UG EG S6-01 (DSC)

FOUR YEAR BACHELOR'S DEGREE COURSE

(CBCS in Accordance with NEP 2020)

SEMESTER - VI

NON FICTIONAL PROSE

ENGLISH

Padmanath Gohainbaruah School of Humanities

KRISHNA KANTA HANDIQUI STATE OPEN UNIVERSITY

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Course Introduction : Non Fictional Prose

The paper entitled 'Non Fictional Prose' introduces the learners to some of the widely anthologised works of important prose writers representing different periods in the history of English Literature. Some of the leading writers whose texts have been taken up for study in the present course are namely Francis Bacon, Joseph Addison, Samuel Johnson, Mahatma Gandhi, Nirad C. Chaudhuri, Bertrand Russell, Anne Frank, Robert Browning and A.G. Gardiner. Apart from introducing the learner to the life and works of these writers, the units shall take up the prescribed texts in a detailed manner and interesting pattern.

The introductory unit entitled "Goodness and Goodness of Nature" an essay by Francis Bacon highlights the significance of moral propriety and the practice of goodness in our day-to-day lives. The second and third units take up Joseph Addison's essay "Sir Roger at Home" which reveals the protagonist's personality traits of being as flawed as endearing owing to the infusion of mild humour in his character. The fourth and fifth unit takes up the popular essayist Charles Lamb's essay "Dream Children" which reverts to the nostalgic memories of the past, the never-to-return moments of childhood days and in an instant, brings one back to the sadness of present realities. The sixth unit takes up Dr. Samuel Johnson's essay entitled "Life of Cowley" which is one of his famous biographical accounts of the famous metaphysical poet named Abraham Cowley.

The seventh unit takes up a chapter from the autobiography of Mahatma Gandhi known as *My Experiments with Truth* (1948) and in this selected chapter entitled "Playing the English Gentleman" the learner will receive an insight into the dynamic role of this great figure. In the eighth unit which takes up a chapter from John Stuart Mill's *Autobiography* (1873) presents the childhood experiences of the narrator and some of the most influential years of his life. The ninth unit takes up Nirad C. Chaudhuri's "Shakespeare in Today's England" which is an excerpt from his second book titled *A Passage to England* published in 1959. This essay brings out the author's deep understanding of the English culture, Shakespearean theatre, wide audience and challenging criticism through the ages.

The tenth unit on Bertrand Russell's essay entitled "The Impulse to Power" which presents the writer as a social activist and thinker who highlights man's thirst for power and glory. The eleventh and twelfth unit takes up selected entries from the remarkable diary of Anne Frank, which was written by the young diarist in hiding during the period of Jewish persecution in German occupied Europe in the 1940s. The thirteenth and fourteenth units contain three selected letters of Robert Browning, which he had written to his fellow poet, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, expressions that bloomed into romance and a lasting friendship.

The letters unravel the wonderful world that the poets had built for themselves given their difficult circumstances, learning about each other through the sharing of each other's joys and sorrows by way of letters. The letters are almost a window to their intellect, as well as, their emotions and reflect the common wavelength of thought that they shared with each other. In a similar strain the final unit of the course, unit fifteen takes up A.G. Gardiner's "On Letter Writing" which highlights the very significance and intensity of expression in this literary form through an interesting narrative.

After going through these units of the first block, the learner will be able to discuss the prescribed drama and plays in a detailed manner. 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 which have been designed to self-check your progress of study. It is important to note that the Self Learning Material (SLM) is not an end in itself and the learners are strongly advised to consult the references and other resources recommended for reading.

UNIT 1: FRANCIS BACON: "OF GOODNESS AND GOODNESS OF NATURE"

UNIT STRUCTURE

1.1 Learning Objectives
1.2 Introduction
1.3 Francis Bacon: The Essayist
1.2.1 His Life and Works
1.4 Explanation of the Essay
1.5 Major Themes
1.6 Style and Language
1.7 Let us Sum up
1.8 Further Reading
1.9 Answers to Check Your Progress
1.10 Model Questions

1.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going throgh the unit, you will be astet :

- discuss the life and works of Francis Bacon
- explain the essay "of Goodness and Goodness of Nature"
- highlight the major themes resident in the essay
- describe the style and language of Bacon.

1.2 INTRODUCTION

The present unit takes up an essay titled "Of Goodness and Goodness of Nature" by the French essayist Francis Bacon. Sir Francis Bacon, 1st Viscount St. Alban (1561-1626) is one of the major essayists of his time and is considered one of the pioneers of the essay form due to his literary contribution to the genre of essay-writing. He was also a philosopher, scientist, statesman and jurist. The philosophical and scientific ideas of Bacon were held in great regard during the 1630s and he was also considered as the "Father of Empiricism."

1.3 FRANCIS BACON : THE ESSAYIST

Let us briefly explore the life and works of Francis Bacon before we read through the prescribed essay for the unit.

1.3.1 His Life and His Works

Francis Bacon was born in the year 1561 to the Lord Keeper of the Seal, Sir Nicholas Bacon and Lady Anne Cooke who belonged to a noble family of England. Bacon was

mostly tutored at home and surprisingly, had received the opportunity of studying at the Trinity College, Cambridge at the tender age of twelve. He went on to study at the University of Poitiers and entered the Honourable Society of Gray's Inn in 1576 to pursue law. As a young man, he had a sharp intellect and was greatly influenced by philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle and Cicero to mention a few. During this phase, he travelled to places like Poitiers, Italy and Spain which had opened up new learning experiences to him. It was at his father's demise that he had to return home. He worked for three years at the Gray's Inn where he went on to receive his promotion as a barrister, while also looking out for better work opportunities.

On the personal front, Bacon married the young girl Alice Barnham at the age of forty-five after his unsuccessful courtship with a young widow named Elizabeth Hatton. Bacon was actively involved in politics throughout his career. He received knighthood in 1603 with King James I taking over the throne of England. Bacon served in the Parliament from 1584 to 1617, holding high offices of the Attorney General and Lord Chancellor of England. Although, his career as the Lord Chancellor of England (as appointed by the King) was marred due to legal charges of corruption, Bacon pleaded innocent as any man who would receive gifts without much thought and yet remain true to his conscience at all times.

Bacon believed in the spirit of the new Renaissance humanism and true to the spirit of enquiry he was a skeptical in his thought i.e. he doubted or questioned accepted opinions. His empirical or inductive method of knowledge which emphasised on the relevance of experience, proof and physical observation led to the development of the scientific- method and modern sciences. In order to discover and verify nature's truth, the empirical method now also known as the 'Baconian method' encourages experimentation, systematic analysis and physical observation. Among his important works of literary merit are his *Essays* (1597-1625) and some of his other works include: *On the Wisdom of the Ancients*, based on ancient mythology, *The Advancement and Proficience of Learning Divine and Human* (1605), *Novum Organum Scientarium* (1620), *The History of Henry VII* (1622), *Essays or, Counsels Civil and Moral* (1625), *The New Atlantis* (1624) and *Apothegms* (1624).

The great thinkers of the Renaissance period such as Voltaire and Diderot considered Bacon as the 'Father of Modern Science'. He was optimistic that the empirical school of thought would replace the older schools of thought and usher in the spirit of Renaissance Humanism. His concern as the philosopher of science had led to his well known work *Novum Organum* (1620) published in Latin in the year 1620 which had opened up a newer perspective to the scientific way of acquiring knowledge. He had also forwarded the idea of the 'duality of truth' which held that truth to the idealist and the common man is different. Even after his demise in 1626, Bacon had brought about a major scientific reform which came to be embodied in the principles of The Royal Society of London.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1. Where did Francis Bacon receive his education?

Q2. What is meant by the Baconian method?
Q3. Name a few of the important works by Francis Bacon.
Q4. Who were the great thinkers who considered Bacon as the Father of Modern science?

1.4 EXPLANATION OF THE ESSAY

The essay "Of Goodness and Goodness of Nature" has been taken from Francis Bacon's volume titled *Essays, Civil and Moral*. The essay has been divided into five paragraphs for ease of discussion and reference. It opens with Bacon's opinion of what constitutes goodness and how inherent goodness is the factor that brings in fortune and prosperity for those who 'practice' goodness. This goodness was known as 'philanthropia' among the Grecians and is known as philanthropy in English. Philanthropy is the inner goodness of the human heart and according to Bacon even the word 'humanity' cannot fully define the term. He considers that of all virtues and dignities of the mind, it is philanthropy that is the greatest of all virtues. This quality is akin to that of benevolent deities or goddesses. It is thus the quality that gives man his essence and without which man would simply be an ordinary, miserable and even a destructive being. Although the excess desire of power or the excess desire of knowledge can be harmful to men, the virtue of goodness is open to excesses (and is not restricted or limited).

The second paragraph discusses how men have a natural tendency towards being good and so much so, that if he is unable to find an opportunity of extending his goodness to fellow men, he does so to all other living creatures. One such example that Bacon provides is that of Turks who are considered ruthless or cruel people and yet who are kind to beasts and birds. In fact a Christian boy in Constantinople ran the risk of being stoned for having strangled a bird- the long-billed fowl. While noting the risk of errors in the practice of goodness, Bacon is reminded of an Italian proverb "good for nothing" which you must have surely heard of. It simply means that being 'impractically' good amounts to being good for nothing. In Italy, **Nicholas Machiavelli**, had the courage to write that Christianity which upheld its tenets on goodness and propriety of conduct, was itself guilty of having sacrificed too many good men in the name of religion, while turning a blind eye to those who were cruel and unjust. This was in itself an error that was committed in the pursuit of ideal goodness.

The third paragraph continues the discussion on how Machiavelli had openly stated the same as this was against the tenets of Christianity and the Christian law as well. Thus, in order to avoid goodness, it is advisable to have a clear knowledge of errors of goodness. This would help in entirely avoiding scandal and danger. It is necessary to look for good or good qualities of other men but not in the fascination of their beauty or promises. And if this is not avoided, one would be merely committing another error. An error of goodness occurs when one is taken by others at face-value. This can weaken a good mind and thereby disillusion the goodness of the mind. He further exemplifies that God teaches to give benevolently to the poor but one must not sell away everything to provide for others, nor should one empty all resources to end up in poverty. As long as one has

the means or a certain "vocation" through which one may spread or "do" good. it is justified Otherwise, "in feeding the streams, one would be guilty of drying the fountain source" just as the Lord says.

