. His aim was always to find reasons for accepted beliefs in mathematics, science or plain common sense. Russell remained a prominent anti-war, anti-imperialist activist and campaigned against Hitler's regime and Stalin's totalitarianism and also attacked the United States' war in Vietnam and was a major figure in Nuclear Disarmament.



Empiricism: Empiricism is a theory that believes knowledge comes primarily from sensory experience.

Russell lived a long and fulfilling life dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and service to humanity. He remained in the high tradition of British **Empiricism** and was its outstanding representative in the twentieth century. Due to the power of his elegance and literary style, Russell was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1950 "in recognition of his varied and significant writings in which he champions humanitarian ideals and freedom of thought." He died of influenza at the age of 97 in Caernarfonshire, England.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: What are the contributions for which Russell was best remembered?

Q 2: What was the great loss that had occurred in Russell's life? Who had brought up Russell as a young boy?

Q 3: Where was Russell educated?

Q 4: Name the works that Russell wrote while he was imprisoned.

4.4 TEXT OF THE "PROLOGUE"

The following text is the Prologue written on 25th July, 1956 to the *Autobiography of Bertrand Russell.* Let us go through the text of the preface, before we supplement our reading with the provided explanation of the text.

Three passions, simple but overwhelmingly strong, have governed my life: the longing for love, the search for knowledge, and unbearable pity for the suffering of mankind. These passions, like great winds, have blown me hither and thither, in a wayward course, over a deep ocean of anguish, reaching to the very verge of despair.

I have sought love, first, because it brings ecstasy — ecstasy so great that I would often have sacrificed all the rest of life for a few hours of this joy. I have sought it, next, because it relieves loneliness — that terrible loneliness in which one shivering consciousness looks over the rim of the world into the cold unfathomable lifeless abyss. I have sought it, finally, because in the union of love I have seen, in a mystic miniature, the prefiguring vision of the heaven that saints and poets have imagined. This is what I sought, and though it might seem too good for human life, this is what — at last — I have found.

With equal passion I have sought knowledge. I have wished to understand the hearts of men. I have wished to know why the stars shine. And I have tried to apprehend the Pythagorean power by which number holds sway above the flux. A little of this, but not much, I have achieved.

Love and knowledge, so far as they were possible, led upward toward the heavens. But always pity brought me back to earth. Echoes of cries of pain reverberate in my heart.

Children in famine, victims tortured by oppressors, helpless old people a hated burden to their sons, and the whole world of loneliness, poverty, and pain make a mockery of what human life should be. I long to alleviate the evil, but I cannot, and I too suffer.

This has been my life. I have found it worth living, and would gladly live it again if the chance were offered me.

4.4.1 Explanation of the "Prologue"

Many critics and philosophers over the years have tried to sum up and encapsulate Russell's life and works. Philosophers from Harvard and Oxford

W.V Quine and A.J Ayer are notable amongst them. However, it is widely accepted that the most succinct and memorable encapsulation of Russell's life and works came from Russell himself in the prologue to his autobiography. Let us then read through this Prologue in detail illuminating important points and discussing the major themes as we go along.

Russell had lived for and achieved the experience and the rewards of love, knowledge and care for others. These passions were complex and had led him to contrary directions in life but all the same he sought them and achieved them to a large extent. Love he sought for the ecstasy it brought to relieve the terrible loneliness of the human predicament and for the sense of mysticism the union in love brings which is the stuff of poetry. He was a mathematician and numbers he sought to understand in the grand Pythagorean manner. These pursuits may appear selfish and could perhaps serve the individual alone. But however, his unfailing pity for human suffering brought him down to earth and he became an activist for human weal as he was a militant pacifist in life.

Russell begins the Prologue by stating that "*Three passions, simple but overwhelmingly strong, have governed my life: the longing for love,*

the search for knowledge, and unbearable pity for the suffering of mankind". Russell in his own words thus proclaims these three passions as the driving forces that have defined his life. He calls them "simple" passions but says that it is but the intensity of these passions ("*overwhelmingly strong*") or the determination through which he has pursued these passions that has shaped his life.

He then proceeds to elucidate upon these passions and begins first with "love" saying that he sought love due to the "ecstasy" or happiness which it brings. Love as we know is a powerful tool capable of uniting the world and defining lives and Russell aptly recognises the importance of love and says that he sought love for the happiness which it brings and also because it relieves terrible feelings of loneliness that can turn into lifeless despair. Finally, he says that he has sought love because in the union of love he has seen a mystic vision or a prefiguring of what heaven must be like that have been dreamed of and imagined by poets and saints.

Russell then says that he has pursued knowledge with equal intensity and passion. He states that he has desired to understand the hearts of men and know why stars shine. As a mathematician, he has even sough to understand the world in numbers in a grand Pythagorean manner. He says that *"a little of this, but not much"* he has achieved in his life.

According to Russell, the pursuits of love and knowledge "*led upward toward the heavens"* meaning that these pursuits may well be seen as serving only the individual but his *"unbearable pity for the suffering of mankind"* always brought him "*back to earth*", i.e amongst the troubles of men in the world. Famine, poverty and general suffering and pain according to Russell "*make a mockery of what human life should be*" and he longs to alleviate these evils from the world and his inability to do so fill him with sadness and anguish and he too considers himself a part of suffering mankind.

Russell ends by saying that these passions and the experience of these pursuits have defined his life and he has found it worth living and *"would gladly live it again if the chance were offered me."*



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 5: How does Bertrand Russell begin his Prologue to the Autobiography?

Q 6: What does Bertrand Russell desire to do with regard to human suffering?

4.5 MAJOR THEMES

The overarching theme is that of life and its worth and the imperatives of dedicating oneself to the well being of others while satisfying personal longings too.

The three passions which Russell talks about are the primary themes of the Prologue.

Love and its Importance in Human Life: The power and quality of love that has the ability to bring happiness, banish loneliness and unite people is evident as a major theme of the essay.

The Pursuit of Knowledge: The desire to know and understand the world to help alleviate the suffering of mankind and at the same time fulfilling personal aspirations to knowledge is another major theme.

Care and Pity for Human Suffering: The third theme of pity for suffering mankind is perhaps the most important as it prevents the other passions from degenerating into only personal assuaging of interests but keeps one firmly rooted on the ground amongst the suffering of the world.

4.5 STYLE AND LANGUAGE

As in his other writings, this prologue to Russell's autobiography titled *Autobiography of Bertrand Russell* is simple in its style but is at the same time loaded with concepts. His idiomatic English brought him nearer to the reading public despite the complex philosophical and scientific themes that he addressed. It is his style which was so idiomatic that whatever he said was immediately received by the people and this may have facilitated his earning the Nobel Prize for literature.

There is an element of simple rhetoric in the passage. Right in the beginning, he uses qualifiers and parentheses in order to introduce his themes of a useful life governed by love, knowledge and pity and ably elucidates upon his themes throughout the prologue. The prowess of the writer is evident in the passage and this Prologue remains an important marker of Russell's literary abilities and style.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 7: Name the autobiography of Bertrand Russell.

Q 8: Write a few lines on the style and technique employed by Russell in the "Prologue" to his Autobiography.



4.7 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we have read about Bertrand Russell's life and his contributions primarily to the world of philosophy, mathematics, history, literature and politics. Russell's "Prologue" to his autobiography has also been widely accepted as the best piece of text that sums up his life. Also, in this context, we have discussed the driving forces or passions that has come to shape his life and the dedication through which Russell continued serving in the interests of human suffering and the larger mankind.



4.8 FURTHER READING

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4.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: Bertrand Russell is best remembered for his contributions to mathematical logic, epistemology and analytic philosophy.

Ans to Q No 2: Russell lost both his parents when he was very young and he was brought up under the care of his grandmother, Lady Russell.

Ans to Q No 3: Russell was initially educated at home and later in 1890 won a mathematical scholarship to Trinity College, Cambridge.

Ans to Q No 4: Russell was jailed for six months and it was in prison that he wrote his *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy* (1919) and began working on his later book *Analysis of Mind* (1921).

Ans to Q No 5: Russell begins the Prologue by stating that "Three passions, simple but overwhelmingly strong, have governed my life: the longing for love, the search for knowledge, and unbearable pity for the suffering of mankind". Russell in his own words thus proclaims these three passions as the driving forces that have defined his life. He calls them "simple" passions but says that it is but the intensity of these passions ("overwhelmingly strong") or the determination through which he has pursued these passions that has shaped his life.

Ans to Q No 6: Famine, poverty and general suffering and pain according to Russell "make a mockery of what human life should be" and he longs to alleviate these evils from the world and his inability to do so fill him with sadness and anguish and he too considers himself a part of suffering mankind.

Ans to Q No 7: *Autobiography of Bertrand Russell.*

Ans to Q No 8: There is an element of simple rhetoric in the passage. Right in the beginning, he uses qualifiers and parentheses in order to introduce his themes of a useful life governed by love, knowledge and pity and ably elucidates upon his themes throughout the prologue. The prowess of the writer is evident in the passage and this Prologue remains an important marker of Russell's literary abilities and style.



4.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q 1: Write a short note on the life of Bertrand Russell

Q 2: Discuss Bertrand Russell's lifetime contributions and achievements.

Q 3: Explain the text of the "Prologue" to Russell's Autobiography.

Q 4: Highlight the major themes evident in the text of the Prologue.

Q 5: Discuss the style and language employed by Bertrand Russell.

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UNIT 5 : MATTHEW ARNOLD: "LITERATURE AND SCIENCE"

UNIT STRUCTURE

5.1 Learning Objectives

5.2 Introduction

5.3 Matthew Arnold: Life and Works

5.4 Explanation of the Text

5.5 Major Themes

5.6 Style and Language

5.7 Let Us Sum Up

5.8 Further Reading

5.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

5.10 Model Questions

5.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you will be able to:

- describe the life of Matthew Arnold
- explain the context of the essay "Literature and Science"
- analyse Arnold's style and language
- examine the contributions of Matthew Arnold as an essayist.

5.2 INTRODUCTION

This unit will give you an introduction to Matthew Arnold and provide you with a detailed study of the man, his life and his works.

A detailed synopsis of the essay has also been included in this unit for a better understanding of the interrelation of literature and science. Over and above, this unit aims to acquaint you with the themes that form a crucial part of the essay. Besides this, the unit shall also discuss the style and the language used by Arnold.

5.3 MATTHEW ARNOLD: LIFE AND WORKS

Matthew Arnold has always been rated very highly among English essayist. It was through his essays that Arnold asserted his greatest influence on literature. His writing on the role of literary criticism in society advance classical ideas and advocate the adoption of universal aesthetic standards. His insistences on standards, the total quality of civilisation have left permanent marks on modern criticism. His essays articulate the desire to establish universal standards of taste and judgement. According to Arnold, 'critical inquiry' should not be limited to literature but should also include theology, history, art, sociology, science and political theory.

Arnold's essays deal with, practically, the entire fabric of English civilisation and culture in his day. His writings are all directed by one clear and consistent critical purpose. The purpose was to rationalise our intellect in terms of art, literature and religion.

Matthew Arnold, the son of Thomas Arnold, the famed headmaster of Rugby School, was born on 24th December 1822 at Laleham, Middlesex, England. He was an English poet and cultural critic. He worked as an inspector of Schools. He has been characterised as a 'sagewriter', a type of writer who chastizes and instructs the readers on contemporary social issues.

Arnold was not only poet but also a social and religious critic who devoted a large part of his life to demonstrating the central part that an adequate literary culture could and should play in society. He also tried to rescue religion from the rationalist scoffers on the one hand and the rigid fundamentalists and dogmatists on the other by propounding a liberal Christianity based on a view of the Bible.

Matthew Arnold married Frances Lucy, daughter of Sir William Wightman, Justice of the Queen's Bench. He had six children. He died suddenly in 1888 of heart failure when running to meet a tram that would have taken him to the Liverpool Landing Stage to see his daughter.

As a literary man, Matthew Arnold published one of the most significant volumes of poems *Empedocles on Etna* in 1852. The second

volume of the same anthology was published in the same year entitled *Empedocles on Etna and Other Poems*. In 1853 Arnold published another anthology entitled *Poems: A New Edition*, a selection from the two earlier volumes famously excluding *Empedocles on Etna* but adding new poems, *Sohrab and Rustum* and *The Scholar Gipsy*. After a grand success of the anthology mentioned above its second part appeared in 1854 entitled *Poems: Second Series*, including a new poem *Balder Dead.*

In 1857 Arnold was selected as the Professor of Poetry at Oxford and he was the first in this position to deliver his lectures in English rather than in Latin. He was interested in European educational practices and conducted three trips to the continent in 1859 for its study. He self published *The Popular Education of France* (1861) which was later published under the title *Democracy* (1879).

From poetry Arnold moved on to the realm of essays. His *Essays and Criticism: First Series* appeared in 1865. *Essays and Criticism: Second Series* appeared posthumously in 1888. *Thyrsis*, an elegy to Clough, who had died in 1861, came to light in 1866. One of Arnold's major works in social criticism,*Culture and Anarchy* appeared in 1869. It is a series of periodical essays. The preface was added in 1875. The essay divides English society into three constituent classes: aristocracy, bourgeoisie and working class. None of these classes either sympathizes with or upholds a truly refined high culture which could stand unmoved in the political and religious order. According to Arnold, "[culture] seeks to do away with classes ...". *Literature and Dogma*, Arnold's major work in religious criticism appeared in 1873. Another significant essay composed by Matthew Arnold, *Literature and Science* was published in 1882.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: How did Matthew Arnold begin his career?

Q 2: How did Arnold's life come to an end?

Q 3: Name any two major works of Matthew Arnold.

Q 4: What are the genres that Arnold was associated with?

5.4 EXPLANATION OF THE TEXT

"Literature and Science", the two terms present in the title of Matthew Arnold's essay are extremely diverse in their explanation. But Arnold, through the work tries to bring in a logical relation between them. He focuses on the gap between science and humanities in the 19th century when the industrial age had set in and the humanities did not matter to anyone.



Impracticable: impossible or difficult in practice.

In a practical world, philosophy does not have a strong grip. It is always termed as unpractical and **impracticable**. Having a minute observation of the essay we come to know that Arnold supports not only rational thinking as a part of education but also emphasizes on the knowledge of nature. He believes that the knowledge of nature is interesting to all men since the result of the scientific investigations of nature had a bearing on human life. At the very outset of the essay, Arnold seems to be supporting the practical people against the philosophies of Plato. Later on, he attempts to highlight the concept that the notion of the practical people is not worth supporting as all branches of knowledge are important and undoubtedly humanities are not an exception in this regard.

Supporting an unrestricted and objective criticism, Arnold implies that the prosperity of a society is dependent upon its intellectual life which is free from personal, political and practical considerations. From this implication of Arnold, a fact comes to light that only intellectual attitude is not sufficient but it should be rational, as well as, liberal. This fact undoubtedly proves that literature and science are internally like two sides of the same coin despite being different in external sense.

Arnold is totally against the idea of the practical people giving the sole importance on 'natural sciences' as the core of education. According to Arnold, "all knowledge is interesting" and the concept of supporting natural science as the core of education can never be accepted. He pinpoints that the human life is built around powers (power of conduct, intellect, beauty, social life and manners) of which we have the need for. Giving more importance on humane letters Arnold stresses that science discredits religion. Further, he adds that it is hard to show the relation between powers and



Belles Letters: humane letters

Albuminous: of or pertaining to albumin (a kind of monomeric proteins occur in egg white.



Copernicus: Nicolaus Copernicus, a renaissance mathematician, an astronomer who formulated a model of the universe that placed the sun rather than the earth at the centre of the universe.

Galileo: Galileo Galilei, an Italian astronomer, physicist, engineer, philosopher and mathematician.

Newton: Sir Isaac Newton, English physicist, mathematician, astronomer, alchemist and natural philosopher.

Darwin: Charles Darwin, an English naturalist and geologist, best known for his contribution to evolutionary theory.

humans without **belles lettres**.

To strengthen the connection between science and humanities/ religion, he refers to a fine example of an egg and a chick. He says, " It is very interesting to know, that, from the **albuminous** white of the egg, the chick in the egg gets the materials for its flesh, bones, blood, and feathers; while, from the fatty yolk of the egg, it gets the heat and energy which enable it at length to break its shell and begin the world." To be more specific, the albumious white of the egg refers to the knowledge of natural science and on the other hand the fatty yolk of the egg refers to the knowledge of nature. It establishes a clear cut concept of balancing science and humanities in a highly remarkable way.

To sum up, Arnold feels that humanities cannot in any way lose its position in the leading educational system despite repeated oppositions. According to Arnold literature or humanities is the base for "knowing the world and ourselves." Moreover it would be incorrect to say that Arnold is strictly not in favour of natural science. Defending the significance of natural science, Arnold forwards a comment that to know the best of a modern nation does not mean just knowing their belles lettres but we must acquaint ourselves with what has been done by **Copernicus, Galileo, Newton, Darwin** and so forth. Hence, Arnold feels that to cater humans with knowledge in true sense the connection between literature and science is undisputable.

5.5 MAJOR THEMES

Arnold belongs to such an age when the rapid advent of science and technology was one of the most remarkable aspects. Due to the rapid advancement of science people seemed to be more rational and as a result they became highly dependent on facts and ideas which were scientifically proven rather than being affected by the traditional ideas of religion and humanities. This attitude has created a new era of differentiating the two ranches of knowledge, literature and science from each other. With special reference to the prescribed text we may say that the gap between science and literature has found a special expression and gives the readers a new

provision of thinking in a new thought provoking manner. In short, the inevitable aspect of Victorian period, conflict between faith and science is one of the major themes of the essay "Literature and Science". Here, Arnold tries his level best to minimize the gap between science and literature by forwarding different sorts of references from numerous fields of study.

Another theme of the essay is the Arnoldian concept of education. Education is a vast subject that can never be captivated in a limited spun of interest. To support the broad concept of education, Arnold, very critically portrays that only the knowledge of natural sciences is not sufficient to justify the concept of education. Invigorating the novelty of educational value, Arnold strives to focus on the value of all branches of knowledge as an integral part of it. According to him all knowledge is interesting and the knowledge of humanities is not an exception in this regard. Hence, to put the essay in a nutshell, we can say that the concept of education does not stand on any one particular study but is an amalgamation of all branches of knowledge.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 5: Explain the essay "Literature and Science" in about 200 words.

Q 6: To which Victorian conflict does the essay refer?

5.6 STYLE AND LANGUAGE

Matthew Arnold's argument intermixes a post- Carlylean irony and an often heavy handed wit; it reiterates phrases, terms and embodied ideas; it offers its readers what purports to be an investigative moralism and it attempts to establish the nature of a broad and all – embracing notion of culture. His polished, didactic and satirically witty prose works have earned him quite a big fan following. His narratives and descriptions were pleasant and picturesque, loaded with outstanding similes to produce a lingering effect on the readers' mind. Arnold's approach was markedly eclectic. He derived ideas from a broad and diverse range of sources.

Arnold's essays show demand of development, clarity and arrangement and simplicity of style which marked his inspiration from the Greeks as well as Goethe and William Wordsworth.

The style of Arnold has been praised at once too much and too little. His words have such fascinating effect that whether or not you agree with the matter, the manner inspires you with a personal affection for the author. He focused his writings on an examination of how things work for us here and now.

Arnold uses a language that binds him and his readers intimately, arising the feeling that the reader is actually sitting opposite him engaged in an informal, intimate and cosy private conversation.

In this essay "Literature and Science", Arnold strives to show the readers a well-arranged relation between Literature and Science in an immensely critical manner which is not only convincing but also is of great significance.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 7: What idea of Arnold's style did you get after reading the essay?



5.7 LET US SUM UP

After reading this unit, you have been familiarised with Matthew Arnold- his life, his works and his place in the world of the English essay. Furthermore, you have been introduced with one of his most significant essays where he focuses on a torn relation between education composed principally of liberal arts (knowledge of humanities) and education composed significantly of scientific knowledge and professional training (knowledge of natural science).



5.8 FURTHER READING

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http:// www.bartleby.com/223/0407.html. www.literature-study-online.com>essays.



5.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: Matthew Arnold started his career as an Inspector of Schools.

Ans to Q No 2: Arnold died suddenly in 1888 of heart failure when running to meet a tram that would have taken him to the Liverpool Landing Stage to see his daughter.

Ans to Q No 3: *Empedocles on Etna(1852)* and *Culture and Anarchy(1869).*

Ans to Q No 4: Poetry, literary, social and cultural criticism.

Ans to Q No 5: Refer to Section 5.4.

Ans to Q No 6: The conflict between faith and science.

Ans to Q No 7: Refer to Section 5.6.



5.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q 1: How does Matthew Arnold compare and contrast the two branches of knowledge in his essay "Literature and Science"?

Q 2: What particular aspect of Matthew Arnold's style do you find most appealing and why?

Q 3: Why does Matthew Arnold say that he does not agree with the practical people's idea of education?

Q 4: State the grounds on which Arnold supported literature as an integral branch of knowledge?

Q 5: Arnold uses the example of an egg and a chick in his essay "Literature and Science". Explain the significance of this example.

Q 6: Make a note on Matthew Arnold's career as an essayist with reference to "Literature and Science".

Q 7: What, according to Arnold, is the prosperity of a society dependent upon? Explain.

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UNIT 6 : RICHARD KEARNEY: “ON STORIES”

UNIT STRUCTURE

6.1 Learning Objectives

6.2 Introduction

6.3 Richard Kearney: Life and Works

6.4 Explanation of the Text

6.5 Major Themes

6.6 Style and Language

6.7 Let Us Sum Up

6.8 Further Reading

6.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

6.10 Model Questions

6.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- describe the life and works of Richard Kearney
- explain the content of the essay “On Stories”
- discuss the relevant theme as reflected in the text
- discuss the style and language employed in the essay
- gain a better idea on the transforming narratives of stories and story telling.

6.2 INTRODUCTION

Story-telling is perhaps as old as mankind itself and almost everyone enjoys a well narrated story or anecdote. Our own lives are replete with countless stories that make us laugh or cry. We all have our share of personal narratives that capture the lessons of life and it is precisely from human experiences that stories are born or created. Time and again storytellers have spun the magic of their narrative yarn and enchanted our minds with their fascinating stories. Can the existence of stories and storytelling be at stake? Let us explore the essay “On Stories” by Richard Kearney to find an anwer to this question.

6.3 RICHARD KEARNEY: LIFE AND WORKS

Richard Kearney (born 1954) was born in Cork, Ireland and is widely known among literary and intellectual circles owing to his **meritorious** scholarship. An intellectual in his own right, Kearney haswritten and published over twenty books and several other academic publications. He has also received several awards and honoursfor his contribution to inter-disciplinary studies that include Philosophy, Literature, History and others. He had pursued his higher studies at the University of Dublin, McGill University, winning a Masters Travelling Studentship, at the National University of Ireland in 1977 and completed his doctoral studies at the University of Paris.

As an academician, he has widely lectured across various American universities and has held several academic posts notably the Chair of Film School at University of Dublin (1993-2005) and currently holds the Charles B. Seelig Chair of Philosophy at Boston College since 1999 and the Chair of the Institute for Critical Philosophy at The Global Center for Advanced Studies since 2012. Also, Richard Kearney has been associated with the Arts Council of Ireland, Royal Irish Academy (to which he was elected in 1994), International Association of Philosophy and Literature, Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy, American Philosophical Association, American Association of Religion, Global Aesthetic Research Project, Society for Ricoeur Studies among several others. He was also part of the drafting of proposals for the series of Northern Irish Peace Agreement.

A few of his literary works include *Sam's Fall* (1995), *Walking at Sea Level* (1997) and *Angel of Patrick's Hill*. Some of his most recent works include the two co-edited books *Reimagining the Sacred: Richard Kearney Debates God* (2015) and *Carnal Hermeneutics* (2015) apart from other books such as*Anatheism: The Returning to God After God* (2011), *Navigations* (2006), *Debates in Continental Philosophy* (2004), *On Paul Ricouer: The Owl of Minerva* (2004), *Strangers, Gods and Monsters* (2003), *On Stories* (2002) and *The God Who May Be* (2001). His other works that dwell widely on philosophy, politics and culture are titled: *Post nationalist*

Ireland: Politics, Culture, Philosophy; *Poetics of Modernity*, *Poetics of Imagining: Modern and Postmodern*, *Transition: Narratives in Modern Irish Culture*, *Modern Movements in European Philosophy*, *Dialogues with Contemporary Continental Thinkers* etc.

Among the literary awards that Kearney had won, one can mention the 'Choice Book Award for Outstanding Academic Publication' in 1988', 'Ranconteur Short Fiction Award' (1995), 'Guardian Book of the Year Award' (1997) and'FNAC Book Selection Award' (1998). He has met and interacted with leading intellectuals namely Paul Ricouer, Jacques Derrida, Julia Kristeva, Luis Borges, Noam Chomsky, Stanislas Breton through the course of his intellectual journey. The learner shall come across some of these names while studying Literary Theory. Let us then explore the text of the essay "On Stories" which highlights the continuing tradition of storytelling that has transformed its style and structural modes, **retaining** its position as a major literary form in the modern world.



Meritorious: someone who has merit or credibility.

Retaining: continue to hold a position.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Write a few lines on Richard Kearney.

Q 2: Name the literary works by Richard Kearney.

Q 3: Name the literary awards won by Richard Kearney.

6.4 EXPLANATION OF THE TEXT

The author begins with the reflection that the short story may have reached its tail end as suggested by the French philosopher Jean Baudrillard and the German philosopher Carl Hempel. But he also interprets the German Jewish philosopher and cultural critic Walter Benjamin's opinion that when he had highlighted the threat to the art of narration or stories in the information age, Benjamin certainly did not mean that stories as a narrative form would die away. And according to the author, it is possible that Benjamin was only pointing towards the dying forms of the age-old traditions of storytelling that had rolled down the ages. These oral narratives had traditionally survived and had travelled down across centuries, through countless generations simply by word-of-mouth andthe joy of sharing stories.



Linear: pertaining to a direct progression.

Mnemonic: a system such as a pattern of letters, ideas, or associations which assist inrememberingsomething.

Epistolary: it refers to letters, diary entries, newspaper clippings and other such series of documentedwriting.

Deterritorialise: to break the boundaries of territory or territories.

Verdict: formal finding and declaration of fact.

Criss-cross: a mix pattern.

Nouveaux: new.

Coherent: forming an unified whole.



Decipherable: something that can be easily understood.

Obituarists: refers to those critics who suggest that story telling has died; obituary in general is a news article that reports the recent death of someone.

Narrating stories was a **linear** tradition that was woven into the fabric of the day-to- day life of people. But the advancement of technology such as the computer and the World Wide Web posed as challenges to these continuing traditions. Today the advanced telecommunication systems and the digital web of information have rapidly replaced the old "**mnemonic**, **epistolary** and print modes of expression". These advancements, as you will most certainly agree with, has in turn transformed the world into a "**deterritorialised** world" or in other words, all forms of barriers transcending both space and time have been broken down.

Although, this modern day reality cannot be denied, the author suggests that we could challenge or question the **"verdict"** on the death of stories as a form. Thus, in the words of the author, "[s]torytelling will never end" and that there will always be someone "who will respond "Once upon a time…"". In fact, the old stories have undergone changes with regard to style and variation and the modern reader will find that short stories have branched out and given birth to more "multi-plotted, multi-vocal and multi-media" forms. Then there are the layered "micro-narratives or post-narratives" and stories that are narrated backwards like Martin Amis' *Time's Arrow* or stories with simultaneously **criss-crossed** plots at the same time as in Mike Figgis's digitally shot film titled *Timecode*.

The author suggests that the declaration of the "**nouveaux-**romanciers" 'that the story must be obliterated' in the 1960s and the 1970s, they were short-sighted in their attempt to do so. He does agree that narratives need not necessarily represent a linear world where "everything [is] aimed at imposing the image of a stable universe, **coherent**, continuous, univocal and wholly **decipherable**" world. But, he also suggests that writers like James Joyce who had experimented with the fictional form had "revolutionised the whole storytelling process." The changing of the literary form from age to age does not necessarily mean that they are short of disappearing. Therefore, he counters the arguments of the "literary **obituarists**" stating that the story telling undergoes changes and is 'recreated' every time its narrative thread wears out. Thus, if writers like Alaine Robbe-Grillet (French writer) claims that "novels that contain

characters belong truly to the past", it could be a definition of his own novels without his knowing.

The author suggests the positive approaches of some of the theorists such as the philosophers Paul Ricoeur (French), Charles Taylor (Canadian), Scottish Alasdair MacIntyre (Scottish), Richard Rorty, Martha Nussbaum (both American), andHollywood Development Executive Christopher Vogler. For an instance, the author of *The Writer's Journey* (2007) Voglerstates that the beginning of cyber culture is rather a "catalyst for new possibilities of interactive, non linear narration". Vogler writes that "[t]he fact is that no matter how much technologies transform our modes of storytelling, people will always 'enjoy going into a story trance and allowing themselves to be led through by a masterful story weaver.'"



Ethics: ethics is also known as moral philosophy.
Hermeneutics: it is the theory and methodology of textual interpretation.

Thus, to elucidate "the irrepressible art of the story", the author divides the essay under five main headings with the model of Aristotle's *Poetics* in mind. The *Poetics* is one of the first works that provides a foundation of both dramatic and literary theory. The most important elements of a narrative includes:(1) plot (*mythos*) (2) recreation (*mimesis*) (3) release (*catharsis*) (4) wisdom (*phronesis*), and (5) **ethics** (*ethos*) in order to interpret creative texts which fall under **Hermeneutics**. The author aims to take the support of some of the ancient and modern theories regarding the same. We shall briefly discuss each of these six elements.

In order to discuss the concept of 'Plot or Mythos' we could take up the example of our own lives. Just like a story the pattern of our lives is structured in terms of beginnings, middles and endings in other words: "…our existence is already pre plotted before we ever consciously seek out narrative in which to reinscribe our life as life-history". Further, Aristotle was one of the first philosophers to have identified that human life is defined in terms of action directed towards a particular end. In his *Poetics*, the Plot represents the life of action in terms of (a) a telling (b) a fable or fantasy and (c) a crafted structure. According to the philosopher Saint Augustine, "life [was] a **temporal** plot in search of an ultimate author" that was God. Others like the German philosophers Martin Heidegger and Hans Georg Gadamer, as well as, Paul Ricoeur had their own strands of interpretation with regard



Temporal: relating to time.

to the same. One of the interesting lines found in this passage is that "Life is pregnant with stories. It is a nascent plot in search of a midwife".

The essence (*eidos*) of our lives is what Aristotle calls 'Recreation or Mimesis'. It highlights the "potential truths" of this world and "re-enacts the real world of action by magnifying its essential traits."The frame of existence is best defined or narrated through the means of "verbal **recounting**" and the recreation of the plot. In this regard, the passage reads thus:

> "*Mimesis* is 'invention' in the original sense of the term: *invenire* means both to discover and to create…It is the power, in short, to re- create actual worlds as possible worlds."

'Release or Catharsis' which is also referred to as Purgation is the next important element in narration. This calls for the play of free imagination which is "[t]o know what it is to feel like to be in someone else's head, shoes or skin."

Thus, cathartic release of emotions involves both pity (*eleos*) and fear (*phobos*) and one tends to relate to the kind of emotional element infused in a story.

Thus, if one reads Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* which is the story of a "passionate woman" who dies a tragic death in the novel, he or she would almost relate to the pain experienced by the broken-hearted character of Anna. Thus, stories have a cathartic element through which we could relieve our emotional thoughts and feelings. The humanitarian quality of **empathy** is extremely necessary in our day-to-day lives. Historical tragedies like the **Holocaust** which you must have read took place because of this missing element of 'empathy' among the Nazis. In this regard, the author writes thus, "[t]he power of empathy with living things other than ourselves - the stranger the better- is a major test not just of poetic imagination but of ethical sensitivity" and "[i]f we possess narrative sympathy-enabling us to see the world from the other's point of view- we cannot kill. If we do not, we cannot love."

Another quoted passage from this essay by Elizabeth Costello reads thus:



Recounting: tell someone about something; give an account of an event or experience.

Empathy: the experience of understanding another person's condition from their perspective.

Holocaust: refers to the historical tragedy of the mass killing of six million Jews by German Nazis.

> "The heart is the seat of faculty, sympathy, that allows us to share at times the being of another…There are people who have capacity to imagine themselves as someone else, there is no limit to the extent to which we can think ourselves into the being of another. There are no bounds to the sympathetic imagination."

A good story also bears a therapeutic element or in other words the power to heal. The creation of narratives is like a spell, which makes the impossible seem possible and sustains our interest and curiosity. This element is also known as the 'literary belief' which is essential to make narratives credible.

In narratives, the interplay of fiction and history enables fiction "to portray the 'essential truths of life'" and history "to portray a credible sense of particularity". The element of 'Wisdom or Phronesis' is defined as "…a form of practical wisdom capable of respecting the singularity of situations as well as the nascent universality of values aimed by human actions." Narrative wisdom accepts the fact that there is always an "element of fictionality" in the representation of history.

The author discusses the concept of 'Ethics or Ethos' and notes that "…stories make possible the ethical sharing of a common world with others in that they are invariably a mode of discourse." The act of storytelling involves someone (a teller), telling something (a story) about something (a real or imaginary world), to someone (a listener) at the receiving end. As highlighted by the author the act of storytelling is critically studied in different ways such as:

(1) **Romantic idealists and Existentialists:** The intentional role of the teller.

(2) **Structuralists:** The linguistic aspects of the 'story'.

(3) **Post-Structuralism:** The receptive role of the 'reader'.

(4) **Materialists and Realists:** The referential role of the 'world'.

(5) **Hermeneutics:** All the above aspects in a balanced narrative.

Narratives also have a larger moral or ethical function.They can unravel a range of essential human values and inspire sensitivity to ethical values in readers.

Finally, we are all born to a certain "inter-subjective history" that is invariably connected to our lives and existence. Perhaps, this is why the author says that "[w]e are made by stories before we ever get around to making our own". Stories are integral to human lives and as long as the human race lives, stories will always live. Thus, the author sums up with a very interesting note:

> "Storytelling invites us to become not just agents of our own lives, but narrators and readers as well. It shows us that the untold life is not worth living. There will always be someone there to say, 'tell me a story', and someone there to respond. Were this not so, we would no longer be fully human."

The essay "On Stories" is part of Kearney's book published in the year 2002 with the same title and is almost thirty one pages long. Therefore, important extracts from the texts have been provided in the course of the explanation itself. However, you could search for a copy of the text on the internet for reference and to enhance your own reading.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 4: What did Walter Benjamin highlight with regard to storytelling and narration?

Q 5: What are the advancements that has deterritorialised the modern world?

Q 6: What are the most important elements of a narrative?

Q 7: What are the two factors involved in the cathartic element of a narrative?

Q 8: What are the four aspects involved in the act of storytelling?



LET US KNOW

Romantic Idealists: It is a reference to the Romantic idealism of the 1800s when the Romantic Movement is thought to have begun in Europe.

Existentialists: It refers to philosophy known as Existentialism of the late 19th and 20th century that laid emphasis on existence,

freedom and choice.

Structuralists: Structuralism began in Europe in the early 1950s that studies the structural representations of language and linguistics.

Post-Structuralist: Post-Structuralism is an intellectual movement that had emerged in the late 20th century in philosophy and literary criticism in opposition to structuralism. It studies the ways by which knowledge is produced.

Materialists: It refers to the philosophy of materialism and has a long history which studies material interactions with human life or existence.

6.5 MAJOR THEMES

Can you possibly remember any memorable story (or stories) that might have remained with you even after years of reading it? Let us discuss some of the major themes highlighted in the text to which you may also add your individual analysis of the text.

Story and Storytelling :

It is commonly said that, 'everyone loves a good story' and strong plots or storylines always tends to capture the interest of a reader. In fact, good stories always leave a lasting impression on our minds. Although the essay begins on the note that "the end of story" is at hand as we "pass into the third millennium", yet the author through the discussion of his essay argues for the promising future of stories and storytelling.

Kearney notes that the advancement of technology has not taken away the joy of stories but has rather improvised ways of sharing them. In fact, authors like Christopher Vogler believe that 'cyber-culture' does not hinder the development of story but rather, introduces newer trends and possibilities with regard to stories and the art of storytelling. The narrative form shall constantly evolve with the passing of time and undergo significant changes in its form and function. Thus, there would always be a rising demand for new kinds of stories and unique ways of storytelling.

When it comes to story and storytelling, it is important to note in the words of the author that, "Every act of storytelling involves someone (a

teller), telling something (a story), to someone (a listener) about something (a real or imaginary world)." Stories are inseparable from human lives and we inspire stories as both the "storytellers" and the "story-followers." And narratives always tend to be open-ended in the way they are narrated and the way they are received. Thus, we are as much the narrator or reader as much as the actor. We inspire stories and stories inspire us.

The Significance of Stories :

In truth, stories are unquestionably born of human experiences and there are countless narratives within each individual that longs to find a creative expression. If this is true, then we can never imagine an end to this vast sea of stories.The author writes that, "[s]tories alter our lives as we return from stories to action" which suggests how stories are closely intertwined with our own lives. And often it is through the commonalities of human experiences (transformed into stories) that we are able to acknowledge the universal significance of the narrative form.

Stories have the power to enrich our minds with wisdom and necessary values. Through the narration of stories, we gain practical wisdom, new insights and "emotional sensitivity". Further, when silenced voices or untold stories find a vent or outlet in the form of historical narrative or other creative modes of expression, they also extend a therapeutic effect on readers or listeners.

Towards the end of the essay, the author opines that storytelling "shows us that the untold life is not worth living". Thus, instead of accepting the negative judgment on the fate of Stories, the author encourages readers to raise questions on such unfavourable opinions put forth by leading critics and theorists today. As stories are here to stay and also adapt to newer creative modes of narration, the author writes that, "[t]he simple fact that story-forms mutate from age to age does not mean they disappear". As long as the human race survives, storytelling will continue to live.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 9: What does Christopher Vogler believe with regard to the advancement of technology and its effect on the development of story?

Q 10: What happens when silenced voices or untold stories find an outlet?