In the fourth paragraph, Bacon discusses that while in some people, the habit of goodness is naturally inclined towards the right reason, in some men, there is a natural "malignity" or sense of evildoing even in their good deeds. In fact, this is true to our contexts where we will find many philanthropists who perform good deeds to secure their own self-interests. True philanthropy is about being a true well-wisher of others without any selfish concern and about giving generously and genuinely. According to Bacon, the negative factor of malignity is of two kinds: one is the "lighter sort" that is quick to oppose or cause difficulty and the "deeper sort" which is out of a sense of competitive envy or a sheer sense of mischief. Such malicious people worsen the difficult times of others for an instance, the dogs that licked the sores of a dying **Lazarus.** Bacon compares such men to flies that hover about anything that is raw and such malicious people are called 'misanthropists' who are "haters of men" and can never be well-wishers of others. Here Bacon gives another example of **Timon** who could only take advantage of others and have nothing much to do with them. These malicious or harmful inclinations are the errors of human nature, although, such nature proves to be perfect in politics. And thus, he exemplifies how knee timber makes good ships which is ideal to be tossed about in the seas but the same is unsuitable for construction of houses as such timber holds no promise of standing firm.

The final words of the essay discusses how goodness does reflect multiple virtues in human beings. Bacon opines that when a man is kind and courteous to strangers- it shows that he is the "citizen of the world" and that "his heart is no island" which is isolated from others, as no man can survive without friendship. It shows the ability to build bridges and maintain harmony with others. If a man is compassionate towards the pain or sorrow of fellow men, it shows how his heart is like a "noble tree" which does not fear being wounded in providing solace and comfort and solace to those in need. If a man easily pardons offenses, it shows that his mind is "planted above injuries" or is too superior to be defeated and kind enough to be forgiving at the same time. If a man is grateful even for small mercies, it shows that he "weighs" the noble thoughts of one's mind, above all other qualities. And Bacon states that if a man has the "perfection" of St. Paul who would not mind disagreeing and even repelling Christ the Lord for having died for the salvation of his brothers and fellow disciples (some of whom had in fact betrayed Christ), then it would show more of a divine nature.

LET US KNOW

Nicholas Machiavelli: Machiavelli was a Italian Renaissance historian, philosopher and politician who wrote the famous work The Prince in 1513.

Lazarus: Lazarus of Bethany is a biblical figure who was restored to life after four days of his death with the blessings of Christ.

Timon: The reference to T imon is found in the New Testament who was one among the seven elected preachers of Christianity who was thrown into a fire by non believers but survived it without any harm.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q5. What is philanthropy according to Francis Bacon?
Q6. What did Nicholas Machiavelli write with regard to errors of those who upheld Christianity?
Q7. What is necessary in order to avoid errors of goodness?
Q8. What does a compassionate man show or reflect?

1.5 MAJOR THEMES

The major themes that emerge from the essay are as discussed below:

Nature of Goodness :

The natural inclination towards goodness is inherent in all men according to Bacon. The nature of man is so designed that he bears a natural disposition towards goodness. According to him, goodness is equivalent to the theological virtue of charity which also reflects the generosity of the heart. An ideal "habit so excellent" as goodness is what is termed as 'philanthropia' by the Grecians. Even the term "humanity" falls short of the term "philanthropy" as it transcends beyond that quality. Thus, it is also the greatest among all other virtues.

In the practice of goodness, Bacon advices practicality, right discretion and measure so that a good person is self-sufficient, remains free from being cheated and continues his or her philanthropic activities without suffering any form of setback. As the saying goes "charity begins at home", it is necessary to take care of one's own necessities first before reaching out to others. A good deed, however, small can make a great difference and good deeds always have good repercussions as well. Being truly good even in the face of all odds and difficulties is a reward in itself. Bacon also highlights the natural inclination of some people towards malignity who are referred to as misanthropists and such people must be watched out against by those who believe in the value of goodness and in the goodness of mankind.

The Importance of Discretion and Self-sufficiency :

In his essay, Bacon measures the virtue of being good in a practical way as he opines that there is always the possibility of committing errors in the practice of goodness and charity. There is thus, a judicious balance that has to be met in the role of being good and charitable. When Bacon says, "Neither give thou **Aesop's cock** a gem, who would be better pleased and happy if he had had a barley corn", he means to say that one must give freely but also apply correct judgement or be discreet in giving wisely i.e., giving that which one deserves or requires and not that which one fancies.

Bacon provides the example of God who taught the true lesson that God sent rain and sunshine to all on earth equally, to both the just and the unjust. But He did not shower wealth, honour or virtues equally on all men. There are common benefits which are shared with all but privileges or special benefits must be shared or given through the exercise of correct "choice".

If divinity makes self-concern or self-love a natural "pattern" in good people, then the love of neighbours makes a complete "portraiture." Bacon warns that while making this portraiture or acting in the love of our neighbours, we must not leave our own natural patterns or needs and concerns unattended. It is important to be self-sufficient and not to spend one's entire efforts or resources. If one is not careful to do so, it is nailing one's own feet or in other words an indirect invitation to endless trouble.

Text Box:

Aesop's Cock: It refers to a fable by Aesop titled "The Cock and the Jewel" which portrays a cock who comes across a jewel while searching for food but remains indifferent as it appears of no use for a hungry bird.

1.6 STYLE AND LANGUAGE

The essay centers its discussion on goodness, the errors of goodness, the right measure of being good, dangers of malignity and the reflections of a good person. Bacon's essays as also discussed by Mary Augusta Scott in the introduction to *The Essays of Francis Bacon*, she writes thus, "[i]n the *Essayes or Counsells, Civill and Morall*, the method is ever to reduce reflection to its lowest terms, to try discover the fundamental principle of conduct that influence the actions of men." The volume contains a total of fifty-eight essays of which the present essay is the thirteenth in the table of contents. The essays of *Counsel, Civil and Moral* contain interesting areas of discussion as the titles suggests such as: "Of Truth", "Of Death", "Of Unity", "Of Unity in Religion", "Of Revenge", "Of Adversity", "Of Parents and Children", "Of Marriage and Simple Life", "Of Envy", "Of Love", "Of Great Peace", "Of Boldness", "Of Nobility", "Of Superstitions", "Of Travel", "Of Wisdom For Man's Self", "Of Friendship", "Of Suspicion", "Of Youth and Age", "Of Beauty", "Of Anger" among others.

The essay titled "Of Goodness and Goodness of Nature" is a reflection of Bacon's moral philosophy which he presents in a clear and crisp style of writing. The text of the essay that we read is an English translation from the Latin version in which it had been written. The Latin translation was first published in the year 1838. These essays are somewhat reminiscent of the moralistic or reflective essays written by Montaigne or the Plutarch. Bacon was himself a voracious reader of the classical masters who had inspired his own style of writing. You would be interested to know that Bacon had a habit of jotting down proverbs and sayings. Moreover, we will find plenty of allusions to historical, mythological or even religious ….in his essays. For an instance, in the present essay itself, Bacon alludes to the Bible, drawing from Italian quotations, citing from medieval references.

You may also note the old archaic use of the English language in the usage of words such as "he spake", "doth", "taketh", "teacheth", "sendeth", "maketh", "all thou hast" etc. Some of his words almost read like sayings such as: "[s]eek the goodness of other men, but be not in bondage to their faces or fancies; for that is but facility or softness; which taketh an honest mind prisoner" or "[c]ommon benefits are to be communicated with all; but peculiar benefits with chance." Although Bacon uses a free conversational style in the essay, yet he maintains the tone of a preacher throughout the text. His essays

make an easy reading and bear moral truisms that have a universal relevance in developing a sense of morality in individuals.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q9. What is the effect of good deeds?
Q10. Name a few of the essays in the volume *Counsel, Civil and Moral*.
Q11. Mention some of the archaic use of English words in the essay.

1.7 LET US SUM UP

After having gone through this unit, you will be able to discuss the life and works of the essayist Francis Bacon, who is considered one of the pioneers of essay writing as a literary form. A thorough reading of the essay "Of Goodness and Goodness of Nature" will enable you to appreciate the importance of virtues of goodness and charity which form the central themes of the essay. Further, the provided explanation of the text, the major themes together with the style and language employed by the essayist will give you a complete idea of the essay. You are also recommended to read more such essays by Bacon which are little treatises on life and living itself.

1.8 FURTHER READING

Scott, Mary Augusta. *The Essays of Francis Bacon*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908.

1.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Q1: Francis Bacon had first received the opportunity of studying at the Trinity College, Cambridge at the tender age of twelve. He went on to study at the University of Poitiers and entered the Honourable Society of Gray's Inn in 1576 to pursue law.

Answer to Q2: The 'Baconian method' encourages experimentation, systematic analysis and physical observation.

Answer to Q3: Among his important works of literary merit are his *Essays* and some of his other works includes: *On the Wisdom of the Ancients*, based on ancient mythology, *The Advancement and Proficience of Learning Divine and Human*, *Novum Organum Scientarium*, *The History of Henry VII*, *Essays or, Counsels Civil and Moral*, *The New Atlantis* and *Apothegms*.

Answer to Q4: The great thinkers of the Renaissance period such as Voltaire and Diderot considered Bacon as the 'Father of Modern Science'.

Answer to Q 5: Philanthropy is the inner goodness of the human heart and according to Bacon even the word 'humanity' cannot fully define the term. He considers of all virtues and dignities of the mind, philanthropy as the greatest of all virtues.

Answer to Q6: Nicholas Machiavelli had the courage to write that Christianity which upheld its tenets on goodness and propriety of conduct, was itself guilty of having sacrificed too many good men in the name of religion, while turning a blind eye to those who were cruel and unjust. This was in itself an error that was committed in the pursuit of ideal goodness.

Answer to Q7: In order to avoid errors of goodness, it is advisable to have a clear knowledge of errors of goodness.

Answer to Q8: If a man is compassionate towards the pain or sorrow of fellow men, it shows how his heart is like a "noble tree" which does not fear being wounded in providing solace and comfort and solace to those in need.

Answer to Q 9: A good deed, however, small can make a great difference and almost always good deeds have good repercussions as well. Being truly good even in the face of all odds and difficulties is a reward in itself.

Answer to Q 10: The essays of *Counsel, Civil and Moral* contain interesting areas of discussion as the titles suggests such as: "Of Truth", "Of Death", "Of Unity", "Of Unity in Religion", "Of Revenge", "Of Adversity", "Of Parents and Children", "Of Marriage and Simple Life", "Of Envy", "Of Love", "Of Great Peace"

Answer to Q11: The old archaic use of the English language in the usage of words such as "he spake", "doth", "taketh", "teacheth", "sendeth", "maketh", "all thou hast" etc. are found in the essay.