6.6 STYLE AND LANGUAGE

The essay begins with the following quote: "There are three points about stories: if told, they like to be heard; if heard, they like to be taken in; and if taken in, they liked to be told." Stories have always captivated the minds of human beings since the beginning of time. Right from the pre-historic etchings of stories on cave walls to the present day storytelling practices, the narration of stories has continued to enrapture the human mind. The modes of storytelling and narration are constantly transformed in order to suit the tastes of listeners. And hence comes in the role of both the style and language in the presentation of stories as well.

With regard to the present text of the essay, it must be said that the essay is well structured and the style of presentation reflects the author's depth of study. Infact, the constant cross references to various theorists and thinkers together with the clash of their ideas are signs of a well read author. Although, the language used is relatively simple, yet the learner may initially find it difficult to grapple with the text owing to the criss-cross of references. Thus, an apparent unfamiliarity with the references to the leading intellectuals, their ideas or expositions, literary movements, historic-political examples, theoretical discourses and controversies might take away a lay reader's interest from exploring the text at length. The essay presupposes that the reader is well-read on the areas of discussion. And although, it may not be necessarily so, the supplemented explanation of the text in the unit highlights the important points of the essay.

Some of the important components of a story propounded by Aristotle in his *Poetics* (335 B.C) are taken up in Kearney's discussion of the essay.

These are namely: Plot (*Mythos*), Re-creation (*Mimesis*), Release (*Catharsis*), Wisdom (*Phronesis*) and Ethics (*Ethos*). In his own additions to each of these elements of a story, Kearney makes an attempt to argue and "champion the irrepressible art of the story". As the essay unravels its lengthy discussion on the promise of stories, it stresses on the structural elements of stories and their respective functions through a range of examples derived from the author's wide reading.



ACTIVITY

Dear learner, when was the last time that you read or listened to a story?

For all you know, you could possess the gift of storytelling without ever realising it. You could look around for an interesting picture that stirs a story in you. The picture could be from an old photograph, magazine, newspaper cutting or any other such source. And, then try the mind boggling activity of spinning a story in such a way that it would leave your readers or listeners craving for more.



6.7 LET US SUM UP

After going through the unit, you will be familiar with the life and works of Richard Kearney. The explanation of the essay "On Stories" will give you a detailed idea on the important elements of stories and storytelling. Further, it will enrich your idea on the significance of stories in our lives. The major themes together with the aspects of style and language have been discussed with reference to the text of the essay. Thus, the learner will gain a detailed insight into the structural functions of stories.



6.8 FURTHER READING

1) Kearney, Richard. (2002) *On Stories*. London: Routledge. Website: kearneyr@bc.edu http//richardmkearney.com



6.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: Richard Kearney (born 1954) was born in Cork, Ireland and is widely known among literary and intellectual circles owing to his meritorious scholarship. An intellectual in his own right, Kearney has written and published over twenty books and several other academic publications. He has also received several awards and honours for his contributions to inter-disciplinary studies

Ans to Q No 2: *Sam's Fall* (1995), *Walking at Sea Level* (1997) and *Angel of Patrick's Hill* are some of his literary works.

Ans to Q No 3: Among the literary awards that Kearney had won, one can mention the 'Choice Book Award for Outstanding Academic Publication' in 1988, 'Ranconteur Short Fiction Award' (1995), 'Guardian Book of the Year Award' (1997) and 'FNAC Book Selection Award' (1998).

Ans to Q No 4: Walter Benjamin had highlighted the threat to the art of narration or stories in the information age

Ans to Q No 5: The advancement of technology such as the computer and the World Wide Web posed as challenges to the continuing traditions of storytelling. Today the advanced telecommunication systems and the digital web of information has rapidly replaced the old modes of expression. These advancements have deterritorialised the world.

Ans to Q No 6: The most important elements of a narrative includes: (1) plot (*mythos*) (2) recreation (*mimesis*) (3) release (*catharsis*) (4) wisdom (*phronesis*), and (5) ethics (*ethos*)

Ans to Q No 7: The cathartic release of emotions involves both pity (*eleos*) band fear (*phobos*).

Ans to Q No 8: The act of storytelling involves someone (a teller), telling something (a story) about something (a real or imaginary world), to someone (a listener) at the receiving end.

Ans to Q No 9: Authors like Christopher Vogler believe that 'cyber-culture' does not hinder the development of story but rather, introduces newer trends and possibilities with regard to stories and the art of storytelling.

Ans to Q No 10: When silenced voices or untold stories find a vent or outlet in the form of historical narrative or other creative modes of expression, they also extend a therapeutic effect on readers or listeners



6.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q 1: Briefly discuss the life and works of Richard Kearney.

Q 2: Explain the text of the essay "On Stories" in your own words.

Q 3: Discuss some of the important themes pertaining to the text of the essay "On Stories".

Q 4: Explain the style and language of the text of the essay.

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UNIT 7 : MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. : "I HAVE A DREAM"

UNIT STRUCTURE

7.1 Learning Objectives

7.2 Introduction

7.3 Martin Luther King Jr.: Life and Works

7.4 Context of the Speech

7.5 Explanation of the Speech

7.6 Style and Language

7.7 Let Us Sum Up

7.8 Further Reading

7.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

7.10 Model Questions

7.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to:

- discuss the life and works of Martin Luther King Jr.
- explain the prose piece "I have a Dream" in its proper context
- appreciate and analyse the significant themes
- grasp an idea of the style of the prose piece.

7.2 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, we will look at a speech delivered by Martin Luther King Jr. (1929-68). He was an American civil-rights campaigner and one of the most significant black leaders in modern American political history. He fought for the rights of the black people in America. The black population in America was severely exploited by the whites.They were not allowed entry into many public places and many **sanctions** were imposed upon them. King raised his voice against such exploitation and tried to motivate the demoralized black population to fight against inequality and injustice.



Sanctions: bans of restrictions which prevent someone from doing something.



Discrimination: prejudice, bias or segregation.

He attended many protest rallies and delivered many speeches. The given speech titled "I have a Dream" was delivered by King in one of such protest rallies in Washington DC on 28thAugust, 1963. This speech called for faith and hope in the possibility that America would one day be freed from all racial **discriminations** and everyone, irrespective of race, religion and colour would enjoy real freedom.

To begin with, we will discuss the given text of the speech. We will then analyze the word-pattern and the important themes that emerge from a close reading of the text.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Which historical period did Martin Luther King Jr. belong to?

Q 2: For whom and against whom did King raise his voice for equality and justice?

7.3 MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.: LIFE AND WORKS



Civil-rights: domestic rights, municipality rights.

Pastor: priest, reverend, clergyman, churchman or cleric.

As we have already seen, Martin Luther King Jr. was a black leader and a campaigner for **civil rights**. He dedicated his life to the mission of emancipating the black Americans from exploitation and inequal treatment at the hands of the whites. Now, let us have a brief look at his life and also at his writings which reflect his ideas about real freedom and universal brotherhood.

Martin Luther King Jr. was born on 15thJanuary, in Atlanta, Georgia in the year 1929. He was the son of a Baptist minister. He was educated at Morehouse College and Boston University. He received his degree of Bachelor of Divinity from the Crozer Theological Seminary at Chester, Pennsylvania. He became a **pastor** in Montgomery, Alabama, but soon returned to his father's church in Atlanta in 1956. As mentioned already, he played a very significant role in spreading awareness among the American blacks to rise up against racial discrimination and policies of segregation. He was greatly influenced by the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi and adopted the doctrine of non-violence as his guiding principle.

It was in the year 1955 when he first came into public notice as a leader who carried on a **boycott** of segregated public buses in Montgomery, Alabama. This boycott movement was hugely successful and as a result of it, the Supreme Court of USA abolished the unlawful practice of racial discrimination in public transportation. In another occasion, he organized a march of about 250,000 people in Washington DC in the year 1963 to voice his demand for racial equality. The speech prescribed in your course was delivered in that protest march. Between these two hugely popular public events, King also founded the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in 1957. King was a brilliant and **motivational** speaker and he was a leading figure in the campaign for racial integration and granting of equal rights to all sections of the American society in the late 1950s and 1960s. King received the Nobel Peace Prize in the year 1964. However, his adoption of the ideal of non-violence as well as his moderate approach to the civil rights movement was questioned by black militant groups. These groups believed in the **efficacy** of violent actions in order to attain their goals. His policies and actions were investigated intensively by the **federal** authorities of America. There were many who were opposed to his policies. On 4th April, 1968, he was assassinated in the middle of a peaceful demonstration in Memphis, Tennessee by a suspected white assassin named James Earl Ray. His birthday is observed as a public holiday in the USA.



Boycott: to avoid or reject the use or existence of something.

Motivational: inspirational, full of ambition.

Efficacy: effectiveness or usefulness of something.

Federal: a type of government having two sets of authorities– one at the centre and other at the state level.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 3: In which year did King come into public notice and why?

Q 4: In which year did King win the Nobel Peace Prize?



LET US KNOW

Mahatma Gandhi, whose ideal of non-violence was adopted by King, was assassinated in a prayer meeting. He was shot dead by a Marathi assassin named Nathuram Godse.

King was a political activist and also a public speaker. He delivered speeches at several public gatherings held mainly for the political cause of freedom and emancipation from racial discrimination and policies of segregation. King's writings too had the same flavour of freedom and the call for unity amongst the blacks. Some of his outstanding works which carry this message to the public are *Stride Towards Freedom* (1958), *Why We Can't Wait* (1964), and *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community* (1967).

7.4 CONTEXT OF THE SPEECH

This speech was delivered by Martin Luther King Jr. in an important public event. On 28th August 1963, King organized a historic protest rally in Washington DC. This march was attended by about 250,000 Americans, both black and white. They had gathered in front of the Lincoln Memorial to listen to the powerful speech delivered by King. In his speech, King shares his vision of a future not too distant, when the shackles of racial discrimination would be broken and every American, whether a white or a black, would enjoy 'real freedom'. He expresses his **conviction** that the messages of friendship and unity would reach every corner of the country and all Americans would enjoy equal rights, irrespective of race and colour.



Conviction **:** confidence and firm belief in something.

Metaphor **:** figure of speech.



LET US KNOW

'The Declaration of Independence' was signed by the then thirteen colonies of America. It was adopted by the newly formed American Congress on 4th July, 1776. On this day, the thirteen American colonies declared their independence from the British Crown. The signing of the Declaration of Independence signalled the end of British rule in America and the end of all political connections with Britain. Since then, 4th July is celebrated as the Independence Day in USA.

7.5 EXPLANATION OF THE SPEECH

Martin Luther King begins his address by extending a happy welcome to the audience who have come to listen to him. According to him, this demonstration would be the most significant one in the whole history of America. He goes back a hundred years ago when Abraham Lincoln, the great American President had signed the **Emancipation Proclamation**. He fondly remembers that moment which came with a ray of hope for the millions of Black slaves who had been so long treated with injustice and unfairness. But soon, King moves back to the present moment and realises that the situation has not yet improved at all. The Blacks still suffers from racial discrimination. He is still very poor in a country which has seen tremendous material prosperity and has not been able to attain a respectable position in the society.

King attempts to explain the situation with the help of a **metaphor**. He describes their act of gathering in their nation's capital as one of 'cashing a check'. According to him, when the American Constitution and the Declaration of Independence was written, a 'promissory note' was issued to every American, no matter whether black or white and it would guarantee rights to 'life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness' to him. But America has failed to keep her promise to the blacks. They have been given a 'bad check' which has come back because the nation does not have sufficient 'funds' or opportunities to accommodate the black population. King expresses his doubt regarding this lack of opportunity and calls for a united effort to demand for freedom and justice.

King feels that they cannot lose any more time. They cannot wait for the events to take shape gradually by themselves. It is time when the promises of democracy have to be fulfilled. They have to rise from dark corners of segregation and racial injustice on to the glowing path of racial justice and universal brotherhood. They are God's children tooand, therefore, they deserve equal treatment with the whites. He hopes for a autumn of freedom and equality after this present summer of discontent and un-fulfilment.



Menial **:** lowly or low- grade.

Astray **:** to go off the right track.

Motels **:** hotels or lodgings.

King sees the year of their gathering, i.e. 1963 not as the end but as the beginning of the revolt of the Blacks. They would not rest content with **menial** jobs but would demand that his citizenship rights be granted. And till then, the nation would continue to suffer from this rude awakening which threatens its very foundation until the Black is treated with justice.

So far King speaks about what they need to do to achieve their aims, but now he moves on to speak about the way to do so. He addresses his audiences who have followed him on the road of freedom to follow the path of righteousness and not to be carried away by bitterness and hatred. This is where we can see how King sought and was influenced by the thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi. The freedom struggle must be carried on with dignity and discipline by following the path of non-violence. King dreams on conducting this struggle not with the naked power of physical violence but with the creative strength of the soul power. The re-awakened Black community must not be driven **astray** by their newly gained militant power. They should not distrust the whites. Not all the whites are against the blacks. This is proven by the fact that many white brothers are present in the protest rally. They feel that their freedom is closely tied with the freedom of the blacks. They have an equal share in the struggle for freedom. The blacks require the help of the sympathetic whites. With their help, King dreams on moving ahead in the struggle.

King then quotes a question made frequently to the Civil Rights activists by the Whites as to when the former would be satisfied. He immediately answers the question by citing many conditions. According to King, the Blacks would not be satisfied as long as he is made the sufferer of violence inflicted by the police. He would not find satisfaction in anything as long as he is denied access to the highway-**motels** and the city-hotels. The Black people must be allowed to move out from their ghettos and live in proper places. The Black child must enjoy a healthy upbringing. His right to opportunity must not be taken away by denying him entry into places which are so-called reserved for whites. The Blacks living in Mississippi must enjoy the right to vote and the one living in New York must be educated with the knowledge of what will he get if he votes. King demands the fulfilment of all

these conditions. Justice and righteousness must be allowed to flow into their community, and it is only then he and his fellow Negroes will be satisfied.

King expresses his awareness of the fact that parts of his audience have attended the rally after undergoing a lot of troubles. Some of his audience have been prisoners whereas some have undergone untold sufferings at the hands of **persecutors** and policemen. King regards these as 'creative sufferings'. He asks them to continue their good work in spite of sufferings because such sufferings which are inflicted through injustice are '**redemptive**', i.e. they would actually lead them on to the path of freedom and emancipation. He asks them to go back to their own respective cities and ghettos, with the hope in their hearts that the present situation of despair and misery would not last long.

King then announces his dreams! In the face of difficulties of the day, he still **nourishes** his dream. His dream has its roots in the glorious American Dream. He dreams that the American Nation will stay true to its dream. He believes the fact that all men are equal. And, therefore, he dreams that a day will come when the sons of the black slaves and those of the white slave owners of Georgia would forget the enmity of their fathers and would be united with the feeling of brotherhood. He dreams that states like Mississippi which are down heavily with the ills of injustice and oppression, would witness the birth of freedom and justice made available for all. He dreams that his four little children will be the inheritors of the American Dream. They would live in a nation where their worth would be judged not on the basis of their race or colour but according to their **merit** and character. King dreams that the day will come when the state of Alabama, with its Governor always in a punishing mood and so plagued by racism, would see its little boys and girls, both blacks and whites, joining hands together as sisters and brothers. He dreams that the hills and mountains of racism and injustice would be laid low and in its place, valleys of freedom and justice would prosper. There would be no rough places and no **crooked** ways. Everyone would travel on the plain and straight path to righteousness. Everyone would witness the glory of God whose choicest blessings would be showered upon all creatures of flesh and blood.



Persecutors **:** one who tyrannizes or abuses.

Redemptive **:** something which frees one from sin or suffering.

Nourish **:** cherish or entertain (a hope or a wish).

Merit **:** excellence or worthiness.

Crooked **:** not in a straight line, bent or twisted.



Discord **:** disagreement or differences in opinion.

Nook and corner **:** evey part of a structure.

Prodigious **:** huge or gigantic.

Terrain **:** an area of land.

Gentile **:** a person who is not Jewish.

Boon **:** blessing or godsend.

With his dream, King also expresses his hope in the faith that the day is not far when the ugly sounds of **discord** and exploitation would be drowned in the beautiful music of unity and brotherhood. This faith would keep alive their spirits when they decide to act together and face whatever comes in their way of attaining freedom from foreign rule. This faith would give them the confidence that they would be free one day. And on that day, all of God's children would sing in the praise of their sweet land of liberty. The song of freedom would be sung from every **nook and corner** of their sacred land – a land for whose freedom their fathers have laid down their lives. King realises the importance of this day in the history of the great American nation.

In the concluding stages of his speech, King calls for the sweet voice of freedom to ring from all over America. He specifically mentions a number of American regions like the **prodigious** hilltops of New Hampshire, the snow- capped Rockies of Colorado or the Stone Mountain of Georgia and many more. In short, he covers the entire physical **terrain** of the American nation. Let freedom ring from every mountainside. And when this song of freedom would ring from every village, every city and every state of America, then the day would not be far when people from all sections of the society, whether black or white, Jews or **gentile**s, Protestants or Catholics would be unified in their expression of thankfulness to the God Almighty for granting them the **boon** of freedom at last.



LET US KNOW

The great American President Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865) signed the **Emancipation Proclamation** in the year 1863. This proclamation freed the Negro slaves living in the southern states of USA from the bondage of slavery. This proclamation was made operative from 18th December, 1863 and it was supposed to abolish slavery throughout the USA. But, nothing of that sort actually happened in the next hundred years. King delivered his speech to register his protest against the failure of that project to emancipate the blacks from slavery.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 5: What is the 'vision' that King shares with his audience?

Q 6: Who signed the Emancipation Proclamation and when?

Q 7: What was the promise made to every American citizen by the American Constitution and the Declaration of Independence? Has the promise been kept?

Q 8: What, according to King, are the demands of the Blacks?

Q 9: How does King intend to conduct the freedom struggle?

Q 10: What does King mean by 'creative sufferings'? Why are they 'redemptive'?

Q 11: What are the possibilities that King visualizes in his dream?

Q12: What is the faith that King speaks about along with his dream?

Q 13: How will it help the black Americans in their journey to freedom?

7.6 STYLE AND LANGUAGE

"I Have a Dream" is a speech delivered by a revolutionary leader in a public gathering. King tries to inspire the black people to fight against injustice and exploitation. He, therefore, speaks in a motivational manner so as to touch the hearts of the people who are listening to him with awe and respect. As you read the prose-piece, you will see that King speaks in a manner which reflects his sense of urgency and desperation. His sentences are very **crisp** and heavily loaded with adjectives. The use of adjectives helps him to express the intensity of the situation. The present situation of the blacks is very depressing and

King's use of many negative adjectives adequately conveys this sense of **desolation** and despair. King also attempts to inspire the people to rise up against their oppressors. And he makes use of many inspirational symbols and metaphors to enable his statements to have their effect. At this point, if you go back and read the text, you will realize the power of his



Crisp **:** very clear, neat and decisive.
Desolation **:** unhappiness.

speech from the choice of his words.

Two important themes of the prose-piece are that of freedom and justice. Both of these are equally important in the upliftment of an individual. Another important aspect of the essay is the emphasis on non-violence. King demands for freedom and justice for his people but not at the cost of human lives. He was tremendously influenced by the teachingsof Mahatma Gandhi and therefore he sought to attain his ideals of freedom and justice through peaceful and non- violent methods. It also shows King's concern for humanity as a revolutionary leader.



7.7 LET US SUM UP

This unit deals with the famous speech "I Have a Dream" by Martin Luther King Jr. You must have been able to comprehend the true meaning of this speech delivered by the Civil rights leader on 28 August, 1963 in Washington DC. We have cast a brief look at the illustrious life and works of this great American leader. We got to know how his entire life was committed to the cause of emancipating the black population in the USA from injustice and exploitation. His commitment became clear when we attempted to understand the context of his speech and then moving on to the explanation of the speech itself. King Jr. had been gifted with a great power of expression, as we can see from the manner in which he could enable the blacks to remember their history and the promises made to them about hundred years ago.

History is a witness to the untold sufferings which they were subjected to. King's sole purpose is to make his Negro audience realize the inequality and injustice they are subjected to for this he has used choice phrases and expressions from important books. This helped him to add strength to his arguments and rightful demands.



7.8 FURTHER READING

1) Carson & Shepard. (eds). (2001). "Address at the Freedom Rally in Cobo Hall," '*A Call to Conscience'*

2) Carson & Shepard. (eds). (2001). "I Have a Dream" *A Call to Conscience.*

3) I have a Dream: The Story of Martin Luther King in Text and Pictures (1968). New York, Time Life Books.

4) King. "A Realistic Look at the Question of Progress in the Area of Race Relations," An address Delivered at St. Louis Freedom Rally, 10 April 1957.

5) King. "The Negro and the American Dream," An excerpt from address at the Annual Freedom Mass Meeting of the North Carolina State Conference of Branches of the NAACP, 25 September 1960.

6) King, "Unfulfilled Hopes," A sermon delivered at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, 5 April 1959.

7) Reston, James. "'I Have a Dream…' Peroration by Dr. King Sums Up a Day the Capital Will Remember," *New York Times*, 29 August 1963.



7.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: It was a significant moment in the modern-American political history when the black leaders led the American Civil Rights movement.

Ans to Q No 2: The black people who were severely exploited and discriminated by the whites.

Ans to Q No 3: In the year 1955, King first came into public notice as a leader who had led the boycott of segregated public buses in Montgomery, Alabama.

Ans to Q No 4: King received the Nobel Peace Prize in the year 1964.

Ans to Q No 5: The vision of a future not too distant.

Ans to Q No 6: Abraham Lincoln.

Ans to Q No 7: A 'promissory note' to every American, no matter black or white and it would guarantee rights to 'liberty and the pursuit of happiness' to him. There was no change and the black population lacked opportunities in America as equal citizens.

Ans to Q No 8: The Blacks would not rest content with menial jobs but would demand that his citizenship rights be granted.

Ans to Q No 9: The struggle of freedom to be solved not with the naked power of physical violence but with the creative strength of the soul power.

Ans to Q No 10: 'Creative sufferings' is the continuation of the black people's good work despite their sufferings which would lead them to the path of freedom and emancipation.

Ans to Q No 11: King's dream which has roots in the glorious American Dream also visualizes the birth of freedom and justice for all, in a nation where the worth of a black person would be not be on the basis of their race or colour but their merit and character.

Ans to Q No 12: The faith that the day is not for when the ugly sounds of discord and exploitation would be drowned in the beautiful music of unity and brotherhood.

Ans to Q No 13: This faith would give them the confidence that they would be free one day in the land for whose freedom their fathers had laid down their lives.



7.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q 1: With what purpose was the historic protest march to Lincoln Memorial organized on 28th August, 1963?

Q 2: What were the promises made to the blacks in the Emancipation Proclamation? How does King explain the present situation of the blacks?

Q 3: In what words did King call upon the Black people to rise up against their situation? Explain the methods prescribed by him in order to conduct their struggle against injustice and exploitation?

Q 4: What is the 'dream' that King speaks of? Explain the important points of King's dream for the American people.

Q 5: State whether the following statements are True or False.

a) Two important themes of the essay are freedom and justice.

b) Martin Luther King (Jr.) was not influenced by Gandhi

c) Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation.

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UNIT 8 : LORD CHESTERFIELD: LETTER TO HIS SON

UNIT STRUCTURE

8.1 Learning Objectives

8.2 Introduction

8.3 Lord Chesterfield: Life and Works

8.4 Text of the Letter

8.5 Explanation of the Text

8.6 Major Themes

8.7 Style and Language

8.8 Let Us Sum Up

8.9 Further Reading

8.10 Answers to Check Your Progress

8.11 Model Questions

8.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- define the epistolary genre
- gain an idea of the life and works of Lord Chesterfield
- discuss the letter written by Lord Chesterfield to his son
- analyse the important themes of the letter
- describe the style of the letter.

8.2 INTRODUCTION

The genre of literature that employs the use of letters as a narrative is known as the epistolary genre and this genre was the most prevalent in the 18th century with Lord Chesterfield being one of its prime exponents.

Although, Lord Chesterfield enjoyed a reputation as a man of wit and letters and penned many a letter and essay for publication, his reputation as a writer today rests solely upon his letters written to his illegitimate son over a period of thirty years beginning in the year 1737-38. Chesterfield

wrote most of the letters during the years 1746-54; and, to develop and refine his son's skill, flair and command of languages, he wrote him letters in French, English, and Latin and also wrote instructive letters about subjects ranging from Classical literature and history to geography and politics.These were published as *Letters to His Son on the Art of Becoming a Man of the World and a Gentleman* posthumously by his son's widow Eugenia Stanhope in 1774. The student must note that these letters were private correspondences between Lord Chesterfield and his son in which Lord Chesterfield advised and guided his son in the ways of the world and thus were never meant for the public eye or for publication. Perhaps, due to this intimate nature of the letters Chesterfield wrote with a frankness and honesty that may have at time been at odds with the "cultivated self-seeking and hypocritical morality of the upper-class society of the time". The letters can be seen as a guide to manners, of good conduct and of worldly success and they provide a view into 18th century codes of aristocratic values and norms.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: What is meant by epistolary?

Q 2: Who was the recipient of these letters?

Q 3: When was Chesterfield's *Letters to his Son* published?

8.3 LORD CHESTERFIELD: LIFE AND WORKS

Philip Dormer Stanhope, the fourth Earl of Chesterfield, was born in London on 22nd September, 1694. He was a British statesman, diplomat and a man of letters who is primarily remembered as the author of *Letters to His Son* published in 1774, a year after his death in March, 1773.

Born in London to parents Lady Elizabeth Savile and Philip Stanhope, the 3rd Earl of Chesterfield, he was known only as Lord Stanhope until the death of his father in 1726. He was educated at Trinity Hall, Cambridge and having completed his education went on a tour to Europe in 1714 to complete his education as a nobleman. He spent most of his time in Paris and was a great admirer of French culture and manners. It is here that he came into

contact with his aristocratic counterparts from Europe and was exposed to European modes and tastes. His political and administrative career began early, upon his return in 1715; he was appointed the Gentleman of the Bed-chamber to the Prince of Wales and in 1723 was appointed the Captain of the Yeoman of the Guards. He became the 4th Earl of Chesterfield in 1726 upon his father's death and was appointed ambassador to Holland in 1728. He stayed there till 1732 when he returned to England. It was during his tenure as ambassador in Holland that his illegitimate son, Philip Stanhope, who was the recipient of his famous *Letters to His Son,* was born. He started his decade long parliamentary career in the year he returned to England and was a strong opponent of Sir Robert Walpole. He had a long political life serving as the much esteemed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in 1745 and later brought about the Calendar (New Style) Act of 1750 which enabled the adoption of the Gregorian calendar in 1751 in Britain and the Commonwealth. He gradually retreated from public life in his later years due to his increased deafness and he died in London on March 24th 1773.

Lord Chesterfield has been variously recorded as being witty and courteous but also as being selfish and shrewd in matters of worldly importance. His urbanity and manners were praised by many contemporaries and he was close to many men of letters of the age such as Voltaire and Alexander Pope. However, he quarreled with Samuel Johnson in 1755 regarding the dedication to *A Dictionary of the English Language* and Johnson famously went on to condemn him in his letter against professed patrons of the arts. Johnson also critiqued Chesterfield's *Letters to his Son* when it was published posthumously in 1774 and said the letters sought to teach "the morals of a [mistress], and the manners of a dancing master." Decades after his death, Chesterfield was caricatured as Sir John Chester in Charles Dickens' novel *Barnaby Rudge*in 1841. The learner may note that the opinions of these two famous writers regarding Chesterfield have shaped future conceptions of him as being a cynic and calculating courtier. However, it is important to note that despite such conceptualisations, the readers of *Letters to his Son* have found his letters enlightening and helpful and they have been described as offering "sound advice" and present with "wit and elegance".



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 4: When was Stanhope born?

Q 5: When did he become the Earl of Chesterfield?

Q 6: Which writer did Chesterfield have an argument with?

Q 7: Who caricatured Chesterfield as Sir John Chester and where?

8.4 TEXT OF THE LETTER

London, October 16. O.S. 1747

Dear Boy

The art of pleasing is a very necessary one to possess, but a very difficult one to acquire. It can hardly be reduced to rules; and your own good sense and observation will teach you more of it than I can. “Do as you would be done by,” is the surest method that I know of pleasing. Observe carefully what pleases you in others, and probably the same things in you will please others. If you are pleased with the complaisance and attention of others to your humours’, your tastes, or your weaknesses, depend upon it, the same complaisance and attention on your part to theirs will equally please them. Take the tone of the company that you are in, and do not pretend to give it; be serious, gay, or even trifling, as you find the present humour of the company; this is an attention due from every individual to the majority. Do not tell stories in company; there is nothing more tedious and disagreeable; if by chance you know a very short story, and exceedingly applicable to the present subject of conversation, tell it in as few words as possible; and even then, throw out that you do not love to tell stories, but that the shortness of it tempted you.

Of all things banish the egotism out of your conversation, and never think of entertaining people with your own personal concerns or private affairs; though they are interesting to you, they are tedious and impertinent to everybody else; besides that, one cannot keep one’s own private affairs too secret. Whatever you think your own excellencies may be, do not affectedly display them in company; not labour, as many people do, to give that turn to the conversation, which may supply you with an opportunity of

exhibiting them. If they are real, they will infallibly be discovered, without your pointing them out yourself, and with much more advantage. Never maintain an argument with heat and clamour, though you think or know yourself to be in the right; but give your opinion modestly and coolly, which is the only way to convince; and, if that does not do, try to change the conversation, by saying with good-humour, "We shall hardly convince one another; nor is it necessary that we should, so let us talk of something else."

Remember that there is a local propriety to be observed in all companies. And that what is extremely proper in one company may be, and often is, highly improper in another.

The jokes, the *bon-mots* (1), the little adventures, which may do very well in one company, will seem flat and tedious, when related in another. The particular characters, the habits, the cant of one company may give merit to a word, or a gesture, which would have none at all if divested of those accidental circumstances. Here people very commonly err; and fond of something that has entertained them in one company, and in certain circumstances, repeat it with emphasis in another, where it is either insipid, or, it may be, offensive, by being ill-timed or misplaced. Nay, they often do it with this silly preamble: "I will tell you an excellent thing," or, "I will tell you the best thing in the world." This raises expectations, which, when absolutely disappointed, make the relator of this excellent thing look, very deservedly, like a fool.

If you would particularly gain the affection and friendship of particular people, whether men or women, endeavour to find out their predominant excellency, if they have one, and their prevailing weakness, which everybody has; and do justice to the one, and something more than justice to the other. Men have various objects in which they may excel, or at least would be thought to excel; and, though they love to hear justice done to them, where they know that they excel, yet they are most and best flattered upon those points where they wish to excel, and yet are doubtful whether they do or not. As for example: Cardinal Richelieu, who was undoubtedly the ablest statesman of his time, or perhaps of any other, had the idle vanity of being

thought the best poet too; he envied the great Corneille his reputation, and ordered a criticism to be written upon *The Cid* (2). Those, therefore, who flattered skilfully, said little to him of his abilities in state affairs, or at least but *en passant* (3), and as it might naturally occur. But the incense which they gave him, the smoke of which they knew would turn his head in their favour, was as a *bel esprit* (4) and a poet. Why? Because he was sure of one excellency, and distrustful as to the other.

You will easily discover every man's prevailing vanity by observing his favourite topic of conversation; for every man talks most of what he has most a mind to be thought to excel in. Touch him but there, and you touch him to the quick. The late Sir Robert Walpole (5) (who was certainly an able man) was little open to flattery upon that head, for he was in no doubt himself about it; but his prevailing weakness was, to be thought to have a polite and happy turn to gallantry- of which he undoubtedly less than any man living. It was his favourite and frequent subject of conversation, which proved to those who had any penetration that it was his prevailing weakness, and they applied to it with success.

Women have, in general, but one object, which is their beauty; upon which scarce any flattery is too gross for them to follow. Nature has hardly formed a woman ugly enough to be insensible to flattery upon her person; if her face is so shocking that she must, in some degree, be conscious of it, her figure and air, she trusts, make ample amends for it. If her figure is deformed, her face, she thinks, counterbalances it. If they are both bad, she comforts herself that she has graces, a certain manner, a*je ne sais quoi* (6) still more engaging than beauty. This truth is evident from the studied and elaborate dress of the ugliest woman in the world. An undoubted, uncontested, conscious beauty is, of all women, the least sensible of flattery upon that head; she knows it is her due, and is therefore obliged to nobody for giving it her. She must be flattered upon her understanding; which, though she may possibly not doubt of herself, yet she suspects that men may distrust.

Do not mistake me, and think that I mean to recommend to you abject and criminal flattery: no; flatter nobody's vices or crimes: on the

contrary, abhor and discourage them. But there is no living in the world without a *complaisant* (7) indulgence for people's weaknesses, and innocent, though ridiculous vanities. If a man has a mind to be thought wiser, and a woman handsomer, than they really are, their error is a comfortable one to themselves, and an innocent one with regard to other people; and I would rather make them my friends by indulging them in it, than my enemies by endeavouring (and that to no purpose) to undeceive them.

There are little attentions, likewise, which are infinitely engaging, and which sensibly affect that degree of pride and self-love, which is inseparable from human nature, as they are unquestionable proofs of the regard and consideration which we have for the persons to whom we pay them. As, for example, to observe the little habits, the likings, the antipathies, and the tastes of those whom we would gain; and then take care to provide them with the one, and to secure them from the other; giving them, genteelly, to understand, that you had observed they liked such a dish, or such a room, for which reason you had prepared it: or, on the contrary, that having observed they had an aversion to such a dish, a dislike to such a person, etc., you had taken care to avoid presenting them. Such attention to such trifles flatters self-love much more than greater things, as it makes people think themselves almost the only objects of your thoughts and care.

These are some of the *arcana* (8) necessary for your initiation in the great society of the world. I wish I had known them better at your age; I have paid the price of three and fifty years for them, and shall not grudge it if you reap the advantage. Adieu.

Notes

1. *A clever saying; literally, good words (French)*
2. *When the French classic tragedy The Cid, founded upon the legendary exploits of the medieval Castilian warrior-hero, was published in 1636 by its author Pierre Corneille (1606-1684), it was the subject of violent criticism, led by the French minister of state, Richelieu (1585-1642)*
3. *Casually or in passing (French)*
4. *Beautiful spirit (French)*
5. *For two decades a powerful prime minister, Walpole (1676-1745)*

was also a patron of the arts and prided himself on his taste.

6. *A certain inexpressible quality; literally, I do not know what (French)*
7. *A certain disposition to please or comply, affability*
8. *A secret, mystery. Or a secret and powerful remedy*

Let us now discuss in detail the letter by Chesterfield to his son that has been included in your course. Learners are requested to read the entire letter once before coming to this section. Having read the letter and then this discussion, you are requested again to revisit the letter to fully appreciate its contents and qualities. The following section aims to explain the text of the letter and provide an analysis of its style and language.

8.5 EXPLANATION OF THE TEXT

As we have already read in the previous sections, Lord Chesterfield's letters to his son were instructive letters to help his son get on in life. They reveal the writer's views on good breeding, manners, social and conversational etiquettes and thus offer us a glimpse into 18th century mores and manners. This particular letter was written in October 1747 and thus belongs to the period in which Chesterfield wrote most of his letters. The letter seeks to primarily educate his son in manners by which to please other people, not by outright flattery but by a certain complaisance. It also endeavours to teach his son proper conduct in respect to the company that he finds himself in.

Let us now go through the letter in detail, taking one paragraph at a time.

Lord Chesterfield begins his letter straight on point without any sort of a preamble of greetings. He says, "The art of pleasing is a very necessary one to possess, but a very difficult one to acquire", thus setting the tone for the letter and stating the subject outright. Thus we may notice that the first paragraph seeks to introduce the ideas that would be elucidated further as the letter progresses. He goes on to say that to please others is a quality which cannot be taught but is one which is most likely to be inculcated by a good and keen sense of observation. Having said that, he goes on to say that the only thing one must keep in mind is that the qualities in another

person that please you are most likely to be the same qualities in you that would please others and thus Chesterfield advises his son to “do as you would be done by”. He then goes on to say how one must conduct himself according to the situation, context and company one finds himself in and must adopt the appropriate tone for the said company. He says one must not tell stories to please but if one recalls a short story that is appropriate in the context then one must share it in as few words as possible after having proclaimed that it is but the brevity of the story that made one want to share it.

Continuing on the topic of the adoption of the appropriate tone for appropriate company, Chesterfield advises his son to remove any sort of egotism from his conversation and instructs him never to try and please others with matters that may be of importance or concerns himself. Chesterfield states that things that may seem interesting or important to you may not necessarily be so for others and may indeed be tiresome and tedious. He also says that one must keep one’s private matters to himself in the company of others.

Chesterfield says that his son must not ever “labour” or try to display the qualities, he may believe to be good in himself because if they are good and strong qualities, they would be visible to others without any attempt or effort to display them. He then talks of how one must never carry out an argument with another with “heat and clamour” but with restraint and finesse and offer his opinions “coolly and modestly”. Even if one believes himself to be right, one must not be too argumentative and too eager to convince the other of his own views. And if coolly offering one’s opinion does not work then the best thing is to politely change the conversation by saying something like, “We shall hardly convince one another; nor is it necessary that we should, so let us talk of something else.”

The third paragraph continues in the same strain and elaborates more on the idea of one’s propriety in terms of the situation and context one is in. He goes on to say how the jokes and funny stories related in one situation may be entirely inappropriate in another and how one must take care not to make this mistake as it is an easy mistake to make and many

end up doing so too. Chesterfield says people who found enjoyment in a joke in a particular situation seem to want to repeat it in another and when the context is inappropriate, it makes the person look "deservedly like a fool". Thus the student may see that the prime themes of the first three paragraphs seem to be conversational etiquette and conduct and propriety in terms of contexts and the first three paragraphs may be seen as an organic whole in terms of the themes explicated.