1.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q1. Discuss the life and works of the essayist Francis Bacon.

Q2. Explain the content of the essay "Of Goodness and Goodness of Nature" in your own words.

Q3. Discuss some of the major themes in Bacon's essay.

Q4. Analyse the style and language in the essay "Of Goodness and Goodness of Nature"

Q5. Explain with reference to context:

a) "Goodness answers to the theological virtue charity, and admits no excess, but error."

b) "Common benefits are to be communicated with all; but peculiar benefits with choice."

c) "Such disposition are the very errors of human nature; and yet they are the fittest timber to make great politics of."

d) "The parts and signs of goodness are many."

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UNIT 2: JOSEPH ADDISON: "SIR ROGER AT HOME" I

UNIT STRUCTURE

2.1 Learning Objectives
2.2 Introduction
2.3 The Form of the Essay
2.4 Joseph Addison: The Essayist
    2.4.1 His Life and Works
2.5 Reading "Sir Roger at Home"
    2.5.1 Explanation of the Text
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:

- describe the life and writings of the famous essayist, Joseph Addison
- define the form and significance of the periodical essay as reflected in the essay "Sir Roger at Home"
- gain an interest towards exploring the text of the essay

2.2 INTRODUCTION

This unit aims to acquaint you with the essay titled "Sir Roger at Home" penned down by one of the popular essayists of the eighteenth century Sir Joseph Addison. As an essayist, Addison's essays were guided towards the society of his time. Although, classical literature was his initial love, yet his literary career was rooted to the depiction of Englishness and the English society. The most impressive quality of Addison as an essayist is his use of mild humour as reflected through his essays and what is distinct in the use of his wit or humour is that it is not acerbic or critically mean and is not used to slight others in anyway. You will certainly like reading his literary essays which are very informative and at times didactic or instructional in nature.

2.3 THE FORM OF THE ESSAY

Before reading this essay you must be familiarised with the form of the 'periodical essay' which was one of the most popular literary forms published in the periodic magazines from time to time in the seventeenth century. Towards the end of the seventeenth century, it was clear that the essay was becoming an increasingly popular form of diversion. It

was Daniel Defoe the popular novelist, who also wrote journalistic essays and pamphlets that significantly influenced the growth and development of the English essay. However, it was with Joseph Addison and Richard Steele that the essay in England had truly arrived.

Their periodical essays ranged on subjects starting from as the title suggests, the "Tombs in Westminster Abbey" to "Ladies' Head-dress", from the "Cries of London" to "Recollections of Childhood", which appeared in *The Tatler* (1709-11) and in *The Spectator* (1712). Both, Addison and Steele enjoyed a creative fulfilment through their co-writing as well as co-editing for *The Tatler* and *The Spectator* which also reflects the social history and literary tastes of the period. Richard Steele equally contributed to *The Englishman*, *The Guardian*, *The Lover* (which contained a total of his 40 essays), *The Reader*, *Town-Talk*, *The Plebeian* and a biweekly periodical *The Theatre*. A major chunk of the contents of *The Tatler* i.e. 192 of a total of 271 issues was entirely written by Steele, while Addison had written 42 and they had together co-written 36 issues. *The Tatler* had first appeared in 1709 and was a tri-weekly periodical which contained crisp writings on informative ideas, entertainment, poetry, politics, changing fashions and tastes and a range of subjects circulating from the popular coffeehouses of the time.

You will be interested to know that during the early eighteenth century, coffee-houses became a hub for intellectual meetings and a place that gave rise to a 'coffee house culture' where periodical magazines were circulated, which provided news, information and gossip in a good measure. Life in London during the seventeenth century was stirred by a sense of political and intellectual curiosity and the coffeehouses were abuzz with enlivening discussions, serious debates and in general the sharing of useful information of the day. The coffeehouse was thus, a place that was frequented not only by writers, politicians or leading thinkers but also by the general public. And to be in the knowledge of current affairs and a variety of other subjects, apart from one's interests was the trend of the intellectual climate.

The Tatler stopped circulating probably because it was difficult for Whigs to fare successfully in a political scenario in which the Tories had come to power in 1710. This could also be one of the reasons for him having officially lost the post of Gazetter writer. It was after two months of this sudden halt in publication that both Steele and Addison brought out *The Spectator*, followed by *The Guardian* (1713) and *Englishman* (1713-1714). Thus, it was a joint effort of the two essayists Steele and Addison who developed the form of the periodical essay. Let us now, briefly discuss the life and works of Joseph Addison.

2.4 JOSEPH ADDISON: THE ESSAYIST

In the following subsections we shall first discuss the life and literary contribution of Joseph Addison to the genre of non-fictional prose before moving onto the discussions of the text of the essay.

2.4.1 His Life and Works

Joseph Addison was born in Wiltshire, England to the Reverend Lancelot Addison who later held the position of Archdeacon of Coventry and Dean of Lichfield. He was educated at Queen's College, Oxford and being a meritorious scholar of Latin was a fellow at Magdelen College, bearing a great deal of knowledge of the Classics. He served as a Commissioner of Excise in 1705 and was also actively involved in politics, being a Member of Parliament from 1709 until his last and served as Chief Secretary to Lord Wharton in 1709.

Although the Whig government had collapsed in 1710, he returned to London after a brief year spent in Ireland and became a member of the Kit-Cat Club and met his close friends, Jonathan Swift and Richard Steele.Thus began the literary association of Addison and Steele in founding *The Tatler* and *The Spectator* (as already described above) which made them two of the most leading journalists of their time. Though the popular character of Roger de Coverley was sketched by Steele, Addison had developed the humorous and satirical essays based on the sketch better known as the de Coverley papers to full length and with remarkable literary skills.

Addison, however, regained power with his appointment as the chief secretary for Ireland as soon as the power returned in the hands of the Whigs. He also served as a lord commissioner for trade. Regarding his conjugal life, you must note that the countess of Warwick was his wife. Often rumoured to have led an unhappy marriage, Addison retired from service in 1718.He was laid to rest the following year in the Westminster Abbey.

Basically a classical scholar, Joseph Addison has to his credit many works. Some of his major works include "The Campaign" (1704) a poem in heroic couplets based on the Battle of Blenheim, a tragic play written in blank verse titled *Cato* (containing a prologue penned by Alexander Pope), a prose comedy *The Drummer* (1715), several hymns and political tracts. When the Whigs returned to power in 1715 he went on to hold the position of Lord Commissioner of Trade in 1716 and also started the political newspaper *The Freeholder* (1715-16).

Steele and Addison wrote the essays "The Aim of the Spectator", "The Scope of Satire" to outline the aim of *The Spectator*. They aimed at bringing about a reform in the society on social life of England and also refine the tastes of the English people. In fact, its aim was to "to enliven morality with wit, and to temper wit with morality". *The Spectator* ran a total of 555 issues till 1712 and to add to it, Addison had revived 80 more issues in 1714. Alexander Pope, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu among others had contributed to the magazine and it contained topics of socio-cultural and moralistic relevance presented in a satirical, reforming manner and yet making them a pleasant and interesting reading.

Some of the essays by Addison are "Sir Roger at Church", "On Ghosts and Apparitions", "The Spectator's Account of Himself", "Character of Will Wimble", "On Witchcraft—Story of Moll White", etc.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: How would you describe Sir Joseph Addison as an essayist?
Q 2: Addison's association with Richard Steele led to the production of two famous periodicals. What are the titles?
Q 3: What is the significance of coffee-houses in the eighteenth century?
Q 4: Mention the name of a few essays written by Addison.

2.5 READING "SIR ROGER AT HOME"

The following subsections will help you to discuss the essay in terms of its different important aspects and issues.

2.5.1 Explanation of the Text

'Sir Roger' is the outcome of Addison's imaginative zeal. In fact, "the creation of Sir Roger is Addison's masterpiece. The man is not only an excellent figure of comedy with his **eccentricities**, his peculiar expressions, his attitudes, his mental leaps, but he is foremost among the characters who are not only loved but respected even while they are loved at." (Legouis)Addison's comic bent of mind is fully exposed through his portraiture of a character as Sir Roger. The present unit deals with the essay "Sir Roger at Home" and as the title implies, this essay is a reflection of Addison's own choice of a free society based on the cultivation of effective qualities. Addison coloured the character of Sir Roger as a Tory; the Tories are usually conservative in their approach towards political reforms. But this character by Addison is a lovable person who is at times funnier in his outlook. Himself a Whig, Addison brilliantly represented Sir Roger as a Tory who loves to cling to the traditional ways of life.

Let us discuss the essay in details. By your reading of the first line of the text of the essay, you must have noticed that Sir Roger is Mr. Spectator's friend; you must note that Mr. Spectator is a fictional character whom Addison used as a medium to outline his own philosophies.

Sir Roger had invited his friend and thus the Spectator joined with him for a month-long programme at Roger's country-house. In this essay the Spectator was overwhelmed by his friend's kind hospitality. He was taken care of very well and his ideals were also respected. For example, the Spectator reflected how he was given freedom in matters as "go to bed when I please" or "dine at his own table", etc. Sir Roger was well acquainted with his friend's humour and shyness, so he paid more attention to comfort his guest in

those matters. As a result, the Spectator, according to his wish, led his life there in the country house of his friend, Sir Roger.

The Spectator was impressed by his good-natured host, Sir Roger, for his polite behaviour and his understanding nature. The Spectator's privacy was well maintained during his stay at Sir Roger's home. Addison did justice to the humour-filled nature of Sir Roger in presenting his attitude towards his guest. As mentioned in the essay, the Spectator was not very favourable in terms of meeting with strangers. Hence, the host made every effort so as to comfort his guest by keeping the visitors away from him. But ironically, the Spectator found out strangers peeping at him over the hedges to take notice of him.

In the next section of the essay, the Spectator pointed out how the **ambience** of Sir Roger's household made a positive impact upon him. He was impressed by Roger's family who largely comprised servants. However, those servants were treated by Mr. Roger as his own people and so the goodness of their master could be found in them. What appeared interesting to the Spectator was that each of those servants was of sober nature and their loyalty and long companionship with their master could be predicted from their advanced ages. Indeed, Mr Roger's personality and goodness was reflected in his family. The servants were so much attached to their master that "[y]ou would take his valet de chambre for his brother; his butler is grey-headed; his groom is one of the gravest men that I have ever seen; and his coachman has the looks of a privy-councillor". The Spectator also observed Roger's kind-hearted nature on seeing the love and care given to his old house dog, which was of great service in the past. Sir Roger's family was faithful towards him; they were very much concerned about Roger's health and took great care of him. In fact, at a slightest sign of Mr Roger's ill health or old age, they expressed distress. As a whole, the master and his servants were bounded by a common thread of faith, loyalty, respect and humility.