It is with the next sections from paragraphs 4 to 5 in the letter that Lord Chesterfield reveals his shrewder side and his ability to discern qualities in people that may help one please them better. Chesterfield's experiences as a calculating courtier come to light here. He says, in order to gain the affection and friendship of certain (important) people, it is necessary to discover their predominant "excellencies" and weaknesses. While people may have many fields in which they excel and are pleased when one praises them in those but it is where a man wants or wishes to excel but may be unsure of his standing is where he is most pleased when praised. This advice seems *Machiavellian* in nature and seems to be a departure from the previous sections which may seem straightforward good moral advice as here one must use one's tact and cunning to identify qualities in men which to praise as to please them and improve one's station in life. He goes on to give the example of Cardinal Richelieu, who, though the most able statesman of his time, considered himself a poet too and those who praised his poetry rather than his administrative abilities found more favour at the hands of this powerful man of state. He then goes on to tell his son that one may identify a person's leading vanity by his topic of conversation as "man talks most of what he has most a mind to be thought to excel in". One must but praise him there to please him the most. He goes on to give the example of Sir Robert Walpole whose prevailing weakness was a "turn to gallantry" and those who could identify it, would praise him for it and reap success.

Chesterfield now dedicates one paragraph to how women in general behave and how they like to be praised and about what. This frank commentary of his opinions on women may offend our modern sensibilities but we must put the letter in its misogynist context of the 18th century. Also,

it is important to keep in mind the private nature of the letters which granted Chesterfield a freedom to frankly voice his thoughts without having to mince words which might not have been the case if it was a document written for public readership.

He says that with women, it is their beauty which pleases them most and no amount of praise upon that object is too much. He then goes on to say that nature has never created a woman who would be insensitive to praises heaped upon her appearance. He says if a woman doesn't have a pretty face, she believes her figure and her airs make up for it and if a woman has neither of those things, she believes she has certain natural graces and a kind of inexplicable endearing manner that is even more arresting than beauty. Chesterfield supports his opinions by stating that "this truth is evident from the studied and elaborate dress of the ugliest woman in the world". He says that a woman who is aware of her "uncontested" beauty would be less sensitive to flattery upon her appearance as she believes it is "her due, and is therefore obliged to nobody for giving it (to) her". These women, according to Chesterfield, must be praised for their intelligence as even though they might be sure of it themselves, they might believe men would be distrustful of their intelligence.

Chesterfield, from this point onwards, begins to sum up his letter. Having offered advice on how to identify people's vanities and weaknesses in order to please them, he says to his son that it must not degenerate into a kind of sycophancy or "abject and criminal flattery" of people's values and vices. He says that one must even condemn vices in others and not flatter them. The key Chesterfield says is to still have a complaisant nature for people's "innocent; though ridiculous vanities". One must not flatter or criticise unnecessarily but occasionally should give in to people's innocent indulgences. This helps one stay in people's good books without being viewed as being overtly flattering or exceedingly harsh. He says that if a man wants to believe he is wiser than he is or if a woman believes she is more beautiful than she might really be, these vices are "a comfortable one to themselves, and an innocent one with regard to other people" and Chesterfield says that he would rather make these people his friends by

indulging them in their harmless vanity than making them his enemies by trying to "undeceive" them which would be of no avail and unnecessary on his part.

He then says that there are certain little things which when done please people and make them feel good about themselves. He says that one must observe people of importance or from whom one stands to gain in life of their certain habits or likes and dislikes. This provides one the opportunity to offer them something they like or make sure something they dislike is not presented to them. These little things when done and then noticed by the person it was meant to please, makes them feeling exceedingly important and boosts what Chesterfield calls their "self love". These qualities would undoubtedly hold the person responsible for these indulgences in good stead.

Chesterfield then concludes the letter in this paragraph by saying that these little pieces of advice are the secrets he has learned along the way in life that would help his son's "initiation into the great society of the world". He wishes he knew these better when he was younger and says he has had to live a long life to arrive at these and would not be unhappy if his son would "reap" the benefits of his experiences and advice.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 8: Do you think that Chesterfield's letters reveal his views on eighteenth century manners?

Q 9: What did Chesterfield say about the art of pleasing?

8.6 MAJOR THEMES

The major themes of the text are as discussed below:

Worldly Success or Success in Society :

The major overarching theme of this particular letter by Chesterfield to his son is a kind of worldly success in polite society, something which Chesterfield calls "an initiation into the great society of the world". All particular advice in the letter regarding etiquette and speech etc. can be subsumed under this theme of succeeding or climbing up the social ladder. It is a

limited view of a courtier and man of parliament as to what he views as social success. We view things from the vantage point of Chesterfield, an 18th century courtier and this view does not accommodate exceptions and there is no space or scope for individual success in this view of things. While most of the letter seems to contain good moral advice, we also encounter parts where succeeding in society seems to be a matter of much calculation and flattery. Chesterfield attempts to distinguish what he calls "complaisance" from "abject and criminal flattery" but the implications of being complaisant towards men of importance shows that his advice is aimed at gaining ground in the social hierarchy of the age.

To succeed in society is thus the main theme of the letter. The other themes like that of conversational etiquette, of conducting oneself according to certain manners in specific contexts etc. can all be grouped under the grand theme of social success. Let us look at these themes briefly.

Conversational Etiquette :

Chesterfield guides his son on how to carry out a conversation with social peers and the manners in which one must argue. The theme of etiquette is an important one in this letter as we can see the first three paragraphs being dedicated to it. It is also an overall important theme in the other letters as many letters are dedicated towards the elucidation of manners of speech. This becomes an important theme as it is one of the qualities which helps an individual be noticed in society and admired too for his skill and flair in conversation and thus becomes an important step in the process of social success.

Proper Conduct :

An individual's conduct in society reflects his culture, manners and breeding and thus Chesterfield gives this theme an important place in the letter. Adopting the proper tone for the appropriate company and making conversation that would suit the context are important directions Chesterfield gives his son and thus, this becomes another important theme through the letter.

Complaisance :

This perhaps is the most important step on the path towards social

success. It is in advice such as this that Chesterfield lives up to his reputation as a calculating shrewd courtier. He advises his son to be indulgent towards people's weaknesses and vanities as these offer opportunities to please the concerned people. Although Chesterfield seeks to dissociate his "complaisance" from flattery, it still may be perceived as a trick or a formula to please the rich and important rather than it being a simple moral quality that one may necessarily possess.

Women :

Although not exactly an important theme in this particular letter, Chesterfield's views regarding women in the letter can be seen as reflecting the prevalent attitudes towards women in the 18th century. This view can be seen as being misogynistic as it viewed women solely according to their beauty rather than any other faculties of intelligence and imagination.

8.7 STYLE AND LANGUAGE

The language is crisp, instructive and the purpose, didactic. While Chesterfield wrote letters in different languages to hone his son's skill and flair in them, his letters in English too have been celebrated for its masterful use of language and for its succinct nature. Chesterfield's letters to his son, although many, are never too laborious or long. They display a precision and mastery of the English language. His letters have also been celebrated for the apt use of maxims and metaphors in the appropriate places in his correspondences with his son.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 10: What is the most important theme of the letter?

Q 11: State very briefly Chesterfield's style in the letter that you have read?



8.8 LET US SUM UP

The epistolary genre was a popular one in the 18th century and we can see Chesterfield making use of this genre in his *Letters to His Son*. We have read about Chesterfield's life and his political achievements and also gathered that Chesterfield was a writer who wrote a fair amount of letters and essays. Although unintended for publication and written for the instruction of his illegitimate son, these letters are the chief reason why Chesterfield is remembered as a writer today. The letters contain instructions and advice as to how to conduct oneself in society and lessons in good breeding and manners. The letters also reveal Chesterfield's political sensibilities and reveal the values and norms of 18th century society. These letters have been celebrated for its didactic purposes of instilling good manners and etiquette and also been criticized for being too calculating and cunning in the pursuit of social success.



8.9 FURTHER READING

1) Ann C, Dean. (2005) "Authorship, Print, and Public in Chesterfield's "Letters to His Son", *Studies in English Literature. 1500-1900*. Vol. 45, No. 3, Restoration and Eighteenth Century.

2) E. Sprague, Allen. (1923). "Chesterfield's Objection to Laughter". *Modern Language Notes*. Vol. 38, No. 5.



8.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: The genre of literature that employs the use of letters as a narrative is known as the epistolary genre.

Ans to Q No 2: Chesterfield's illegitimate son.

Ans to Q No 3: Chesterfield's *Letters to his Son on the Art of Becoming a Man of the World and a Gentleman* was posthumously published by his son's widow Eugenia Stanhope in 1774.

Ans to Q No 4: Philip Dormer Stanhope, the fourth Earl of Chesterfield, was born in London on 22ndSeptember, 1694.

Ans to Q No 5: He became the 4th Earl of Chesterfield in 1726 upon his father's death.

Ans to Q No 6: Samuel Johnson.

Ans to Q No 7: Chesterfield was caricatured as Sir John Chester in Charles Dickens' novel *Barnaby Rudge* in 1841.

Ans to Q No 8: Yes, Chesterfield's letters reveal the writer's views on good breeding, manners, social and conversational etiquettes and thus offer us a glimpse into 18th century mores and manners.

Ans to Q No 9: He says, "The art of pleasing is a very necessary one to possess, but a very difficult one to acquire".To please others is a quality which cannot be taught but is one which is most likely to be inculcated by a good and keen sense of observation.

Ans to Q No 10: The major overarching theme of this particular letter by Chesterfield to his son is a kind of worldly success in polite society, something which Chesterfield calls "an initiation into the great society of the world".

Ans to Q No 11: The language is crisp, instructive and the purpose, didactic. His letters have also been celebrated for the apt use of maxims and metaphors in the appropriate places in his correspondences with his son.



8.11 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q 1: What are the factors that contributed to Chesterfield's reputation as being a shrewd and selfish courtier?

Q 2: Write short notes on:

a) Lord Chesterfield

b) Lord Chesterfield's *Letters to His Son*.

Q 3: Why did Chesterfield write letters to his son?

Q 4: What, according to you, are the themes of the letter?

Q 5: Do you find all the advice moralistic or do you find certain sections cunning? Explain.

Q 6: Give a gist of the letter by Chesterfield in your own words.

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UNIT 9 : R. L. STEVENSON: EXTRACTS FROM *TRAVELS WITH A DONKEY IN THE CEVENNES*

UNIT STRUCTURE

9.1 Learning Objectives

9.2 Introduction

9.3 R.L. Stevenson

9.4 Explanation of the Extract

9.5 Major Themes

9.6 Style and Language

9.7 Let Us Sum Up

9.8 Further Reading

9.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

9.10 Model Questions

9.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- identify with the term 'outdoor literature'
- explain the extract from Stevenson's *Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes*
- analyse the style and language of Stevenson
- discuss the major themes of the extract.

9.2 INTRODUCTION

In this unit you will be reading an extract from Robert Louis Stevenson's *Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes* (1879) which is titled as "A Camp in the Dark." This work is considered to be one of the finest works of the literary genre known as outdoor literature. Stevenson's work is an engaging and humorous account of the twelve day journey he had undertaken alone, in the year 1878, through the sparsely populated rural areas of the Cevennes Mountains which is located in the southern part of

France. As such it is autobiographical by nature. *Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes* begins with a section titled *The Donkey, the Pack and the Pack- Saddle.* The author gives a description of how the author acquired the travel necessities in a place called La Monastier for the intended excursion through the Cevennes. However, it is only in the first part of the second section "A Camp in the Dark" where we see the progress of the traveller's journey.

It is a common literary practice in British writing to state the intentions of the author in the form of a preface, epilogue or a letter before the actual text. The same is seen in the case of Stevenson's *Travels with a Donkey to Cevennes.* The following is the letter written by R.L.Stevenson to his friend Sidney Colvin and it was attached as an introduction to the text *Travels with a Donkey*. The letter serves as a means of expressing the intention of writing the book after the journey. In the letter, Stevenson also adds that though the letter is addressed to his friend, "the letter is directed to all."

My Dear Sidney Colvin,

The journey which this little book is to describe was very agreeable and fortunate for me. After an uncouth beginning, I had the best of luck to the end. But we are all travellers in what John Bunyan calls the wilderness of this world - all, too, travellers with a donkey: and the best that we find in our travels is an honest friend. He is a fortunate voyager who finds many. We travel, indeed, to find them. They are the end and the reward of life. They keep us worthy of ourselves; and when we are alone, we are only nearer to the absent. Every book is, in an intimate sense, a circular letter to the friends of him who writes it. They alone take his meaning; they find private messages, assurances of love, and expressions of gratitude, dropped for them in every corner. The public is but a generous patron who defrays the postage. Yet though the letter is directed to all, we have an old and kindly custom of addressing it on the outside to one. Of what shall a man be proud, if he is not proud of his friends? And so, my dear Sidney Colvin, it is with pride that I sign myself affectionately

yours,

R. L. S.



LET US KNOW

The term outdoor literature refers to a literary genre that involves the outdoors. It is somewhat similar to travel writing but deals only with activities done outdoors such as exploration of the landscape, hiking, mountaineering, etc. Under the term outdoor literature, one can include other sub-genres such as adventure literature, exploration literature or nature writing. Some of the best examples of outdoor literature include Henry David Thoreau's *Walden*, Mark Twain's *Roughing It*, John Muir's *My First Summer in the Seirra*, etc.

9.3 R.L. STEVENSON: LIFE AND WORKS

Robert Louis Stevenson is one of the most significant literary figures of the nineteenth century whose considerably large number of works comprising novels, short stories and non-fiction have contributed to the body of English literature. Stevenson's works have earned the admiration of writers such as G.M.Hopkins, Arthur Conan Doyle, Marcel Proust, Rudyard Kipling among many others. He was born on 13th November 1850 in Edinburg, Scotland to Margaret Isabella and Thomas Stevenson who was a lighthouse engineer. The Stevenson family was renowned for their expertise and skill in the field of lighthouse designing. R.L. Stevenson was named after his paternal grandfather who was a known and respected figure in Scotland.

Stevenson developed a weak disposition since childhood because of his inability to tolerate cold and damp weather, especially during winters. As such, the family was constantly on the move to revive the young Stevenson's health. However, this streak of illness continued till adulthood and it drew him away from the family's hopes of continuing in the field of lighthouse designing. He completed his higher education from Edinburgh University and later also qualified as a lawyer. By 1875, he began writing essays that he contributed to the *Cornhill Magazine*. During this time he had also collaborated with W. E. Henley to compose four plays which

unfortunately were not much successful.

It is interesting to note that Stevenson's travels to the countryside of different countries were actually undertaken for health reasons, but these travels also allowed him to develop his skills as a writer. In much of his works, it is seen that travelling becomes the main motif that leads to the acquisition of new lessons and experiences. It was during one of these visits to France that he met Lady Fanny Osbourne in 1876. She was ten years older than him and was also married. Nevertheless, he fell in love with her and revealed his feelings in an essay titled "On Falling in Love" (1877). Although it seemed that there was no future for such a relationship but two years later, he received a telegram from Fanny from which he came to know about her divorce from her husband. Consequently, he went to California to meet and propose marriage to her and the couple married in the year 1880. During this period *An Inland Voyage* (1877) and *Travels with a Donkey to Cevennes* (1878) were published. Both these works were essentially based on Stevenson's travel experiences.

Later he began to publish miscellaneous stories, essays as well as travel pieces. He acquired immense success with the works of fiction that he wrote- *Treasure Island* (1883), *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886), *Kidnapped* (1886) and *Master of Ballantrae* (1888). In the year 1888, he went on a trip to South Seas with his family. He settled there in an island called Samoa in Vailima where he acquired the epithet "Tusitala" or the "Story Teller". Stevenson found that his health considerably improved in the South Seas. He engaged in numerous literary projects, some of which were published posthumously. These included historical romance called *The Black Arrow* (1888), *Catriona* (1893), the sequel of the novel *Kidnapped*, *Island Nights' Entertainment* (1893), "The Beach of Falesa" (1893) in which he criticizes the imperial corruption in South Seas and *Songs of Travel* (1896), which serves as an ode to the life in Pacific and also the beauty of Scotland.

Stevenson had also written two comedies in collaboration with his stepson Lloyd Osbourne—*The Wrong Box* (1889) and *The Wrecker* (1892). His last work was the unfinished novel *Weir of Hermiston* (1896) which

came out posthumously two years after his death. It was on December 3, 1894 that Stevenson died suddenly of brain haemorrhage. The natives of Samoa gave him a respectable burial in a spot near Mount Vaea which overlooked the sea.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: To whom does R. L. Stevenson address his letter in the beginning of his book?

Q 2: What led Stevenson to undertake journeys to countryside?

Q 3: Mention the names of a few novels by R. L. Stevenson.

9.4 EXPLANATION OF THE EXTRACT

The section titled “A Camp in the Dark” forms the first part of the section of Stevenson’s *Travels with a Donkey to Cevennes*. The entire book has been written in the manner of journal entries where we come to know about the experiences of Stevenson as he embarked on his journey. It is afternoon of 24th September 1878, and the writer had finished entering the account of his previous day and repairing his traveller’s backpack. He had earlier decided to always carry his travel equipment in a backpack instead of baskets which was the common practice among the rustic travellers. The writer intended to go to a place called Le Cheylard l’Eveque which was near the forest area of Mercoire. Cheylard was one of the places where Stevenson wished to stop and have a look around, during his outdoor sojourn. He was informed that a solo man hiking to Cheylard would take around one and a half hours to reach his destination but Stevenson believed that a man with a troublesome donkey would take four hours to reach the place.

On the way, as he hiked a hill from Lagogne, he found the natural ambience had changed from the one that he had left behind. The journey was not easy as he had to face either rain or strong winds.The area known as Allier basin was filled with the sights of cultivated land and ploughing oxen. But as the journey progressed, he found himself surrounded by moorlands, rocks, and trees such as pines and birch. Some of these trees had turned autumn yellow and added to the luminous beauty of the

landscape. The writer also noticed that the human habitation was sparse as he crossed the mountainous region.

There were no proper or direct roads to Cheylard and so travellers had to completely rely on their instincts or ask people for directions. It was already four in the evening and he reached Sagnerousse which meant that Cheylard was nearby. Stevenson rejoiced knowing that he had finally reached his destination. But as he emerged from the woods, he found that it was not Cheylard. In fact, it was growing dark and he heard the sound of cattle bells. Amidst the mist and bleakness of the evening, he saw some shadows which he realized were those of children. The children were silently following each other. He noticed that the children walked on, holding their hands and prancing about, but their silence seemed very eerie and unearthly to Stevenson due to the ambience of the marshy area. He, too, remained silent and pricked the donkey Modestine to make it move forward. Modestine, however, slowed down her pace and engaged herself in eating the grass. The writer found himself moving in circles as he came back to the same spot even when he moved ahead in the field. As he struggled to find the right direction to Cheylard, he noticed that two little girls from the group of children were still there, observing him. He decided to ask an old man whom he saw outside a house. But no sooner did he attempt to approach the man, the latter went inside and closed the door. He decided to ask another man but the question was misunderstood and Stevenson again found himself taking a wrong direction. The two girls who were still observing him giggled mischievously. One girl cheekily showed him her tongue while the other suggested that he should follow the cows.

Ignoring the children, Stevenson moved through the marshland and came across a well marked road. Night had set in and it was dark all around and lightly drizzling. As Stevenson and Modestine moved ahead, the former spotted light. He saw three houses near a wood of birches. It was the small hamlet of Fouzilhic. Fortunately, he met a jolly old man who came out in the rain to show him the path that led to Cheylard. The old man refused to accept any money and bid him farewell. Stevenson felt more positive for having finally found the correct route. But soon it became too dark to move

ahead. The sky was covered with clouds and so there was no source of light to guide him through the way which he believed was treacherous. It seemed as if he lost his way again as Modestine moved clumsily around the rocks that lay ahead of them. For a moment, he thought about returning to Fouzilhic and requesting the old man to guide him a little more ahead. The traveller then realized that he had lost track of the road he was following and decided to move ahead as he saw some more windows. It was another hamlet called Fouzilhac. Although the names of these two hamlets were very similar, Stevenson found that the behaviour of the inhabitants of this place was somewhat different from the former. He tied up Modestine to a gate and knocked on the door of the first house in which a woman lived alone. She refused to open the door to a stranger and cried out that she was lame. She told Stevenson to try asking at the next door. At the next house, the door was opened by a man with a dubious smile. There were also two women and a girl in the house. Unlike the old man in Fouzilhic, this man was hardly helpful. When Stevenson explained his position, the man agreed that it was quite dark outside and he needed lanterns. Stevenson offered to pay him anything in order to get to Cheylard but he refused. He told the weary traveller that he could hand him lanterns but will not leave the house at night. It seemed that the man was afraid of the notorious mythical beast of Gevaudan which carried away people and devoured them. Stevenson openly expressed his irritation when the man went on asking him impudently about the reasons for his presence in the village. Further Stevenson realised that he was probably the father of the rude girl he met before who told him to follow the cows. Instead of offering any assistance, the man mocked the traveller for his inability to find Cheylard since daytime. The writer left furiously stating that the girl was a mischievous prankster and the man a coward.

As he took to the road again, the writer found that the lanterns had made his surroundings even darker than before and he felt isolated from the world around him. The rain had stopped and he finished drying his trousers and coat. He finally decided of camping out in the dark with Modestine. He searched around for a suitable place in the woods to spend

the night. At last he found a spot where the tall trees formed an arch, a place suited for a traveller camping out in the dark. He tied the donkey to a stout branch and gave it half of the black bread as dinner. Stevenson took off his wet boots and laid his sleeping bag on the ground. The bag served as his pillow and he made lay himself cosily. For supper he had a Bologna sausage and a piece of chocolate cake—the only food that he was carrying. He quenched his thirst with the brandy he was carrying and ended by smoking a cigarette which he considered to be the best smoking experienced after a tiresome day. As he laid his head on the ground, he wondered if he would fall asleep in such an environment. But no sooner he close his eyes, he fell fast asleep from the day's exhaustion. The sound of the wind blowing around was like a lullaby to him. During the course of the night, he woke up twice and the third time when he woke up, he saw the sky filled with a blue coloured hue. He realized very soon it would be dawn. The things around him were more visible now. He saw Modestine still tied to the birch tree, sitting patiently and spotted the rock whose edges troubled him in the night. He closed his eyes and then realized that in spite of all the difficulties that he had to face the previous day, he felt unusually light and content.

With these thoughts, the writer again got ready to see in which part of the world he had spent his previous night. He found the ambience very beautiful with different layers of trees forming the woods and at a distance he observed a picturesque valley and hills. At this point, the writer muses that throughout his life he sought a journey or a voyage to remember in the manner of great explorers or mythical heroes like Ulysses, but he had never expected that a fraction of his daydreams would materialize in an unknown place with natural beauty like Gevaudan. The surroundings were as strange to him as it would be to the first man on earth. Nevertheless he marvelled at the beauty of nature which was further enhanced by the season of autumn. By the time, he packed everything, the sun which was hidden behind the clouds sent a golden hue over him. It was still bitter cold and the wind pricked his skin. So he buttoned up his coat and proceeded on his journey with a pleasant mind. Per chance, he turned a corner and found himself in Fouzilhic again where he saw the merry old man once more. The old man's

expression was one of horrified surprise to see that the traveller was still loitering in Fouzilhic. The writer told him about his experience in Fouzilhac and the old man was angered when he heard about the behaviour of the man who refused to help a lost traveller. The old man apologetically told Stevenson that this time there would be no mistake and he personally accompanied him for half a mile in spite of suffering from rheumatism. Soon, the writer found himself standing at the threshold of Cheylard, the destination he had been seeking for so long.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 4: How is the book *Travels with a Donkey to Cevennes* written?

Q 5: Who is Modestine?

Q 6: To which place was the writer travelling?

9.5 MAJOR THEMES

R.L. Stevenson's *Travels with a Donkey to Cevennes* is a classic example of the literary genre called outdoor literature and the themes and motifs that he uses in this prose piece is in keeping with the genre. Stevenson has shown how as a traveller he had to face certain obstacles during his journey especially because he was travelling alone. However, he has added elements of humour to keep the narrative light without denigrating the image of the places that he had visited. The obstacles that the traveller-writer had to face are also closely related to the economic and educational status of the people. For example, the people depicted in the narrative belong to the peasantry. It is true that they live close to nature but it is also equally true that they are somewhat cut-off from the outside world on account of bad roads. As such they remain wary of travellers and are frightened by the superstitious myth of the beast of Gevaudan.

Another theme that is seen in the narrative is the indomitable human spirit in the face of hurdles in life. While undertaking the journey, the writer lost his way several times and it became more difficult because of the unruly donkey that accompanied him. The donkey Modestine, at times, refused to

move and slowed down the pace of the traveller. Stevenson was also frustrated, at times, due to the problems of communication with the peasants. In spite of these troubles, he learnt to remain optimistic and spent the night out camping in the darkness. The next morning when he woke up, he was awe-struck by the beauty of nature that he saw around him.He felt grateful for having undergone this experience and proceeded with a pleasant frame of mind. Stevenson met the helpful old man from Fouzilhic once again who took pity on the lost wayfarer and decided to personally take him to Cheylard.

9.6 STYLE AND LANGUAGE

The language used by R.L.Stevenson is conversational in tone. You have already read that the text was written in the manner of a journal and is autobiographical since it is based on the real experiences of the author during his journey through the Cevennes mountains. As such the style of writing adds to the realism of the text. The difficulties and hardships that a traveller faces, especially one who intends to go for outdoor recreational activities like hiking, has been expressed in a realistic way. The experiences of the writer/traveller keeps the reader engaged and one could sympathise with the narrator for all the obstacles he had to face on his way to Cheylard.

We see that Stevenson has made use of the French language in order to heighten the authenticity of the narrative. For example, when he briefly stopped at Fouzilhac in order to ask for directions, the man spoke to him in French. Instead of using the English equivalent of the sentences spoken, the writer has included the French sentences. We also see elements of dark humour in the text when the writer asserts: “The Beast of Gevaudan ate about a hundred children of this district. I began to think of him with sympathy.” This is expressed after his experience with the two mischievous girls in the area near the marshlands. Further, he decides to return back the impudent behaviour he received at the hands of the peasants by calling the man a coward and the girl a “*FARCEUSE”* which means a notorious prankster. Humour is also present in the writer’s description of his donkey that is named Modestine. Modestine acquires a personality of its own and becomes an interesting prop in the narrative. Stevenson adds to the humour

by referring to the donkey as "*my lady friend*", "*my lady in the dark*" etc.

Further, Stevenson has described the beauty of the landscape of Southern France in detail. The narrative also offers an elaborate description of natural ambience in the district of Gevaudan. He makes use of highly imaginative imageries in his description of nature such as

"*Moor, heathery marsh, tracts of rock and pines, woods of birch all jewelled with the autumn yellow*…."

and

"*Overhead the sky was full of strings and shreds of vapour, flying, vanishing, reappearing, and turning about an axis like tumblers, as the wind hounded them through heaven.*"

It has also been observed that Stevenson has been quite inventive in the way he converts nouns into verbs or verbs into adverbs or uses compound words. The writer uses this literary device to highlight special attributes related to the place or to express any strong emotion.This is exemplified in his usage of words such as *meadowy*, *shiveringly*, *cloud mountains,* etc. Words from Old English vocabulary,such as *marish,*are also seen in the essay.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 7: What were the difficulties the writer had faced during his journey?

Q 8: Mention any one reason why Stevenson used French language in the text?



9.7 LET US SUM UP

After reading this unit, you have come to know about the life and works of Robert Louis Stevenson. At the same time, the reading of the essay has introduced you to a new genre in literature called outdoor literature. This non-fictional prose piece is autobiographical by nature and so has been realistic in terms of its representation of the experiences of the author

in the district of Gevaudan in Southern France. The glossary which has been added will benefit in the development of your vocabulary.



9.8 FURTHER READING

1) Birch, Dinah. (2009). *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*, Seventh Edition. Oxford : OUP.

2) Humberstone, Barbara et. al. (2015). *Routledge International Handbook of Outdoor Studies.* London : Routledge.

3) Stevenson, R.L. (2011 rpt.). *Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes*. Texas : Jones Press.



9.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: Sidney Colvin.

Ans to Q No 2: Stevenson's travels to the countryside of different countries were actually undertaken for health reasons.

Ans to Q No 3: *Treasure Island* (1883), *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886), *Kidnapped* (1886) and *Master of Ballantrae* (1888).

Ans to Q No 4: The entire book has been written in the manner of journal entries.

Ans to Q No 5: Modestine is the name of the donkey.

Ans to Q No 6: Cheylard.

Ans to Q No 7: While undertaking the journey, the writer lost his way several times and it became more difficult because of the unruly donkey that accompanied him. The donkey Modestine, at times, refused to move and slowed down the pace of the traveller. Stevenson was also frustrated, at times, due to the problems of communication with the peasants.

Ans to Q No 8: Stevenson has made use of the French language in order to heighten the authenticity of the narrative



9.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q 1: What do you understand by the term outdoor literature? Give examples.

Q 2: Write a summary of the section "A Camp in The Dark" from R.L. Stevenson's book *Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes.*

Q 3: Write short notes on the following

a. The style and language of R.L. Stevenson

b. Themes of the section titled "A Camp in the Dark".

Q 4: Narrate the incidents experienced by the author on his way to Cheylard.

Q 5: Give an account of the factors that led the author to set up his camp out in the dark.

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UNIT 10 : DEREK WALCOTT: "THE ANTILLES: FRAGMENTS OF EPIC MEMORY"

UNIT STRUCTURE

10.1 Learning Objectives

10.2 Introduction

10.3 Derek Walcott: Life and Works

10.4 Explanation of the Speech

10.5 Major Themes

10.6 Style and Language

10.7 Let Us Sum Up

10.8 Further Reading

10.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

10.10 Model Questions

10.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- gain an idea on the life and works of Derek Walcott
- read the Nobel Speech in terms of its various important aspects
- make a list of the important themes implicit in his Nobel Speech
- explain the style and language of Walcott
- appreciate Walcott as one of the most significant poets of the 20th century.

10.2 INTRODUCTION

The present unit deals with one of the most significant Nobel Speeches— "The Antilles: Fragments of Epic Memory" delivered by Derek Walcott who received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1992. Walcott is one of the greatest poets in world literature of contemporary times. He grew up in the relatively isolated island of Saint Lucia in the Caribbean, moved to Trinidad in his twenties, and now spends much of his time in the USA teaching literature and creative writing at Boston University. Such a background has

added richness to his writings. He has deep roots in his native culture of the Caribbean, but at the same time, he beautifully asserts his place within the English-speaking literary tradition. He was awarded the Nobel for Literature, after the publication of his most ambitious and celebrated epic poem *Omeros* that draws on the Homeric tradition and contextualise the same in the voices and lives of the people of the Caribbean. His experience of living in two cultures has powerfully influenced his works, and in the Nobel speech that you will be studying in this unit, Walcott deals specifically with this experience to showcase his upbringing as a poet who has strong roots in the history of his own native island and its people.

10.3 DEREK WALCOTT: LIFE AND WORKS

Derek Alton Walcott was born on January 23, 1930 to Warwick and Alix Walcott in **Castries** on the island of Saint Lucia, a former British colony in the West Indies. His family is of African and European origin which reflects the complex colonial history of the island in which he was born and which he explores as a poet. His mother was a teacher and a lover of arts, while his father was a painter and poet. After the death of his father, when he was just 31, the twins Derek and Roderick were born. Walcott's family was part of a minority Methodist community, who felt overshadowed by the dominant Catholic culture of the island established during French colonial rule. Thus, the experience of growing up in a colony had had a strong influence on Walcott's later life and works. He started writing since he was a young boy and published his first collection as *25 Poems*, which he distributed on street corners. A born poet and playwright Walcott was also a painter like his father.



LET US KNOW

Castries is twenty-seven miles long and fourteen miles wide, small island compared to Trinidad or Jamaica.

Before 1963, the island's main product was sugar, with bananas

gradually increasing in importance. In Walcott's childhood, Castries Harbour served as a coaling station, though its coal trade had been declining since the 1920s.

Walcott finished his studies at St. Mary's in 1947. At that time, St. Lucia was allotted one Island Scholarship per year, to send its best student to Oxford or Cambridge. Walcott recalls that he "had failed to win the Island Scholarship because of [his] poor math", and did not continue his education until 1950 when he received a Colonial Development and Welfare Scholarship following which he entered the University of the West Indies, Jamaica, as a student of Liberal Arts. During the interim, he served as assistant master at St. Mary's and continued to work on his poetry and painting. Walcott's attending a newly- opened University of the West Indies was very significant, allowing him to receive his education within the Caribbean. The university was both a product and an inculcator of West Indian cultural nationalism. After graduation, Walcott moved to Trinidad in 1953, where he became a critic, teacher and journalist. There, he also founded the Trinidad Theatre Workshop in 1959.

Three historical events heavily influenced St. Lucian life during Walcott's adolescence. The first was World War II, which was more directly felt in the Caribbean. The second major event was the planning for Independence and Federation of the British West Indies by the end of the 1940s. With the end of the War, England began to dismantle its empire, starting with the Independence of India in 1947. Subsequently, the movement for West Indian unification and Independence reached its climax. The last of the three events framing Walcott's youth and rendering an immediate impact on the emerging poet was perhaps the greatest of all. On June 19, 1948, a fire destroyed about four-fifths of Castries. Although "there was no loss of life in the fire, more than 800 families comprising a total of nearly two thousand people became homeless. People of different classes were thrown together by necessity". In his early poem, "A City's Death by Fire," Walcott called the fire a "hot gospeller" that "levelled all but the churched sky", the levelling was social as well, striking at the class structure as well as the infrastructure of the city.

Walcott's major success as a writer came with the poetry collection *In a Green Night: Poems 1948-1960* (1962) which both celebrates the Caribbean and its history. The same themes overshadow nearly all his later poetry collections—*Tiepolo's Hound* (2000), *The Prodigal* (2004), *Selected Poems* (edited by Edward Baugh, 2007) and *White Egrets* (2010) etc. However, critics point to his *Omeros* (1990), an epic poem reimagining the Trojan War as a Caribbean fishermen's fight, as Walcott's major achievement. The book is "an effort to touch every aspect of Caribbean experience," according to critic O'Brien who also calls the poem an 'Ars Poetica' that deals with "art itself— its meaning and importance and the nature of an artistic vocation." Walcott's wide reading in modernist literature, as well as the influences of Ezra Pound, James Joyce, W. B. Yeats, T. S. Eliot, W. H. Auden, and Stephen Spender is obvious in his collections like *25 Poems* (1948) and *Epitaph for the Young* (1949), both written before he left St. Lucia to attend the University of the West Indies in 1950. As St. Lucian journalist George Odlum remarked, "it is in itself surprising that Walcott was aware of the movements taking place in the mainstream of 20th century European literature at a time when most of his colleagues in the sixth form of St. Mary's College…were desperately grappling with 19th Century romanticism." While at St. Mary's, Walcott also wrote plays, two of the scripts survived in the collection of Errol Hill, a playwright and director who has known Walcott from his arrival at the university in Jamaica in 1950s.



LET US KNOW

Walcott notes of growing up in West Indian culture: "What we were deprived of was also our privilege. There was a great joy in making a world that so far, up to then, had been undefined...My generation of West Indian writers has felt such a powerful elation at having the privilege of writing about places and people for the first time and, simultaneously, having behind them the tradition of knowing how well it can be done—by a Defoe, a Dickens, a Richardson."

Later, Walcott was hired as a teacher by Boston University, where he also founded the Boston Playwrights' Theatre in 1981. Subsequently, he has been constantly travelling in-between US and Saint Lucia. Walcott is also a renowned playwright. In 1971, he won an Obie Award for his play *Dream on Monkey Mountain*, which *The New Yorker* described as "a poem in dramatic form." Walcott's plays generally treat aspects of the West Indian colonial experience, and drawing upon various forms such as the fable, allegory, folk and morality play. In 1992, he won the prestigious Nobel Prize in Literature for his work *Omeros*. The Nobel committee depicted his work as "a poetic oeuvre of great luminosity, sustained by a historical vision, the outcome of a multicultural commitment." In addition to his Nobel Prize, Walcott's honours include a MacArthur Foundation "genius" award, a Royal Society of Literature Award, and, the Queen's Medal for Poetry. He is an honorary member of the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters. He is also a Professor of Poetry at Essex University.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: From where did Walcott receive inspiration to become a writer? What is his first published work?

Q 2: Why is the last of the three events the most significant in shaping Walcott's adolescent experience?

Q 3: Name some of Walcott's poetry collections.

Q 4: What are the two Theatre houses that Walcott built?

Q 5: What did the Nobel Committee say about Walcott's work *Omeros*?

10.4 EXPLANATION OF THE SPEECH

Derek Walcott begins his Nobel Speech, "The Antilles: Fragments of Epic Memory," in Felicity—a village in Trinidad on the edge of the Caroni plain. The village Felicity still grows sugar as indentured cane cutters were brought here after **Emancipation**. Thus, the small population of Felicity is East Indian. In the afternoon of the day on which he visited the village, with

friends from America, he saw the happy faces of the Indians along the road as next Saturday afternoon *Ramleela* would be performed, and the costumed actors from the village were assembling on a field strung with different-coloured flags. Walcott also writes that under an open-shed on the edge of the field, there were two huge armatures of bamboo that looked like immense cages. They were parts of the body of a God, His calves or thighs, which, fitted and reared, would make a gigantic effigy. This effigy would be burnt as a conclusion to the epic. The ritual of burning is annually repeated, the point of the destruction being renewal through fire. To Walcott, 'God' is the shrug that embodies the African and Asian Diasporas. But the interesting point is that nobody in Trinidad knew any more than he did about Rama, Kali, Shiva, Vishnu, apart from the Indians. And the writer misread *Ramleela* to be a theatre of the people, while in fact it was a faith of the people.



LET US KNOW

Emancipation implies an effort to procure economic and social rights, political rights, or equality for a specifically disenfranchised group. In the present and former British West Indies islands the holiday Emancipation Day is celebrated to mark the end of the Atlantic Slave Trade.

In his Speech, Walcott beautifully plays with the name "Felicity" with all its resonances and colonial history, but not without engagement with its African and Indian **Diaspora,** memory, actors, mythologies. He sees the landscape as peopled by a series of actors, performing a variety of roles from various epics. But more than anything else, it is the re-creation and joy in the process that marks the Caribbean as what it is. This is what Walcott celebrates. Thus, for him, "Visual surprise is natural in the Caribbean; it comes with the landscape, and faced with its beauty, the sigh of History dissolves." Felicity thus, becomes his metaphor of a new Caribbean creation. Then Walcott beautifully refers to Antillean arts through the metaphor of broken vase. The totality of the Antillean arts is like the gathering of the broken pieces of the vase—the African and Asiatic traditions. Thus, in his views "Antillean art is this restoration of our shattered histories, our shards



***Diaspora*:** the dispersion or spread of any people from their original homeland.

of vocabulary, our archipelago becoming a synonym for pieces broken off from the original continent. And this is the exact process of the making of poetry, or what should be called not its "making" but its remaking." He further states that Poetry combines the natural and the marmoreal; the past and the present, if the past is the sculpture and the present the beads of dew or rain on the forehead of the past.