Mr. Spectator was left to the care of Roger's butler, who like his other 'fellow-servants', was very particular with the task of pleasing his guest. Roger must have discussed the arrival of Mr. Spectator to them. However, when Mr. Roger was not 'at home', his chaplain accompanied Mr. Spectator. The Spectator was full of praises for the chaplain who has been serving his master since thirty years. His personality is quite impressive for it maintained a balance of reason and scholarship. The chaplain is loved by Mr. Roger who in turn obeyed his master. Thus, the chaplain "lives in the family rather as a relation than a dependant."

Roger's humourous personality is also focussed in the essay which is very unique in the sense that it comprises good qualities as well as his imperfections. Keeping in mind this character trait of Roger, you must note that in the essay he is shown to be lacking in the knowledge of Latin and Greek. Meanwhile, Mr. Spectator expressed his liking for the chaplain who was a sensible man. To point out the humourous side of Sir Roger, it is worth

mentioning how he plainly expressed his desire of finding "out a clergyman rather of plain sense than much learning, of a good aspect, a clear voice, a sociable temper, and, if possible, a man that understood a little of backgammon." All these qualities were, however, present in the chaplain whom both Sir Roger and Mr. Spectator admired. Roger further appreciated the chaplain's honesty and noticed the lack of any demand or favour on his side. The chaplain has been provided with many good sermons when he first came to live with Roger; his main aim was to make the chaplain pronounce those verses all Sundays. Roger was pleased to see that the chaplain's pronouncements were so spontaneous that it seemed like he had memorised the sermons.

Just at that time when the two friends were **eulogizing** the chaplain, he entered the room. On being asked about the programme for the next day, he informed them of the preachers who were to visit that day. He also showed them the list of preachers for the whole year who were meant to come. The spectator found the list exciting enough because it comprised preachers who were not only popular figures but many of them also were attributed with "published discourses of practical divinity". Praising his friend's favourable attitude towards the chaplain, Mr. Spectator was impressed by the 'gracefulness' of the chaplain's delivery of sermons. At once, he felt that his visit to Roger's home was enlightening in the company of the chaplain who **mesmerised** him with his strong, powerful delivery of sermons because "a sermon repeated after this manner, is like the composition of a poet in the mouth of a graceful actor".

To conclude, Addison left a mark of social concern by insisting on the need of other clergymen like the chaplain, who rather than creating new sermons, should emphasise on the improvement of their 'elocution'. Addison pointed out that there is no dearth of sermons that have been penned down in the past by great preachers. For him, the need of the society of that time was the chance to listen to the oratory power of the clergymen and thereby enrich themselves. So he laid importance to the cultivation of such skills by the clergymen who were mostly engrossed in the creation of their own sermons. Through this act of the clergymen, the society would be much more benefitted and intelligence would embrace the society in its fold.

LET US KNOW

Glossary:

Sir Roger de Coverley: An imaginary character who lives in Coverley, an imaginary place.

Thither: To that place.

Hedge: A fence formed by a row of closely planted shrubs or bushes.

Staid: Dignified.

Valet de chamber: A manservant who acts as a personal attendant to his master.

Butler: Usually a man-servant, a butler is the head servant in a household who is usually in charge of food service and wine, the deportment of the other servants, etc.

Privy-councillor: A member of the Privy Council which is a council of the British sovereign.

Infirmity: The state of being weak in health or body

Prudent: Careful and sensible.

Venerable: Impressive by reason of age.

Chaplain: A member of the clergy who conducts religious services for an institution.

Backgammon: A board game for two players; pieces move according to throws of the dice.

Endowments: A natural ability or quality.

Parsonage: An official residence provided by a church for its parson, vicar or rector.

Parish: A local church community.

Annuity: Income from capital investment paid in a series of regular payments.

Soliciting: Request urgently or persistently.

Acquiesce: To agree or express agreement.

Pulpit: A platform raised above the surrounding level to give prominence to the person on it.

Bishop: A senior member of the Christian clergy having spiritual and administrative authority.

Discourses: Verbal expression in speech.

Elocution: An expert manner of speaking involving control of voice and gesture.

Edifying: Enlightening or uplifting so as to encourage intellectual or moral improvement.

Eccentricities: Strange and unconventional behaviour.

Ambience: The surrounding or the environment.

Eulogizing: Praise formally.

Mesmerised: Here, it means to maintain the complete attention of the Spectator

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 5: What was the Spectator's impression upon the chaplain?
Q 6: Give in brief the Spectator's reflection of Sir Roger's household.
Q 7: What is Addison's aim in writing the essay "Sir Roger at Home"?

2.6 LET US SUM UP

After having gone through the unit, you will certainly draw a familiarity with the life and works of the popular essayist Joseph Addison. The text of the essay supplemented with the detailed explanation or summary and the provided glossary will help you to easily grasp and appreciate Addison as an essayist. While you will be able to list some of the

important themes pertaining to the essay, you will also find an easy reference to the context of the intellectual climate and the coffee-house culture during the seventeenth century. The unit will enable the learner to discuss and describe the style and language together with the critical reception of Addison's essays. Thus, the unit highlights the contributions of Addison as an essayist to the periodical essay and his lively and refined style of writing.

2.7 FURTHER READING

1) Legouis, Emile.(1934). *A Short History of English Literature*. Trans. By V. F. Boyson and J. Coulson. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
2) Stapleton, Michael. (1983). *The Cambridge Guide to English Literature*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
3) Addison, Joseph. "Sir Roger at Home." (1711). in *Essays from Addison* by Fowler, J. H. (ed.).
4) Long, William. J. (2007 rpt.). *English Literature: Its History and Significance for the Life of English Speaking World*. Delhi: A.I.T.B.S Publishers.

2.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: As an essayist, Addison's essays were guided towards the society of his time. Although, classical literature was his initial love, yet his literary career was rooted to the depiction of Englishness and the English society. The most impressive quality of Addison as an essayist is his use of mild humour as reflected through his essays and what is distinct in the use of his wit or humour is that it is not acerbic or critically mean and is not used to slight others in anyway.

Ans to Q No 2: *The Tatler* and *The Spectator.*

Ans to Q No 3: Coffee-houses during the eighteenth century became a hub for intellectual meetings and a place that gave rise to a 'coffee house culture' where periodical magazines were circulated, which provided news, information and gossip in a good measure. It was frequented not only by writers, politicians or leading thinkers but also by the general public. And to be in the knowledge of current affairs and a variety of other subjects, apart from one's interests was the trend of the intellectual climate.

Ans to Q No 4:"Sir Roger at Church", "On Ghosts and Apparitions", "Sir Roger at Home", "The Spectator's Account of Himself", "Character of Will Wimble", "On Witchcraft—Story of Moll White", etc.

Ans to Q No 5: Mr. Spectator was impressed by the 'gracefulness' of the chaplain's delivery of sermons. At once, he felt that his visit to Roger's home was enlightening in the company of the chaplain who mesmerised him with his strong, powerful delivery of

sermons because "a sermon repeated after this manner, is like the composition of a poet in the mouth of a graceful actor".

Ans to Q No 6: The Spectator was impressed by his good-natured host, Sir Roger, for his polite behaviour and his understanding nature. He was also impressed by Roger's family which largely comprised servants. The Spectator's privacy was well maintained during his stay at Sir Roger's home. Indeed, Mr Roger's personality and his goodness were reflected in his family. Mr. Spectator expressed his liking for the chaplain who was a sensible man. To conclude, his experience at Roger's home was quite enlivening.

Ans to Q No 7: Through this essay, Addison tried to divert his readers' attention towards the need of other clergymen like the chaplain, who rather than creating new sermons, should emphasise on the improvement of their 'elocution' since the need of the society of that time was the chance to listen to the oratory power of the clergymen and thereby enrich themselves.

2.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q 1. How would you justify Joseph Addison's essays as a critique of the manners of his age?
Q 2. Write a note on Addison as a satirist with particular reference to his essay "Sir Roger at Home"
Q 3. Write a note on the form and significance of essay as a literary form
Q 4. Discuss the life and works of the essayist, Joseph Addison.

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UNIT 3: JOSEPH ADDISON: “SIR ROGER AT HOME”II

UNIT STRUCTURE

3.1 Learning Objectives
3.2 Introduction
3.3 Major Themes
3.4 Style and Language
3.5 Critical Reception
3.6 Let us Sum up
3.7 Further Reading
3.8 Answers to Check Your Progress
3.9 Model Questions

3.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- list the important themes from the text of the essay
- appreciate the coffee-house culture developed during the period
- describe Addison’s choice of language as well as his style of writing
- discuss the critical reception of Joseph Addison
- appreciate the text of the essay

3.2 INTRODUCTION

The present unit is a continuation of the previous unit and here we shall discuss the thematic aspects together with the style and language as well as the critical reception of Addison’s essay titled “Sir Roger at Home”.

3.3 MAJOR THEMES

The important themes of the essay can be summed up under the following headings.

“Sir Roger at Home” as a Periodical Essay: As a periodical essay, “Sir Roger at Home” stands among one of Addison’s contribution in the gamut of English prose. As the name suggests, the periodical essays were meant to appear in magazines or journals at regular intervals. Addison through this essay emphasises on his social aim of conversion in matters relating to the practices of clergymen and its relation to the society. Through this essay, he laid importance to the vocal strength that a clergyman should cultivate in order to allow the society avail and witness such powerful sermons. This, Addison did so as to reform the society. With the freedom of the press during the late seventeenth century, journalism came in the forefront and these periodical essays were used as a weapon to counter the political rivalries that basically formed the issues of that time. To be particular, you must note that the emergence of the Whigs and the Tories on the political front led to

the rise of a literature that encompassed political pamphlets to a large extent. With the help of periodical essays, however, both Addison and Steele were able to divert from this kind of political writings and rather concentrated on entertainment of the public while also giving importance on its reformation.

Reformation of the Society: Both the editors of The Spectator, Addison and Steele emphasised on their aim of reforming the society. In this essay which is a solo contribution of Addison, he did the same. The writer noted that during his time there emerged a mechanical and political lifestyle that went with the situation of those days. He regretted that the clergymen busied themselves in writing sermons and thus that the pleasure the public used to witness in terms of listening sermons was lost. This is because the manner of public speaking was paid less attention. Addison noted this as a problem because it was not doing any good to the society. Rather than creating sermons, if the clergymen dedicated their valuable time in the art of public speaking, the society would be much more benefitted. Hence, in this essay, mixing humour and wit, Addison tried to relate his readers to such an issue and thus reform the society for its betterment.

Addison's Didactic Disposition: While laying down the aims of *The Spectator*, Addison has clarified that he intended to provide a learning experience to the masses through his essays that were designed to both "instruct" as well as "entertain" them. As such in this essay under discussion, we have come across a didactic tone that has been subtly juxtaposed with his humour. The best example of such a disposition can be cited from the text:

> *I could heartily wish that more of our country clergy would follow this example; and, instead of wasting their spirits in laborious compositions of their own, would endeavour after a handsome elocution, and all those other talents that are proper to enforce what has been penned by greater masters. This would not only be more easy to themselves, but more edifying to the people.*

Through this essay, Addison directs the clergymen of his time, who were busier in creating sermons themselves, to spend more time in preparing themselves for enriching the masses. For Addison, the society would be benefitted more if the clergymen concentrated on their presentation rather than creation of sermons. As far as sermons are concerned, there was no dearth of compositions created by great masters in the past.

The Essay as a Mirror of its Age : Though England during the eighteenth century was engulfed with political parties and their respective tensions, Addison while writing The *de Coverley Papers* obliged to stay away from it. Hence, his papers were mostly focussed on the social mores and manners of the age. Not only London and its urban advancements found entry into his papers, but also the countryside occupied the writer. "Sir Roger at

Home" is one of the essays in which Addison focussed on the country life. In this essay he talked about open fields, manners followed in the countryside as well as the domestic life of country people. In doing so, Addison pictured the manners of the country folks that were juxtaposed with their simplicity.

Addison's Excellent Characterisation: You must consider the fact that the creation of Sir Roger de Coverley was initiated by Sir Richard Steele but this character found its lively representation in the hands of Addison. With his detailed and minute observation, Addison has glorified this character, be it in the representation of his physical traits or his personality. While reading the essay, one finds the character of Sir Roger as a generous and humble man. Various examples are provided in the text for enabling the reader to grasp the intent behind the spectator analysing his host, that is, Sir Roger. Also in the characterisation of the Chaplain, Addison has put in a lot of humour for the readers to be familiarised with the essayist's admiration for the chaplain. As the spectator notes the chaplain is a very good human being whose personality is marked by cordiality. In fact, the spectator was quite impressed by the chaplain whose oratory skill was amazing.

3.4 STYLE AND LANGUAGE

> *The most enduring of Addison's works are his famous essays...To an age of fundamental coarseness and artificiality, he came with a wholesome message of refinement and simplicity*.-"Long.

The essays of Addison were both informative and instructional in content and he was much bent towards the use of social satire in order to usher in a flurry of social reform along with his friend and collaborator Richard Steele. Both of them were more focussed on socio-critical aspects rather than the political and they subtly infused their writings with 'morality' through the use of mild wit and good humour, rather than drilling in a sense of compulsive morality in their readers. In general, the themes of the essays were based on the literary tastes, current affairs, contemporary social practices, manners and fashions of the day which were presented in an interesting and somewhat a crisp journalistic style. The style of his presentation had a relative ease to which even a lay reader could easily relate to and thus, it did not require a critical or literary expertise for one to comprehend the essays.

Another remarkable factor of the essays is his skill at 'characterisation' as also seen in the present text, Thus, Addison in his development of the very nuances of the imaginary characters almost brought those creations to life. He had a moderate style of writing in which he established a familiarity with the reader like a friend but also maintained a balanced refinement in his descriptions playing the role of both an essayist and the social reformer. He can be considered one of the significant contributors to the modern prose style who through his use of elegant prose and social satire made a difference to the literary genre of essay writing. His use of humorous satire was not hurtful in any way and intended to

examine and analyse or even throw light on significant aspects rather than 'attack' them with sarcasm. In this way, he aimed to make a pleasant difference to the general reception of the readers who had the potential to realise the follies and vices prevalent in society of that time which makes his humour more corrective in nature.

From your reading of the text of the essay, you will certainly find a relative ease in grasping and comprehending the conversational language employed by Joseph Addison. The use of the first person 'I' brings in a sense of familiarity in narration where the reader almost becomes the confidante (someone with whom one shares secrets) and is almost immediately taken into confidence. Dr. Johnson in his consideration of Addison's prose style found a sense of elegance even in his discussion of informal subjects, with crisp language and concise descriptions and said "[w]hoever wishes to attain an English style, familiar but not coarse, and elegant...must give his days and nights to the volumes of Addison."

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1. Write a note on Addison's characterisation.
Q 2. Briefly describe "Sir Roger at Home" as a periodical essay.
Q 3. Comment on the language employed in the essay.
Q 4. The essays of Addison were both informative and instructional in content. Discuss.

3.5 CRITICAL RECEPTION

In his critical reception, K. Deighton remarked on both the use of humour and irony in the works of Joseph Addison which highlighted "[p]opular superstitions, personal whims, caprices, idiosyncrasies, social manners, pursuits, fashions" which were to be "examined, handled, caressed, rebuked, sentenced" or in other words to be brought under the scanner, to be reviewed and reconsidered. Deighton had rightly opined on the refined and cheerful quality of Addison's literary style of presentation which was also appreciated by Dr. Johnson who in his analysis of Addison's works considered his refined literary abilities. Addison complemented the literary credibility of his collaborator Steele and vice versa, as is also reflected in the considerable efforts in the periodical essays of quality which is why critics down the ages discuss both the essayists together in the same breath.

J. B. Macaulay opined that, "it was due, above all to the greatest satirist who alone knew out how to use ridicule without abusing it; who without inflicting a wound effected a great social reform and who reconciled wit and virtue." This is also reflected in Addison's significant contribution to the very form of periodical essay in the seventeenth century 'periodicals' which were published at regular intervals and specifically aimed at social reform. His style had a characteristic sense of restraint and control with the effective

combination of stylistic humour, wit and irony. It lent an interesting appeal to Addison's Coverley essays which were very well received by the readers of the time, particularly the creation and characterisation of the figures of Sir Roger de Coverley or even Will Wimble in these essays. W.M. Thackeray appreciated his efforts of characterisation in these essays which were good enough to form a novel saying: "What would be Sir Roger without his follies and his charming little brain-cracks? ...If he were wiser than he is, of what worth was he to us? We love him for his vanities as much as for his virtues."

Addison through his works introduced a rapport with the readers and what could be considered "the beginning of that general intimacy of the writer with the reader." Dr Johnson found in Addison a "describer of life and manners" who through his delightful portrayal of the seventeenth century society with an unwavering purpose of reform, also brought about an intellectual awakening in the contemporary society. J.H Fowler in his work *Essays from Addison* considered Addison as a worthy essayist saying: "It is good to read Addison first because he is full of charm; because we soon come to feel an affection for this silent, keen and kindly spectator of men; because he brings to us vividly the vanished life of the early eighteenth century; because he creates in Sir Roger de Coverley one of the most delightful characters in the whole range of English literature."

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 5. What was J.B. Macaulay's opinion about Addison's essays?
Q 6. What kind of a style did Addison follow in writing the essay?
Q 7. Why was Addison's humour praised by the critics?

3.6 LET US SUM UP

After having gone through the unit, you will certainly be able to list some of the important themes pertaining to the essay, you will also find an easy reference to the context of the intellectual climate and the coffee-house culture during the seventeenth century. The unit will enable the learner to discuss and describe the style and language together with the critical reception of Addison's essays. Thus, the unit highlights the contributions of Addison as an essayist to the periodical essay and his lively and refined style of writing.

3.7 FURTHER READING

1) Legouis, Emile.(1934)..*A Short History of English Literature*. Trans. By V. F. Boyson and J. Coulson. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
2) Stapleton, Michael. (1983). *The Cambridge Guide to English Literature*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
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4) Long, William. J. (2007 rpt.). *English Literature: Its History and Significance for the Life of English Speaking World*. Delhi: A.I.T.B.S Publishers.

3.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: The character of Sir Roger found its lively representation in the hands of Addison. With his detailed and minute observation, Addison has glorified this character, be it in the representation of his physical traits or his personality. Also in the characterisation of the Chaplain, Addison has put in a lot of humour for the readers to be familiarised with the essayist's admiration for the chaplain. As the spectator noted the chaplain is a very good human being whose personality is marked by cordiality.

Ans to Q No 2: As a periodical essay, Addison through this particular essay emphasises on his social aim of conversion in matters relating to the practices of clergymen and its relation to the society.

Ans to Q No 3: Conversational language has been employed by Joseph Addison. The use of the first person 'I' brings in a sense of familiarity in narration where the reader almost becomes the confidante (someone with whom one shares secrets) and is almost immediately taken into confidence.

Ans to Q No 4: Addison was much bent towards the use of social satire in order to usher in a flurry of social reform along with his friend and collaborator Richard Steele. Both of them were more focussed on socio-critical aspects rather than the political and they subtly infused their writings with 'morality' through the use of mild wit and good humour, rather than drilling in a sense of compulsive morality in their readers.

Ans to Q No 5: J. B. Macaulay opined that, "it was due, above all to the greatest satirist who alone knew out how to use ridicule without abusing it; who without inflicting a wound affected a great social reform and who reconciled wit and virtue."

Ans to Q No 6: His style had a characteristic sense of restraint and control with the effective combination of stylistic humour, wit and irony.

Ans to Q No 7: Addison's humour praised by the critics because his essays highlighted "[p]opular superstitions, personal whims, caprices, idiosyncrasies, social manners, pursuits, fashions" which were to be "examined, handled, caressed, rebuked, sentenced" or in other words to be brought under the scanner, to be reviewed and reconsidered.

3.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q 1. List down some of the important themes of the essay "Sir Roger at Home" and explain in your own words.

Q 2. Examine the role of *The Spectator* in representing the picture of eighteenth century English society.

Q 3. Give an account of the importance of the essay “Sir Roger at Home” by Joseph Addison.

Q 4. Comment on the language and style of Joseph Addison with particular reference to “Sir Roger at Home”.