Subsequently, Walcott describes his experience of the Antillean language and states that deprived of their original language, the captured and **indentured** tribes create their own, accreting and secreting fragments of an old epic vocabulary, from Asia and Africa, and an ancestral and ecstatic rhythm in the blood that cannot be subdued by slavery or indenture. The original language dissolves into the process of re-creation like the fog trying to cross an ocean, but this process of recreation, of finding new metaphors, is the same process that the poet faces every day making his own tools like Crusoe, assembling nouns from necessity, from Felicity, even renaming himself. Walcott sends out the message to his readers that this is the basis of the Antillean experience, this shipwreck of fragments, these echoes, these shards of a huge tribal vocabulary, these partially remembered customs, and they are not decayed but continuously getting enriched in the works of the writers.



***Indentured*:** a contract binding one party into the service of another for a specified term.

Then, Walcott makes some important comments on the act of writing about the Caribbean as well as the status of Caribbean poetry which deals mostly with the impact of colonial history that destroys originality, because the colonisers carried with them the infection of their own malaise, and the colonial writers and travellers reduced even the Caribbean landscape to melancholia and self-contempt. Moreover, even an English novelist like Graham Greene, looked at the Caribbean with elegiac pathos, a prolonged sadness. According to Walcott, the mood is understandable, but there is something alien and ultimately wrong in the way such sadness as described by the English, French, or the writers of Walcott's ilk. It relates to a misunderstanding of the light and the people on whom the light falls. These writers describe the ambitions of their unfinished cities, but the Caribbean city may conclude just at that point where it is satisfied with its own scale,

just as Caribbean culture is not evolving but already shaped. Its proportions are not to be measured by the traveller or the exile, but by its own citizenry and architecture.

After this, Walcott's speech makes a reference to the book *At Last* written by the Victorian traveller Charles Kingsley. This is one of the first Caribbean books where according to Walcott who feels that history got recognized, "at last". This early book admitted the Antillean landscape and its figures into English literature. Similarly, Alexis Saint-Leger, better known as Saint John Perse, was the first Antillean to win a prize for poetry. But the point is that a "Caribbean genius is condemned to contradict itself", and there lies the problem. For example, to celebrate Perse may also be to celebrate the old plantation system, the **mulatto** servants and so on. But Walcott wonders if that really needs to be so remarkable. Because, he feels that the history of the worldis a record of intertribal **lacerations**, of ethnic cleansings.



***Mulatto*:** an offspring of a black and a white parent.

***Laceration*:** intertribal distress.

In Walcott's view, a native Caribbean novelist then is absolutely at home in the Caribbean, able to navigate a Trinidad with ease, as a St. Lucia. He sees in that epic recognition of the "sea as history" the meaning of the Caribbean but also its ongoing new histories as exemplified by writers from C. L. R. James to Selvon, St. Jean Perse of Guadeloupe and Cesaire of Martinique and Jean Rhys of Dominica etc. But, the Caribbean poet is lucky to have this opportunity to celebrate and mark a culture in the making, because: "There is a force of exultation, a celebration of luck, when a writer finds himself a witness to the early morning of a culture that is defining itself, branch by branch, leaf by leaf, in that self-defining dawn, which is why, especially at the edge of the sea, it is good to make a ritual of the sunrise."It is not that History is obliterated. History is present in Antillean geography, in the vegetation itself.

Since boyhood, Walcott has been reading about the sighs of the people, the butchery of its aborigines, or the lances of cane as a green prison where indentured Asians—the ancestors of Felicity are still serving time. Most of these people are illiterate; they do not read, they are there to be read, and if they are properly read, they create their own literature.

Thus, in this Nobel Speech, Walcott presents his evaluative description about poetry, history and evolutionary literature.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 6: What is the significance of the term Broken Vase?

Q 7: How does Walcott comment on Antillean language?

Q 8: What, according to Walcott, is the problem with Caribbean poetry?

Q 9: Why is Charles Kingsley's book *At Last* important for Walcott?

Q 10: Why, according to Walcott, is a Caribbean poet lucky?

Q 11: What does Walcott say about the Caribbean people and their relation to literary works?

Q 12: Make a list of the important aspects of the Nobel Speech delivered by Derek Walcott?

10.5 MAJOR THEMES

Based on the text of Walcott's Nobel Speech, the following can be seen as the important themes.

Meaning of Poetry:

Walcott in his Nobel Speech provides interesting insights into his own ideas of Poetry. Poetry, according to him, must seem as fresh as the raindrops on a statue's brow, and should combine the natural and the marmoreal. Poetry conjugates both past and present—the past being the sculpture, and the present the beads of dew or rain on the forehead of the past. The process of poetry is one of excavation and self-discovery, and the poet needs to dig out the buried language with the help of his own vocabulary, because, it is the individual voice which shapes its own accent, vocabulary and melody in defiance of an imperial concept of language–the language of Ozymandias, libraries and dictionaries, law courts and critics, and churches, universities, political dogma, the diction of institutions and so on. Poetry is an island that breaks away from the main.

The Antillean Linguistic Experience:

In his Speech, Walcott makes an interesting reference to the Antillean Linguistic experience. Deprived of their own country and language, the captured and indentured tribes in the Caribbean create their own vocabulary derived from Asia and Africa. Their feelings cannot be subdued by slavery or indenture. Their original language dissolves from the exhaustion of distance like fog trying to cross an ocean. They start the process of renaming, of finding new metaphors. This is the same process that the poet faces every morning of his working day, making his own tools like Crusoe, assembling nouns from necessity, from Felicity, even renaming himself. The stripped man is driven back to that self-astonishing, elemental force, his mind. That is the basis of the Antillean experience, this shipwreck of fragments, these echoes, these shards of a huge tribal vocabulary, these partially remembered customs, and they are not decayed but strong. Walcott considers such a background to be a new world, a writer's heaven.

Writing Against General Perceptions:

Walcott in his speech also hints at the impact of colonialism on the Caribbean people. He makes some important remarks on the act of writing about the Caribbean as well as the status of Caribbean poetry which deals mostly with the impact of colonial history that destroys originality as the colonisers carried with them the infection of their own malaise, and the colonial writers and travellers reduced even the Caribbean landscape to melancholia and self-contempt. Walcott is worried about the fact that every new endeavour by a Caribbean author is belittled as imitation. There is a conviction that since History is based on achievement, and since the history of the Antilles was so genetically corrupt, so depressing in its cycles of massacres, slavery, and indenture; a culture was inconceivable and nothing could ever be created in those ramshackle ports, the feudal sugar estates. Walcott however makes a reference to the book *At Last* written by the Victorian traveller Charles Kingsley, which is one of the early books to admit the Antillean landscape and its figures into English literature. The pity is that the Antillean archipelago is there to be written about but by compassionate and beguiled outsiders like Walcott himself. But a traveller

cannot love, since love is stasis and travel is motion. If he returns to what he loved in a landscape and stays there, he is no longer a traveller but in stasis and concentration, the lover of that particular part of earth, a native. Thus, one need not write about the Caribbean like a tourist would write. Instead, one should write like an insider, like a native who loves his own people and country.

Walcott's Views on History:

Walcott's comment on Poetry and History is like this:"For every poet it is always morning in the world. History a forgotten, insomniac night; History and elemental awe are always our early beginning, because the fate of poetry is to fall in love with the world, in spite of History." Walcott is interested in history not History, the history of lives lived in this landscape, not the History of ruins. Walcott conceives the Antilles as a site of multiple and inextricable histories of victimization and cruelty, histories deposited not only in its landscape and its languages but even in his body. From the perspective of identity, a Caribbean writer metaphorically enacts inter ethnic connections to falsify the historical specificity of their people's experience. But for Walcott, there is no need for such falsification as that would lie in an aesthetic separatism blind to the culturally webbed history of the Caribbean, of his ancestors, and of his imagination, in a viewpoint hostile to the cross-racial and cross-historical identifications the New World offers.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 13: What is the process of poetry, according to Walcott?

Q 14: State the nature of the Antillean Linguistic Experience?

Q 15: How does Walcott view the idea of Antillean history?

Q 16: How, according to Walcott, should be the nature of a Caribbean writer?

10.6 STYLE AND LANGUAGE

Derek Walcott is well-known for his technical control, erudition, and the portrayal of large canvases. According to poet-critic Sean O'Brien,

Walcott is "one of the handful of poets currently at work in English who are capable of making a convincing attempt to write an epic... His work is conceived on an oceanic scale and one of its fundamental concerns is to give an account of the simultaneous unity and division created by the ocean and by human dealings with it." Similarly, in his *The New Yorker* review Adam Kirsch highly praised Walcott's oeuvre, describing his style in the following manner: "By combining the grammar of vision with the freedom of metaphor, Walcott produces a beautiful style that is also a philosophical style. People perceive the world on dual channels, Walcott's verse suggests, through the senses and through the mind, and each is constantly seeping into the other." Such remarks help us to examine the poetic style of Walcott.

However, Walcott's prose style too seems to be very unique which can be experienced while reading his Nobel Speech. His hometown had had a deep influence on him, which is reflected in his works as well. Implications of his experience of growing up on an island is seen in many of his works—be it poetry, plays or essays. He is much faithful to his childhood experience while writing in the present. The resonance and musicality in Walcott have been the other important stylistic components of Walcott's prose writing. Recurring themes of loss, survival, and remembrance are present in his prose writings, as can be seen in the Speech. Besides, the desire to keep faith with reality, to reconstruct his past and his people as they are/were, articulates beautifully his personal pain and melancholy through an engagement with history and myth, the festival celebrations in the streets.



10.7 LET US SUM UP

In the above sections of the unit you have learnt that Derek Walcott is an important Caribbean poet who received the prestigious Nobel Prize for Literature in 1992. He grew up in the relatively isolated island of Saint Lucia in the Caribbean, moved to Trinidad in his twenties, and now spends much of his time in the USA teaching literature and creative writing at Boston

University. In his Nobel Speech, Walcott presents his evaluative description about Caribbean history and its evolutionary literature. Experiences during the author's visit to the village Felicity and seeing "Ramleela", the dramatization of the Hindu epic *Ramayana*; evaluation of the cultural traditions associated with performing epic drama; felicity of epical customs; discussion of the Antillean art, culture, and literature; features of poetry as a method of self-discovery; evaluation of the Antillean art as the restoration of shattered histories are some of the most important aspects of the Speech. However, Felicity is the name of the small village in Trinidad to which Walcott returns throughout the entire Nobel Speech as it carries both the irony and truth of names.



10.8 FURTHER READING

1) Bloom, Harold. (2003). *Bloom's Modern Critical Views: Derek Walcott.* Chelsea House Publishers.

2) Edward, Bough. (2006). *Derek Walcott.* UK: Cambridge University Press.

Web Resources:

http://www.enotes.com/topics/derek-walcott/critical-essays/walcott-derek- vol-160 *Nobel Lectures, Literature 1991-1995*, Editor Sture Allén, *World Scientific Publishing Co*., Singapore, 1997

http://www.thefamouspeople.com/profiles/derek-walcott-110.php

Nobel prise.org



10..9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: The experience of growing up in a colonised island had had a strong influence on Walcott's later life as a writer. His first published collection is *25 Poems*, which he distributed on street corners.

Ans to Q No 2: Because, the fire that took place on June 19, 1948, destroyed about four-fifths of Castries, and a huge number of people became homeless. As the people of different classes were thrown together by necessity, Walcott called the fire a "hot gospeller" that "levelled all".

Ans to Q No 3: *In a Green Night: Poems 1948-1960* (1962), *Tiepolo's Hound* (2000), *The Prodigal* (2004), *Selected Poems* (edited by Edward Baugh, 2007), and *White Egrets* (2010).

Ans to Q No 4: Trinidad Theatre Workshop in 1959 and Boston Playwrights' Theatre in 1981.

Ans to Q No 5: The Nobel committee stated *Omeros* as "a poetic oeuvre of great luminosity, sustained by a historical vision, the outcome of a multicultural commitment."

Ans to Q No 6: Derek Walcott refers to the Antillean arts through the metaphor of a broken vase. The totality of the Antillean arts, according to the poet is like the gathering of the broken pieces of the vase—the African and Asiatic traditions.

Ans to Q No 7: In Antilles, deprived of their original language, the captured and indentured tribes create their own language derived from both Asia and Africa. The original language dissolves in the process of re-creation which is the same process that the poet faces every day.

Ans to Q No 8: According to Walcott, Caribbean poetry deals mostly with the impact of colonial history that destroys originality, because the colonisers carried with them the infection of their own malaise. Consequently, the colonial writers and travellers reduced the Caribbean landscape to melancholia and self-contempt.

Ans to Q No 9: Charles Kingsley's book *At Last* is important because, this is one of the first Caribbean books that helped in the recognition of the history of the Caribbean.

Ans to Q No 10: Because, "There is a force of exultation, a celebration of luck, when a writer finds himself a witness to the early morning of a culture that is defining itself, branch by branch, leaf by leaf, in that self-defining dawn, which is why, especially at the edge of the sea, it is good to make a ritual of the sunrise."

Ans to Q No 11: Walcott has been reading about the sighs of the Caribbean people, the butchery of its aborigines, or the lances of cane as a green prison where the ancestors of Felicity are still serving time. Most of these people are illiterate; they do not read, they are there to be read, and if they are properly read, they create their own literature.

Ans to Q No 12: The most important aspects of the Speech are—experiences during the author's visit to the village Felicity and seeing "Ramleela", the dramatization of the Hindu epic *Ramayana*; evaluation of the cultural traditions associated with performing epic drama; felicity of epical customs; discussion of the Antillean art, culture, and literature; features of poetry as a method of self-discovery; evaluation of the Antillean art as the restoration of shattered histories.

Ans to Q No 13: The process of poetry is one of excavation and self-discovery, and the poet needs to dig out the buried language with the help of his own vocabulary.

Ans to Q No 14: Deprived of their own country and language, the captured and indentured tribes in the Caribbean create their own vocabulary derived from Asia and Africa. Their original language dissolves into the new; they start the process of renaming, of finding new metaphors. That is the basis of the Antillean Linguistic experience.

Ans to Q No 15: Walcott is interested in history not History, the history of lives lived in this landscape, not the History of ruins. Walcott conceives the Antilles as a site of multiple and inextricable histories of victimization and cruelty, histories deposited not only in its landscape and its languages but even in his body.

Ans to Q No 16: The writer need not write about the Caribbean like a tourist would write. Instead, he/she should write like an insider, like a native who loves his own people and country.



10..10 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q 1: Write an account of Walcott's upbringing as a writer with particular focus on his life history.

Q 2: Which are the three important events that influenced and shaped Walcott's career as a writer? Explain.

Q 3: Why does Walcott consider himself lucky to be a Caribbean poet? Discuss.

Q 4: Discuss the important aspects of Derek Walcott's Nobel Speech with special reference to the important themes.

Q 5: "One need not write about the Caribbean like a tourist would write." Discuss.

Q 6: Narrate in your own words, the significance of Derek Walcott's Nobel Speech.

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UNIT 11 : ANTOINE DE SAINT EXUPERY: *THE LITTLE PRINCE*

UNIT STRUCTURE

11.1 Learning Objectives

11.2 Introduction

11.3 Antoine de Saint Exupery: Life and Works

11.4 The Title of the Novella

11.5 The Context of the Novella

11.6 Explanation of the Novella

11.7 Let Us Sum Up

11.8 Further Reading

11.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

11.10 Model Questions

11.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to:

- appreciate the art of translation
- gain an idea of the generic form of allegory as this story is considered to be an adult fable
- differentiate between an adult perception from that of a child
- appreciate the joy of adventure
- explain the element of fantasy in the story

11.2 INTRODUCTION

Have you ever come across fictional accounts of imaginary adventures written by eminent authors like *The Adventures of Alice in Wonderland, Gulliver's Travels, Rasselas,* etc. This unit, through the story by the French poet and novelist, Antoine de Saint Exupery, takes us into a world of fantasy and day dream. The narrator, whose journey from a child to an adult covers the length of the novel, is thought to be Saint Exupery himself. The story is an account of his aviation experience and the

subsequent plane crash in the deserts of Sahara. But it will be interesting to see how Saint Exupery narrates the whole adult experience through the perception of a child. The publication year of this novella is September 1943. It was first published in French as *La Petit Prince.* The novella includes wonderful illustrations, also created by Saint Exupery. In *The Little Prince,* the narrator's account of his plane crash is believed by some critics to be Saint Exupery's own account of a similar experience in the Sahara Deserts, which has been recorded in his 1939 memoir, *Wind Sand and Stars* (French: *Terre des hommes).* Saint Exupery, along with his co-pilot, Andre Prevot, had to suffer extreme dehydration in the desert due to this plane crash which occurred on December 30, 1935. But in this novella, Saint Exupery has skillfully made the adult experience seem like events which occur in a child's life. He has merged the reality of adult life with the fanciful and colourful life of a child.



LET US KNOW

A ***novella*** is shorter than a novel but longer than a short story.

11.3 ANTOINE DE SAINT EXUPERY: LIFE AND WORKS

Born on June 29 1900, in Lyon, France, St. du Exupery was a French writer, journalist, aristrocrat, poet and aviator. His literary genres include essays, letters, autobiography and children's literature. He received several literary awards of France. He was also the recipient of the honorable U.S. National Book Award.

Born to an aristocratic Catholic family, Saint Exupery was the third of the five children. His parents were Count Jean de Saint Exupery and Countess Marie de Fonscolombe. After his father's death due to a fatal stroke, the family had to witness the trials and tribulations of a declining aristocracy. His father was an insurance executive at Le Soleil (The Sun) brokerage company and his death jerked the family out of its complacency. This family tragedy was followed by another. Antoine's younger brother,

fifteen-year-old Francois, died of rheumatic fever. During the World War I, they were both studying at the Marianist College Villa St. Jean in Fribourg, Switzerland.This incident also finds relevance in the end of *The Little Prince.* After the death of the two men in the family, the responsibilities of his three sisters and his mother fell on him.

Before studying architecture for fifteen months at Ecole des Beaux-Arts without completing his graduation, Antoine failed twice in his finals at a preparatory Naval Academy. After that, he took to accepting trifle jobs to earn money. He began his military life in 1921 when he joined service as a basic- rank soldier and was transferred to Neuhof, Strasbourg, where he also found the opportunity to take flying lessons. Following this experience, he was offered a transfer from the French Army to the French Air Force. He was first posted at 37th Fighter Regiment in Casablanca, Morocco, and then at the 34th Aviation Regiment at Le Bourget, Paris. After experiencing several aircraft crashes as part of the aviation career, he had to finally surrender to the disapproval of his fiancee's (Louis Leveque de Vilmorin) family and leave his Air Force job for an office job. The engagement finally broke off and Antoine continued looking for several other jobs after this incident. Finally, Antoine began his flying career again in 1926, and this time, he was one of the spearheads of the international postal flight. After his transfer to Argentina in 1926, Exupery was appointed the director of Aeroposta Argentina.