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UNIT 4: CHARLES LAMB: "DREAM CHILDREN" I

UNIT STRUCTURE

4.1 Learning Objectives
4.2 Introduction
4.3 Charles Lamb: The Essayist
    4.3.1 His Life and Works
4.4 Reading "Dream Children"
    4.4.1 Explanation the Text
4.5 Let us Sum up
4.6 Further Reading
4.7 Answers to Check Your Progress
4.8 Model Questions

4.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- discuss the life and works of the English essayist Charles Lamb
- explain the content of the essay "Dream Children"
- discover how memory and imagination are interestingly played with

4.2 INTRODUCTION

This unit deals with Charles Lamb's essay "Dream Children" which dwells on the nostalgic reflections of life and wide-ranging experience through an engaging and interesting play of both memory (whole or fragmented) and figments of imagination. Through the coloured lenses of imagination, Lamb as a writer **interweaves past memories and moments into his narration** and takes the liberty of imagining things that would have been through his conjuring narrator. After reading the text of "Dream Children", the learner will discover **how the real and the imaginary elements weave in and out of the narration** and almost tricks any reader with the element of 'make-belief.' A significant aspect of the essay is the fertile, uninformed and unrestricted imagination of little children who can stretch their limits of imagination endlessly, the tradition of oral narratives and any other form of story-telling has always been popular with them. The style of writing which is unique to Lamb alone takes the reader as a confidante, in which the reader is invited to peek into the life and also to relate to the narrator's experiences of his childhood days and his formative years. Here, it is necessary to reveal that the narrator and his experiences of life are based on Lamb's own life and experiences which is why the essay can be considered as a reflective one (even though it is not written in the first person narrative). The learner will gain a better idea of this fact after reading the unit in details. This is why

Lamb's thought -provoking reflections on the commonality of life and experience that we all share renders his literary works with brilliance and with a wide reception through the ages.

4.3 CHARLES LAMB : THE ESSAYIST

The following subsection provides the learner with a brief idea on the life and works of the essayist, Charles Lamb. The personal life of Lamb is very essential in not only understanding the personality of the writer but also in considering how it had formed the base of his literary works. Lamb was a writer whom we can situate in the **late 18th and early 19th century**.

4.3.1 His Life And Works

Charles Lamb (1775-1834) is better remembered as an essayist of the romantic period. He was born in London as the youngest son of Elizabeth Field and John Lamb, who by profession was a clerk and their family resided in the Inner Temple of London. As a young boy, he shared a loving relation with his sister Mary who was eleven years elder to him and whom he looked after even in his later years. Besides Mary, Lamb had four siblings who passed away during infancy. Thus, it was 'Mary' with whom he shared a very close relation and who along with their siblings featured as interesting characters in his reflective works. Though, Lamb's formal education was brief and ended at the age of fifteen due to his family problems, he had managed to find a job as a clerk at South Sea House, London. Later, he joined the East India Company where he worked for twenty-three years. He had also penned both his bitter and humorous work experiences, in his reflective essays.

Several things had changed very early in his life when his sister's mental health began to deteriorate. And in what followed as a tragic event in his life, Mary in a sudden fit of rage had stabbed her mother with a knife also wounded her father. This is why she had to be sent to the Islington Asylum, Fisher House for a brief period. Lamb was just fifteen years old and was devastated at this point of his life, with the sudden tragic turn of events. This phase of his life was strenuous for him as he had to struggle for sustenance and at the same time, deal with his sister's pervasive illness and sudden fits of rage and madness. These experiences had considerably changed his life and also determined his literary development as a writer.

His preoccupation with the hard realities of his own personal life came to be well reflected in his literary works. Lamb was not the kind of person to abandon his elder sister and he even chose to devote his entire life looking after his sister which is why he remained a bachelor for life. But, here it needs to be mentioned that apart from her sudden bouts of mental illness, Mary spent a normal life with her brother and even interacted with their neighbours and friends. Both Mary and Lamb had gatherings on Wednesdays at their place in the lively company of Coleridge, Wordsworth, Southey, Hunt and Hazlitt. Further,

both of them also collaborated on their literary works which were very well-received at the time.

Lamb's eagerness in sharing his reflections on life through his personal essays in a friendly conversational manner with an easy familiarity, endeared him to his readers and made him a popular essayist of his time and established him among the contemporary writers of his time. He along with his sister had adopted an orphan child 'Emma Isola' in 1823 who later married his friend Edward Moxon in 1833. Lamb had to retire from the East India Company in the year1824 owing to his own deteriorating health. Mary frequently began to suffer her bouts of illness, they moved to Edmonton to have easy access to Mary's attendant nurse in 1833. This was a period of loneliness for Lamb who also suffered the loss of his friend Coleridge and Lamb breathed his last just a year after his demise, in 1834.

Though, Charles Lamb is better known as an essayist than an author, he had the unique gift of a writer to produce literary masterpieces that had carved out a significant place for him in the world of literature. Lamb's early literary efforts can be traced to his first 'four sonnets' which was published in Coleridge's *Poem's on Various Subjects* (1796) followed by his other famous works such as *Blank Verse*(1798) published with Charles Lloyd, *Tales of Rosamund Gray and Old Blind Margaret*(1798), *John Woodvil* (1802) a poetical drama, *Tales From Shakespeare* (1807), *The Adventures of Ulysses* (1808), *On the Tragedies of Shakespeare (1811)*,*Witches and Other Night Fears* (1821), *The Pawnbroker's Daughter* (1825) among others. The most significant writings of Lamb were the publication of two of his best received works *Essays of Elia* (1823) and his *Last Essays of Elia* (1833).

Lamb and his sister Mary had collaborated in the *Tales from Shakespeare* (1807),a work of prose based on the plays of Shakespeare which was well received by readers. The next work on which they had collaborated was *Mrs. Leichester's School* (1809) which contained stories and poems for children. Further, Lamb's excellent editing of the *Specimens of the English Dramatic Poets Who Lived about the Time of Shakespeare* (1808) had stirred a renewed interest in Shakespeare during that period. He had also published a collection of two volumes on his literary work titled *The Works of Charles Lamb* (1818) quite early in his literary career.

The learner would be interested to know that Lamb wrote under the pseudonym of 'Elia'. Some of the important essays of Lamb are: "Dream Children", "Praise of Chimney Sweepers", "The Two Races of Men", "My First Play", "Confessions of a Drunkard", "Bachelor's Complaint of the Behavior of the Married People", "Old China", "A Complaint of the Decay of Beggars in the Metropolis" to name just a few. In most of his critiques and writings, Lamb had also portrayed reflections on life in London, in particular and also pressing social concerns, in general serving the function of a social critic through his critiques and writings. Although, London the imperial capital was his home, somehow he

could never turn a blind eye to the darker underbelly of the city with its thriving issues of poverty and child labour, social inequality and injustice, underworld and crime. Lamb called for an active social involvement in first 'helping' the poor and the distressed, in order to truly 'improve' their conditions. Therefore, Lamb was a very **sensitive writer** who was engaged in not only writing his life into his works or simply in the intellectual exercise of literary criticism but also **engaged in constructive social criticism** in bringing changes in the contemporary social system.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Why did Lamb discontinue his formal education at the age of fifteen?
Q 2: What was Lamb's profession besides being a writer?
Q 3: Whom did Lamb first meet at Christ's Hospital?
Q 4: Make a list of some of the major works of Charles Lamb.
Q 5: What pseudonym did Lamb assume as a writer?
Q 6: Name some of the essays of Charles Lamb.

4.4 READING "DREAM CHILDREN"

Imagine little children sitting around a storyteller cupping their curious faces in their hands, enraptured and carried away into their own world of imagination and gaping with their mouths wide open and frequently nagging their storyteller to make it longer. This is indeed a common picture that we can all associate with little children and which takes us back to our own childhood days when mostly an elderly person, say a grandmother or a grandfather would be surrounded by little children, being keen on narrating a new tale, a fable with a moral in the tale and such long-winding stories to keep little ones engrossed. The present essay begins in a similar manner in which the narrator is surrounded by his own children eager to listen to his real stories. It is through their father's nostalgic descriptions that they imagine their long dead great grandmother, their great uncle and dear mother. But the narration also has a dramatic revelation at the end which brings in an interesting twist in our reading. The text of the essay will provide the learner with an idea on Lamb's conversational and personal form of narration.

ACTIVITY 4.1

Childhood memories are a priceless treasure which we all carry in our hearts and memories for life. At a tender age, children tend to be inquisitive or curious about the world and tend to learn how things work through trial and error. While some children are as innocent as little angels, some are also as mischievous as little imps, always being up to some naughty tricks.

Which are some of your best memories as a child and how were you as a child? How long has it been since you opened your old photo albums and travelled down memory lane? May be you could pause for a while and reach for the old pictures of yours to re-live those experiences and to travel through time into the heart of those rectangular postcard-sized photographs.

4.4.1 Explanation of the Text

The essay highlights the aspect on how children love to spend their pastime listening to stories and particularly imagine stories about their family elders when they were children like them. Children are easily absorbed into storytelling and tend to imagine or picture them simultaneously with such narration owing to the fertility of their imagination and their natural ability to conjure people whom they may have never known and things that seem unusual. Similarly, the two children Alice and John conjure the likely images of their great granddame or great uncle whom they have only heard of and never seen or met in real life. The narrator describes how his little children gather around him one fine evening to listen to the story of their great grandmother Field.

Thus, begins the real story of the old lady (the narrator's grandmother and the children's great granddame) who lived in a great house in Norfolk which was a hundred times bigger than the one in which the narrator's father had lived. In that part of the country certain tragic incidents were generally associated and believed. The narrator and his siblings had learned of these when they were little children from a ballad (i.e., a story travelled by word of mouth) known as the 'ballad of the children in the wood.' This entire 'ballad of the children' and their 'cruel uncle' together with the story of Robin Redbreasts could be seen fairly carved out in wood, upon the chimney-piece of the great hall but this was until a foolish rich person had pulled it down and constructed a marble chimney-piece in its place.

Here, we are first introduced to the narrator's girl child Alice who resembled her mother and happened to wear one of her dear mother's tender expressions. And the narrator continues the story of their great-grandmother Field. Although, the old lady was only the caretaker of the great house, it was as good as her own. She was completely entrusted with the responsibility of living and looking after the house by the real owner, a gentleman who preferred to live in a more fashionable mansion that he had purchased in an adjoining county. Therefore, she was as good as being its owner, residing in it as if it were her own residence.

Great grandmother Field was a good and a pious old woman whom everyone respected and held in high regard. She kept up the dignity of the great house with her presence while she was alive. But afterwards the old house started to fall apart and was nearly pulled down. Gradually, the décor had to be taken off and shifted to the owner's house in the county. And the narrator recalls how the old décor (perhaps antique decor) looked

completely mismatched in the owner's new mansion. This could be likened to one's carrying away the old tombs at the Abbey and placing them in lady C's gaudily decorated drawing room! At this thought the narrator's son, John passes a smile, perhaps, imagining how mismatched that would seem. And then the narrator moves to narrate how on great-grandmother Field's funeral day, almost all the poor of the county together with some of the gentry of the neighbourhood covering many miles were present at the funeral in her loving memory. The old lady had been a good, religious woman all her life and was respected by all who knew her. Thus, the old great grandmother was laid to rest who left a complete void in everyone's heart and whose presence no more filled the great mansion.

At this point the narrator stops to observe little Alice spread her hands but continues his description of great-grandmother Field who was once a tall, upright and a graceful person and in her youth regarded as the best dancer until a "cruel disease" (cancer) took a toll on her health and had her bowed down into suffering and pain. At this point of the narration, Alice shakes her right foot but desists when her father happens to notice it. He then goes on to describe how even the pain from cancer did not succeed in breaking her good spirits or leaving her weak, probably owing to her goodness and her faith in the Lord. May be it was great grandmother Field's faith which stood as her fountain or source of strength in her difficult times of suffering. She would even sleep all alone in a chamber of the great lonely house, even though she often saw spectral forms of two infants at the midnight hour. These forms happened to glide up and down the great staircase which was close to the place where she slept. Perhaps, the house was haunted but it never scared her and he remembers her saying "those innocents would do me (her) no harm." But, the narrator also recalls how frightened he would be as a young boy (while visiting his grandmother) even as his maid slept beside him. While reflecting on this the narrator feels that perhaps he was so scared and fearful as he was not 'half as good' as his grandmother Field. Yet, he confesses that he never saw the spirits of the two infants himself.

At the mention of spirits or the ghostly forms, little John tries to summon his courage by trying not to twitch his eyebrows out of fear. You may pause to notice the changing expressions of children throughout the narration. Well, this is how engrossed children become in stories and how the element of make-belief works on them. This is how stories almost come to life rendering the immediate reality to the background which is the kind of power that story-telling has. It not only stirs the imagination of children but also grown-ups. The narrator goes on to describe how good the old lady was to all her grandchildren and how they were all warmly received at the great house during their holidays.

He reminisces or recalls how he would particularly spend several hours all by himself, gazing at the old busts of the Twelve Caesars (the busts of the twelve Emperors of Rome which were decorative items) and so much so, that they would almost seem to come alive and at times he felt that he would be transformed into a marble statue instead. He would tire out, roaming about the mansion which housed vast unoccupied rooms with worn out hangings on the walls, fluttering embroidery or tapestry, carved oaken panels.

Sometimes, he would also find himself in the spacious old-fashioned, ornamental gardens which carried only his presence unless he ran into the gardener. The gardens were filled with hanging nectarines and peaches on boughs bending and touching the garden walls and these being forbidden fruits, kept him away from plucking them, except occasionally when he would be tempted.

The description of the gardens almost comes alive and awakens our senses and suddenly we are able to see him strolling in pleasure around the old sad-looking yew and fir trees and the fresh green grass. This part of the narration also awakens or stirs our 'senses' through which we can visualise the beauty of the gardens, smell the "fine garden smells" and perceive the taste of the tempting fruits. The narrator would almost be basking in the orangery (a conservatory of orange trees) till he almost fancied himself ripening along with the oranges and limes in that warm sunshine which he calls a "grateful warmth."

And similar to the common leanings of children, he would be captivated in the pleasure of those busy yet idle "diversion" of watching such fish-activity. Sometimes, it was even more engrossing to him than the temptation of pouring flavours and stimulating senses that came from the ripening peaches, nectarines and oranges in the gardens of leisure. At this moment, John slyly while sitting "deposited back upon" a plate of grapes (which he was to share with his sister) is noticed by Alice. But, again at that moment their desire to relish the plate of grapes (after having listened to and imagined the garden of fruits) is withheld for the time being. Thus their father, the narrator of this story assumes a more heightened tone of narration to draw back their complete attention, and tells them of how their great grandmother Field loved all her grandchildren but had a particular soft-corner or fondness in her heart for their uncle (the narrator's elder brother) John L. This was probably because he was a spirited young boy and much different by nature than the rest of her grandchildren. He describes James as a "king" who unlike the rest of his siblings who moped about the lonely corners of the great house, would prefer to get hold of and mount the best horse in the stable, even though he was no bigger in frame than the rest of them. Thus, their uncle John would trot (on horseback) half the countryside in the morning, joining the hunters when they were outdoors although he was not without a great love for the old house and its gardens.

Somehow, he had a spirit that could not be contained within the homestead or its boundaries- and so he had grown up to the "man's estate" brave and handsome, much admired by everyone, particularly by great grandmother Field. He would even carry the narrator, his younger brother upon his back when he was just a little boy and lame-footed. John was much older than him in age and very considerate or concerned about him. Even when John was in pain and was impatient, carrying his brother's weight around, he never gave up on him. But, the same spirited man on his death bed, just an hour after his demise appeared as if he had passed away for a great while. With this he brings into his narration the strangeness of life and death. And although, the narrator had initially coped

up with the loss of his brother John, later on he was constantly haunted with his memories and although he did not break into tears (as John would have had, in his place), he greatly missed John's presence every day of his life. And only then does he realise how much he loved John in his heart who had indeed left a void in his heart.

Sometimes, death can be as strange as life itself which makes one realise the worth of someone, long after he or she is no more. Just as the saying goes "absence maketh the heart grow fonder"" so it is often with us. The narrator almost relives that experience while narrating his feelings that had once moved him, making him miss his elder brother's absence, his kindness as well as his tolerance, wishing he would come alive in person once again, to quarrel with (as siblings do) rather than be all without him. The narrator here compares his uneasiness without him with poor John's uneasiness when the doctor had taken off his limb in the past.

With the thought of loss, the children are emotionally moved to tears which they had perhaps, experienced on losing their mother or perhaps never having seen her at all. May be they had only known her as 'a loss' or 'an absence'. Both of them look up and pray to their father not to continue about their uncle John and instead to tell them stories about their pretty mother. So, the narrator switches the subject to their dear mother who lived in their imagination. He begins telling them how for seven long years, sometimes in consistent hope and despair, he had courted their fair beautiful mother, his beloved Alice W. He tries his best to describe their mother to them, to explain her coyness and the sense of denial in young maidens (although he doubts how much of it the children would understand).

Suddenly, when he turns to little Alice who was "the soul of the first Alice" and was almost made in her image, he feels as if his wife Alice was looking at him through their daughter's eyes. This juxtaposition of faces or similarity in both mother and daughter was so powerful that he turns confused of which Alice (with that bright golden hair) was in front of him. And while the narrator is stuck in a moment that he does not understand both the children turn into spectral figures with a receding presence, fading and almost vanishing until only two "mournful features" could be seen at a distance only producing effects of speech by revealing that they were neither his (or Alice's) children nor were they children at all. The voices reveal that Alice's real children called a certain man known as 'Bartrum' their father and not him and that they were nothing but mere figments of imagination.

At this point, you will realise that the narrator's entire storytelling to his own children is only a daydream or a reverie and rather a creation of his sub-conscious mind. Only when the imaginary voices reveal that they would have to wait for "let he millions of ages" before really coming into being and finding a name, the narrator is shaken awake from his daydream to find himself seated in his bachelor arm-chair where he had fallen asleep, with his faithful Bridget (probably a pet companion) by his side. Thus, the essay "Dream Children" rather ends in the form of a reverie taking us through dreamscapes that appear

just as real and true to life. Many a times our conscious minds with their hopes, struggles, memories, repressions find a way through the channel of dreams, just as we find the narrator living his unfulfilled dreams through his day dream or reverie. We all carry hopes and desires in our bosom which either make themselves felt through sudden appearance, in the form of dreams, day-dreams, reveries, hallucinations or even nightmares. The narrator in the essay lives his unfulfilled dreams, unrequited love and joys of fatherhood through his reverie.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 7: Why are children easily absorbed into storytelling?
Q 8: Why was great grandmother Field as good as the owner of the house?
Q 9: Briefly describe the ornamental gardens in which the narrator strolled in pleasure.
Q 10: What does the storytelling reveal at the end?

4.5 LET US SUM UP

After having read through the text of the essay "Dream Children", the learner will be able to appreciate the nuances of storytelling which can both capture and even trick the mind almost like magic. The introduction to the unit provides a glimpse into the life and works of Charles Lamb. It provides a detailed explanation of the text which will provide the learner with a detailed idea on the content of the essay and further explore the other aspects with regard to its analysis as elaborated in the next unit.

4.6 FURTHER READING

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3) Benson, A. C. "The Art of the Essayist" in C. H. Lockitt (ed) (1949). *The Art of the Essayist.* Harlow: Longman.
4) Courtney, Winifred F. (1982). *Young Charles Lamb: 1775-1802*. New York: New York UP.
5) Haven, Richard. (1963). "The Romantic Art of Charles Lamb." *ELH* Vol 30, No.1.
6) Lucas, E. V. (1905). *Life of Charles Lamb*. London: Macmillan.
7) Park, Roy. (ed). (1980). *Lamb as Critic*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
8) Reiman, Donald H. (1964). "Thematic Unity in Lamb's Familiar Essays." *JEGP* 64: 470-78.

9) Tillotson, Geoffrey. "The Historical Importance of Certain Essays of Elia.'" in *Some British Romantics*. ed. (1966). James V. Logan, John E. Jordan, and Northrop Frye. Ohio State UP. pp. 89-116.

4.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: Lamb's formal education was brief and ended at the age of fifteen due to his family problems.

Ans to Q No 2: He had managed to find a job as a clerk at South Sea House, London. Later he joined for the East India House where he worked for twenty three years.

Ans to Q No 3: It was at Christ's Hospital in Newgate Street that he had first met S. T. Coleridge, known also as one of the greatest harbingers of Romanticism in literature and this meeting had evolved into a lifelong friendship

Ans to Q No 4: Some of the major works of Lamb are as follows: *Poem's on Various Subjects* (1796), *Blank Verse*(1798) published with Charles Lloyd, *Tales of Rosamund Gray and Old Blind Margaret*(1798), *John Woodvil* (1802) a poetical drama, *Tales From Shakespeare* (1807), *The Adventures of Ulysses* (1808), *On the Tragedies of Shakespeare (1811)*,*Witches and Other Night Fears* (1821), *The Pawnbroker's Daughter* (1825) among others. The most significant writings of Lamb can be witnessed when his well -received *Essays of Elia* (1823) and his *Last Essays of Elia* (1833) were published.