In 1931, Exupery married a twice-widowed writer and artist, Consuelo Suncin. In 1935, Exupery, along with his co-pilot, Andre Prevot, set off to break a speed record in an air race from Paris to Saigon, whose prize money was 150,000 francs. However, their plane crashed near the Nile Delta, in a valley named, Wadi Natrun. They both survived the crash, but suffered immensely from dehydration. On the fourth day in the Sahara Desert, they were finally discovered by a Bedouin on a camel, and their lives were saved. What came out as a result of this experience was his memoir, *Wind, Sand and Stars* (1939), and his novella *The Little Prince.* His first novella, however, was not *The Little Prince,* but *L'Aviateur*(*The Aviator*). It appeared in a short lived magazine, Le Navire d' Argent (The

Silver Ship). In 1929, his book *CourrierSud* (*Southern Mail*) was published that introduced him as a journalist to the reading public. The publication of *Vol de nuit* (*Night Flight*) in 1931 established him as a promising newcomer in the literary world. This book was a compilation of his experiences as a mail pilot and director of the Aeroposta Argentina airline.

On 31st July, 1944, Exupery took off on an unarmed war plane, numbered P-38. From this fateful flight to Corsica to fulfill a mission, Exupery never returned. An unidentified body in French air force uniform was discovered a few days later. The sudden disappearance of the pilot created quite a few headlines. It is said that he was suspected of supporting Germany secretly during his air missions. Such scandals were popularised by his professional adversaries like Vichy Regime and Charles de Gaulle. He took to drinking heavily and suffered from depression. His impulsive flight to Corsica bears testimony to his mental turmoil.

11.4 THE TITLE OF THE NOVELLA

As the title suggests, the story is about a little prince from another world. He helps the adult narrator to look at the world from a different angle. The size of the prince might be small, but he outsmarts the adult narrator through his wit. He is referred to as the 'prince' because he occupies his own small world, an asteroid, which is no bigger than a house. Regarding the choice of the title and the subject-matter of the novella, it is opined by some that the physical description of the Little Prince resembles Exupery himself when he was a child. His golden curly locks fringing his plump face made him popular as le Roi Soleil (the Sun King) among his family and friends. The entire story revolves around the events that take place in the desert where the narrator's plane crashed. The Little Prince comes to Exupery like a hope that keeps him going through the most strenuous time in that desert. The Little Prince is also interpreted by some as Christ himself who has simple answers to every complex question. Miraculously, when the photojournalist of the magazine *Life,* John Phillips, asked Exupery about the inspiration behind his creation of this child character, Exupery simply said that, one day, as he was looking down on a blank sheet of paper, he

saw a shadowy image of a child, and when asked who he was,the image replied that he was the Little Prince. The story covers the time length of the narrator from his childhood to adulthood, and the Little Prince becomes a constant reminder of who he had been when he was a child. He appears before the narrator at a time when the latter is caught up in the throes of adult life, and the life story of the Little Prince becomes a silent reminder of the narrator's childhood. The 'Prince' becomes a metaphor for the philosopher in the little boy and his reflections and observations that make the narrator a wiser and a sensible man.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Fill in the blanks with appropriate answers:

a. *Wind, Sand and Stars* is a by Antoine de Saint Exupery.

b. Saint Exupery was initially engaged to .

c. His brother, Francois, was years old when he died.

Q 2: Say whether the following sentences are true or false:

a. Saint Exupery married Consuelo Suncin in 1935.

b. The plane in which Saint Exupery made his last flight was P-37.

c. Saint Exupery was suspected by the French Air Force of secretly supporting Germany in his air missions.

Q 3: What simple messages does the little prince impart during his stay with the narrator?

11.5 THE CONTEXT OF THE NOVELLA

As discussed in the beginning of the unit, the novella is inspired by the incidents that occured in the life of Saint Exupery. The novella was published in 1943, a crucial year in the history of the world. The novel is set against the backdrop of a desert, where Exupery's own plane had crashed. In the extreme heat that caused him and his co-pilot to suffer from dehydration, they began to hallucinate. The character of the little prince is inspired by the younger brother of Exupery and his death has some relevance

in the novella when the writer describes: “He remained motionless for an instant. He did not cry out. He fell as gently as a tree falls.”

The failed attempts of the narrator to paint are references to Exupery’s own failure at making a mark in the initial period of his life to get through an exam at a preparatory Naval Academy. He had failed twice there. The philosophical discussions of the little prince, and his constant conclusion of the adult individual as ‘odd’ and ‘queer’ set it against adult’s perception of life as ‘matters of consequence’. Through the little prince, the novella, perhaps, starkly critiques on the ideas of war, man’s desire to command and rule (like the king), to calculate profits (like the businessman), to conquer and limit (like the geographer), to be appreciated and admired (like the conceited man), to be unnecessarily engrossed to ignore existential questions (like the lamplighter) and to remain intoxicated by dreams and ambitions that have no limits (like the tippler).

The self introspection of the little prince and his regret at leaving his rose all alone in his planet is reflective of Exupery’s own regret of leaving his wife Consuelo Suncin, because he perceived her as proud and vain. However, the little prince is reminded by the fox that one should never judge anybody by words. The rose is special and unique to him, as he has tamed her. Exupery’s regret at having judged Suncin so harshly comes out clearly in his novella.

Thus, the life and experiences of Saint Exupery form a major part of the novella. Even at the end of the tale, the narrator admits that no grown-up would believe his story, because only young children are blessed with the power to imagine beautiful things. Adults only live a life of facts and figures, and not a life of fancy. The longing of the narrator to meet the little prince once again in his life shows his quest for the beautiful and the innocent, which is limitless.

11.6 EXPLANATION OF THE NOVELLA

The novella consists of twenty-seven short chapters, each accompanied by colourful illustrations sketched by Exupery himself. It opens with the narrator musing upon his life as a six-year-old. He says that he was

immensely inspired by a picture in a book entitled *True Stories from Nature.* The picture was that of a huge boa constrictor swallowing an animal. He tried to draw a picture of one with the swallowed animal inside its belly. He drew his first ever painting with colour pencils, and proudly showed it off to the grown-ups in his family. But the painting was interpreted as a hat, and in his second attempt, the grown-ups thought it to be an elephant. Disheartened, the child narrator took to another profession—of an aviator of airplanes. And he decided to talk to them of other "sensible matters" like "bridge, and golf, and politics, and neckties"—a clear reminder of the dry, matter-of-fact world of an adult, where creativity and imagination of a child has very little place.

The adult life of the narrator was full of loneliness and gloom. He even met with an accident in the Sahara Desert. During his moments of depression and self-sought exile, he heard a cheerful voice urging him to draw him a sheep. He looks around and finds a little boy, with golden curly hair and a golden scarf around his neck. He calls him the Little Prince. Gradually, he comes to know about the origins of the Little Prince, and that he has landed on earth from some other planet. When the narrator is unable to draw him a sheep, and draws him a box instead, the Little Prince says that he had actually wanted a sheep inside a box, which he could use as his house. From his description, the narrator was assured that his planet was no bigger than the size of a house. He lived in an asteroid called B-612.

The narrator admits that the arrival of the little prince in his life inspired to take up painting once again- a hobby which he had given up long ago. He wanted to cherish the memories of his new found friend and the constant little demands of the young boy to sketch him something or the other made the narrator take up painting once again at a much mature age. At a point of time, the narrator wishes to remain a little boy like the young prince because he wants to see things that only young children can see. He says "My friend never explained anything to me. He thought, perhaps, that I was like himself. But I, alas, do not know how to see sheep through the walls of boxes. Perhaps, I am a little like the grown-ups. I have had to grow old."

The little prince, through his innocent deeds, teaches each day a

new thing to the narrator. He says that he wants to own a sheep so that it eats up all the baobab trees that might crowd his small asteroid. He suggests that one should weed out the baobab bushes when they are still small, lest they become a problem when they grow into big and strong trees. This little piece of advice from the little prince can be read as a wise saying that one should tackle one's problems when they are still fresh and within one's grasp. To overlook a problem at the very beginning means to invite greater problems that may arise from it. This simple philosophy becomes evident in the words of the little prince: "Before they grow so big, the baobabs start out by being little." The narrator understands the significance of these words and interprets them as a wise comment on nurturing good ideas and weeding out bad ones. He says: "Indeed, as I learned, there were on the planet where the little prince lived- as one on all planets- good plants and bad plants. In consequence, there were good seeds from good plants and bad seeds from bad plants. But seeds are invisible. They sleep deep in the heart of the earth's darkness, until someone among them is seized with the desire to awaken. Then this little seed will stretch itself and begin- timidly at first- to push a charming little sprig inoffensively upward toward the sun. If it is only a sprout of radish or the spring of a rose- bush, one would let it grow wherever it might wish. But when it is a bad plant, one must destroy it as soon as possible, the very first instant when one recognizes it." What the narrator indicates here is the need to destroy undesirable thoughts and ideas the moment they start taking roots on the soil on one's mind, whereas good thoughts should be encouraged to grow into better ideas.

The narrator gradually comes to know of the little prince's fascination for sunsets. The Little Prince says that one loves the sunset most when one is really sad. On being asked, what made him sad, the little prince remains silent. On their fifth day in the desert, the little prince asks the narrator whether sheep eat flowers with thorns. When the narrator replies in the positive, the little prince becomes apprehensive. The narrator keeps trying to mend his plane so that he could go back to his duty, but the constant questions of the little prince makes him angry. The little prince says that he is no different than the grown-ups, and becomes sad. Without his realization,

the narrator starts behaving like grown- ups, because this is what he is- a grown-up, after all. What is important to a child seems ridiculous for the grown-up. All they believe in are 'matters of consequence'. The little prince's concern over a little flower in his planet, and the only flower to be so, and who is going to take care of her in his absence is of no importance to the narrator. But the little prince argues in his own childlike simplicity that things that do matter to him are things like flowers, butterflies and caterpillars, and not calculations and numbers that grown-ups are so fascinated about. The narrator mentions this in Chapter 4: "They (grown-ups) never say to you, "What does his voice sound like? What game does he love best? Does he collect butterflies?" Instead they demand, "How old is he? How many brothers has he? How much does he weigh? How much money does his father make?" only from these figures do they think they have learned anything about him."

The little prince finds in the narrator a friend and tells him how his flower looked like, and how she grew in a bush. Initially, he thought it to be yet another baobab sprout. But soon, he noticed a bud and one day the bud bloomed into a little flower; she took time in choosing the colours of her petals from nature. She was a proud flower, as she was beautiful. She knew that the little prince doted on her, and would run little errands on her demand. She would demand water in the morning and a glass globe when the wind was no longer mild. The little prince took offence and left her alone in his planet. She had once told him that she could protect herself well with her four thorns, and the little prince took her words way too literally and left her behind. Now, in the desert, he realises his fault and confesses his guilt before the narrator. He admits that, "The fact is that I did not know how to understand anything! I ought to have judged by deeds and not by words. She cast her fragrance and her radiance over me. I ought never to have run away from her… I ought to have guessed all the affection that lay behind her poor little stratagems. Flowers are so inconsistent! But I was too young to know how to love her…"

The narrator believes that the little prince flew away from his planet on the back of a flock of migratory birds. Before his flight, he cleaned his

two active volcanoes which were convenient means of heating his breakfast. He also cleaned the dormant volcano, fearing that it might get active one day and cause harm to his planet. And then when he bade farewell to the flower, she only urged him to leave soon, lest he would see her tears.

The little prince describes his journey to the planet earth before the narrator. The asteroid of the little prince was in the proximity of six other asteroids namely 325, 326, 327, 328, 329 and 330. He decides to visit each of them. The first had a king who had no subjects to rule. But the moment he saw the little prince, he addressed him as his subject, although they had never met before. Here, the narrator makes a wise comment: “He did not know how the world is simplified for kings. To them, all men are subjects.” The king urged him to stay and become the dispenser of justice, but the little prince said that there was no one else to be judged. To this the king argued that, if so was the case, he should judge himself, because it was the toughest of all tasks. The little prince politely took his leave from the king and visited the next planet.

The occupant of this asteroid was a conceited man and the little prince found him more entertaining than the king. But soon, he is bored of admiring the conceited man. He left him by wondering how anybody could be interested so much in being admired. But this, after all, was a trait that is common in grown-ups.

The next asteroid was inhabited by a tippler. When asked why he drank so much, the tippler replied that it was because he was ashamed of drinking and to forget his embarrassment, he drank heavily. The little prince only concluded that the grown-ups could be really odd.

The fourth asteroid was occupied by a businessman. He was calculating the stars which he claimed to be his own, because there was no other to claim them. The little prince showed him the futility of such ownership by saying that he cannot really own them because he was of no use to them. The little prince owned the flower because he watered her every morning and tended to her needs; he owned the volcanoes because he cleaned them every day. But the businessman was of no use to the stars.

The fifth asteroid was the smallest of all the other asteroids. It was

inhabited by a lamplighter. He would light the street lamp every single minute, and then blow it out alternately. According to the little prince, this man was the busiest of all the other men he had met so far. He had not a minute's respite. The lamplighter told him that his planet revolved at such a tremendous speed that it was night and day every alternate minute. He had no time to eat or sleep. Without his knowledge the little prince spent one month in it. The little prince wanted to stay for some more time on that planet, but it is too small to have room for two persons. He left it with a heavy heart, because it was the only planet that witnessed 1440 sunsets a day.

The sixth asteroid was ten times bigger than the one occupied by the lamplighter. The inhabitant of this planet was a geographer. When asked by the little prince about the features of his planet, the geographer could not reply as he was ignorant about them. He explained that he is a geographer, and not an explorer. There was a difference; the geographer only had to note down in his book the discoveries made by the explorer. But what amazed and to a point disappointed the little prince was when the geographer said that they do not record flowers. They are 'ephemeral' and hence could not be enlisted in their books of discoveries. They were not mighty and eternal like the oceans and mountains, and therefore do not enter the great records of discovery. The geographer explained: "Geographies…are the books which, of all books, are most concerned with the matters of consequence. They never become old- fashioned. It is very rarely that a mountain changes its position. It is very rarely that an ocean empties itself of its waters. We write of eternal things." This farther fills the little prince with remorse. He thinks: "My flower is ephemeral…and she has only four thorns to defend herself against the world. And I have left her on my planet, all alone!" the geographer advised the little prince to visit the friendly planet earth. The little prince moved away with a heavy heart, thinking all his way about his flower.

The earth is his seventh planet, and the last on the list of the little prince. Here, the narrator gives us an idea of the immensity of the earth by saying that men occupy only a small portion of its surface. The first thing

that the little prince met on earth is a golden snake. The snake introduced himself and says that if ever the little prince missed his own planet then he could send him back to it, although not physically, but through his memory. Perhaps, the little prince understood what the snake indicated at. The conversation between the snake and the little prince brought to light up a lot of philosophical observations about man and his eternal loneliness. The snake reflected that it was always lonely among men. The next object that the little prince encountered was a flower. As they conversed, the flower said that she had seen a caravan of men passing by her place. They were people without permanent homes. After that the little prince climbed up a nearby mountain and shouted with the mountain echoing his words. This made the little prince feel lonely and small. He missed his own planet with a single flower which always spoke first. But soon, the little prince came across a garden full of roses. He was amazed to see so many flowers blooming there. Until then he thought that his own flower was the most beautiful one in the universe, and that it was unique. Soon, the little prince met a fox. The conversation with the fox is another enlightening passage in the novella. The fox said that they could become friends only if he tamed the fox just as he had tamed the flower in his planet. His flower was unique and special to him. There may be thousand other flowers in the universe, of the same kind, but what made the flower in his planet special to him was the fact that she yielded only to him. She missed him, and he should not have left her. Her pride and vanity was her exterior garb, underneath which she disguised her real feelings for him. She actually feared to be left alone, but she never wished to stand on his way of progress and exploration. This journey, according to the fox, was very important because it taught the little prince what the flower actually meant for him. The fox taught him that his rose was unique to him and he owed responsibility towards her alone. “Men have forgotten this truth. But you must not forget it. You become responsible, forever, for what you have tamed. You are responsible for you rose…” Perhaps, this conversation is an indicator to the fact that man must complete his responsibilities towards something that he had initiated. The little prince had tended to the rose, but left her halfway. She became habituated to his

care and love. He should have stayed with the rose and not isolated her.

Next, the little prince met a merchant who bragged that he has invented a pill that could make someone forget his thirst for fifty three minutes a week. The little prince argued that if he had that much time in his hands, he would rather try and find out a spring of fresh water. The little prince and the narrator spent eight days in the desert. Finally, they found a well where there was bucket and a pulley to draw water. They together quenched their thirst, and found the water rather sweet. The little prince mused that it was the difficulty in achieving simply and ordinary things that made them extraordinary and special. He wondered how people had five thousand roses in their garden and yet were on the lookout for something greater. The little prince made one understand that real happiness was in being content in the here and the now, then in searching it somewhere else, in another time. The narrator realized that the little prince looked dejected and greatly missed his rose. One day, he found him talking to the golden snake. The snake slithered away, and the little prince closed his eyes. He had once promised the narrator that he would shine up in the sky, among the glittering stars. The narrator tells the reader that six years had passed after this meeting, yet he dared not tell this story to any grown-up because it would hardly make any sense to them. The narrator further pleads that if anybody comes across a young boy who had golden hair and who refused to answer his questions immediately, then he should be informed.



11.7 LET US SUM UP

This unit tells us how things that are of least importance to grown-ups are so important to children. Things like flowers, sheep with muzzles, weeding out baobab bushes when still young, the preservation of a few caterpillars to see them grow into heavy-winged colourful butterflies, the pleasure of drinking water that one has pulled out of a deep well with the help of a bucket and a pulley, the joy of making new friends, and the mind to accept one's mistake—all form an important part of a child's world.

Whereas, counting loss and profit, geography and cartography with no mention of ephemeral things, ruling and commanding, vanity and counterfeited admiration are things of the adult world. For a child, there is eternity in a moment; he lives that moment to the last. On the other hand, adults waste their present either by being remorseful of their past or apprehensive of their future. Thus, this novella gives us a fresh perspective of looking at life through a child's eyes.



11.8 FURTHER READING

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11..9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1:

a. memoir.

b. Louis Leveque de Vilmorin.

c. fifteen.

Ans to Q No 2:

a. True.

b. False.

c. True.

Ans to Q No 3: The story of *The Little Prince* carries home the thought that it is only a child who can say lofty things in a precise and simple way.

The innocence of the little prince teaches the absurdity of the adult world with all its vanity and meaningless competition. He sees no fun or meaning in those obsessions. Instead, being a child, he seeks pleasure in the simple things of life. Thus, the messages imparted by the little prince are rather philosophical in nature, though they appear to be simple.



11.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q 1: How does the novella discuss serious existential questions through the innocent questions and conversations of the little prince and various characters?

Q 2: Bring out the significance of the rose in the story.

Q 3: How does the narrator help to unravel certain philosophical queries with the little prince?

Q 4: Write a note on Antoine de Saint Exupery.

Q 5: State briefly the context of the novella “The Little Prince”.

Q 6: What could be the possible sources that inspired the novella *The Little Prince*?

Q 7: What fills the little prince with remorse after coming to earth?

*** ***** ***



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