Ans to Q No 5: Lamb wrote under the pseudonym of 'Elia'.

Ans to Q No 6: Some of the essays of Lamb are "Old China", "Praise of Chimney Sweepers", "Dream Children", "The Two Races of Men", "My First Play", "Confessions of a Drunkard", "Bachelor's Complaint of the Behavior of the Married People" etc.

Ans to Q No 7: Children are easily absorbed into storytelling and tend to imagine them simultaneously with such narration owing to their fertile imagination and their ability to conceive of people or things that they may have never seen or thought about.

Ans to Q No 8: Although, the great grandmother Field was only the caretaker of the great house, it was as good as her own. She was completely entrusted with the responsibility of living and looking after the house by the real owner, a gentleman who preferred to live in a more fashionable mansion that he had purchased in an adjoining county. Therefore, she was as good as being its owner, residing in it as if it were her own residence

Ans to Q No 9: The ornamental gardens were filled with hanging nectarines and peaches on boughs bending and touching the garden walls and the narrator would stroll in pleasure around the old sad-looking yew, fir trees and the fresh green grass.

Ans to Q No 10: The end of the storytelling reveals that the narrator's entire storytelling to his own children was a mere daydream or a reverie and rather a creation of his sub-conscious mind.

4.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q1. Explain the life and works of Charles Lamb.
Q2. Give a description of the old mansion and its surrounding gardens in your own words.
Q3. Describe the narrator's childhood leanings or activities in his grandmother's place.

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UNIT 5: CHARLES LAMB: “DREAM CHILDREN” II

UNIT STRUCTURE

5.1 Learning Objectives
5.2 Introduction
5.3 Major Themes
5.4 Important Characters
5.5 Style and Language
5.6 Critical Reception
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 going through this unit, you will be able to:

- discuss the characters as revealed in the essay
- highlight the relevant themes pertaining to the text of the essay
- analyse the style and language employed by Lamb
- further explore the works of Charles Lamb

5.2 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, the learner gained a detailed idea on the life and works as well as the text of the essay “Dream Children” which is a reflective essay. The present unit takes up interesting aspects on the major themes that emerge from the text together while also highlighting the important characters. Along with the critical reception of the work, the unit discusses the style and language employed in the text of the essay which defines the works of the interesting, popular and reader-friendly essayist Charles Lamb. Let us discuss these significant aspects in the following subsections of the unit.

5.3 MAJOR THEMES

The following are the important themes available in the essay.

Death and Sense of Loss: The essay highlights the theme of death and personal sense of loss particularly of a near and dear one and of many other things gone by in time. The narrator contrasts the stark differences, he feels in relation to the nature of life and death in which he imagines his loved ones in their living moments, as well as, their last moments when life fades away from their being. This is one reason that he recalls his old childhood memories and perhaps thinks aloud all by himself, as if he were narrating them in someone’s presence. He remembers the decaying old house his grandmother had lived

in and compares how it was once a great mansion with widespread gardens that had appealed to his childhood fancy until it began to crumble after the old lady's demise.

He also recalls the presence of his grandmother Field and brother John in that house which was once their home when they all came together during the holidays. The sudden death of grandmother due to cancer and that of John perhaps owing to severe ailments leaves the narrator bereaving for a long time. Perhaps, the narrator who managed to register their death could somehow, never fill the void they had left in his life, which is why, he missed their presence every day of his life and particularly, when he was all by himself.

They were so loving and generous towards him that their sudden absence amounted to extreme grief and sadness. The narrator himself was unaware that he was actually capable of such strong emotions. Their painful and untimely deaths had a great effect on his emotional well-being. He describes how even their lively and vibrant spirits had to eventually surrender to 'death'. Also, he harbours a sense of loss and unrequited love of his once beloved Alice who perhaps, marries and bears children to another man. His failure in love might have been due to various reasons such as a lost opportunity or mismatched circumstances, leaving a sense of emptiness in his heart that never really healed with time. Death is an inevitable part of life and also the dying of 'memory.' The themes of both death and loss and of coming to terms with their gravity, highlights a commonality of experience in all human beings.

Dream Children and Imagination: The title of the essay becomes relevant only when one reaches towards the last part of the text which contains a surprise twist. At the end, the narrator's children who are initially present as the keen listeners of his old memories are revealed as a reverie or mere figments of imagination. Perhaps, it is his long lost love and unfulfilled desire of fatherhood which finds an expression in the form of his reverie or mere imagination. It is as if he literally finds himself dreaming or imagining them into life, dreaming of who would have been his wonderful children (whom he would have named Alice and John) and his own beloved wife Alice.

In the essay, the description of the two children enraptured by their father's narration is very life-like as this is how children are with their shifting and short spans of attention, quick response, stirred emotions and excited imaginations. At one level, we realise that Lamb through this reflective essay draws from his real life incidents and at another level, mediating through the narrator, he plays with the idea of reality, fiction and imagination which is woven in and out of the text. Thus, we find that Lamb's essay with its ironical twist in the end is also a piece of fantasy which contains elements of the truth and make-belief, real and unreal, dreams and consciousness.

LET US KNOW

The learner will be interested to not that Lamb was a very spiritual man who regularly read the psalms and the New Testament for hours regularly. Although, he did not believe in organised religion, 'spirituality' was a source of strength to him. While suffering the most difficult phase of his family tragedy, he did not lose faith. His letters to Barton and Coleridge also reveal his deep faith in the word of God. He had also penned religious poems such as "On the Lord's Prayer", "A Vision of Repentance", "Charity", "The Young Catechist", "David" among others.

5.4 IMPORTANT CHARACTERS

The following are the important characters of the essay.

Great Grandmother Field:

She was a lady who was much loved and respected by everyone. She looked after the great home which was owned by a wealthy owner who preferred living in a more new and fashionable mansion in the countryside. This literally made her the mistress of the place in a way, as she took great care of the house all by herself. Sometimes, she would be haunted by spirits like the two infants but her strong faith always kept her in good stead. She had a great knowledge of the psaltery and the testaments and was a very religious person. The narrator describes her as so "good and religious" that nothing really affected her even in her loneliness.

In her heydays, she was held in great esteem as a dancer and was tall, upright and graceful in appearance. But with age and being affected with cancer, her frame underwent considerable changes. She held a great fondness for her grandchildren who visited her during their holidays and in her heart had a special soft corner for her grandson John who was charming as ever. She was an active old lady who was in charge of the grand mansion and the sprawling gardens and also the mischievous, visiting grandchildren who wandered all about the place. The old lady showed certain resilience towards life in which her good spirits were never lost even to pain or suffering. After her demise, the entire place had turned decrepit without anyone to care for the house and its surroundings. She lived in the fond memory of her grandson (the narrator) who reminisces her incredible goodness of heart and strength in her faith.

John L.:

John in the narrator's words is described as a young man who was the elder brother of the narrator. He was a handsome and a spirited person who was always active around the place when the siblings were at their grandmother's house during their holidays. He would not be found moving around, exploring the solitary corners of the place, although it is not to say that the house and the surrounding gardens did not interest him. But his inclinations were very different from that of his siblings as he was older than them. And

instead of moving about the gardens or the corners of the mansion, he preferred to ride across the countryside in the mornings and to join hunters on their spree.

Here, it must be noted that the young boy who exuded such a brave and adventurous persona also had a soft side to him, as he cared for everyone. He was very patient and attentive to his younger sibling, (the narrator) and carried him on his back when he was lame-footed, being kind and considerate to him at all times. John was very tolerant by nature, no matter how much his little brother bugged him. Perhaps, owing to his charm and promising youth, his grandmother nurtured a special fondness for him. The narrator misses John's absence every day, wishing he was alive and not gone away forever. The most tragic point in the essay is the description of the change in John's earlier youthful frame and being, that within an hour of his untimely demise appeared totally withered and old on the deathbed. We also learn that John was perhaps more emotional than his younger sibling as the narrator mentions how John would have cried more than him, had he died in his place. This brings a certain sense of nostalgia through the narration in which a lively and free-spirited young boy's life is cut short by death.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1. How was the old lady in her younger days? What had caused such drastic changes in her being?
Q 2. How did John L. treat the narrator as an elder brother?
Q 3. Explain why the narrator's personal loss affects his emotional well-being.

5.5 STYLE AND LANGUAGE

The personal essay is a contribution of Charles Lamb whom we know as a romantic essayist. Lamb who is better known for his personal essays incorporated in them his personal experiences, reflections, memories, fantasies and character sketches. His style of writing varies in each essay through which he keeps the reader both engrossed and guessing, with the interplay of truth and reality, memory and imagination, engagement and anticipation. His personal essays bore his characteristic 'bittersweet' style which involved old reminiscences or memories with elements of 'wit' and 'pathos'; and sometimes even the combination of both as in the essay "Dream Children".

He employed an ironic treatment of everyday subjects which were full of witty observations and were the best embodiment of his personal experiences. The nostalgic or even melancholic tone often pervades through his more personal essays in which he recalls his childhood years, his old memories of his dear ones, and interesting anecdotes of his life. His portrayal of the old memories, some funny, some happy, some sad and some unforgettable does lend a considerable charm to his works which are unique of its own. Moreover, the wide usage of archaic words, Latinisms, quotations and allusions in his

works are rooted in his intense love for ancient writers. There is a certain 'quaint' or an old-fashioned charm that one cannot miss out in his essays.

Lamb's essays in the *London Magazine* compiled later as *Essays of Elia* and *The Last Essays* of *Elia* were inspired in form and style by his 17th and 18th century mentors such as Bacon, Browne, Walton, Fuller, Addison and Steele but he had experimented and evolved a style which was unique to him. Lamb's first meeting with S.T. Coleridge (known also as one of the greatest harbingers of Romanticism in literature) at the Christ's Hospital in Newgate Street had evolved into a lifelong friendship. In 1797, during a visit to Coleridge at Nether Storay, Lamb received the opportunity of forming a friendship with Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy and his interaction with them as a writer was influential in his literary development.

His satirical essays on the social-evils and city-life in London; his own subjective experiences at the core of every essay; his intensely personal reactions to various aspects and issues of life have also been criticised by many scholars. Yet, it can undoubtedly be said that these are the same factors that has also endeared him to a wide and popular readership down the ages. Lamb has a way with words, which in encompassing his reflections, life and experiences also reveal or spark something in our own.

5.6 CRITICAL RECEPTION

The Oxford History of English Literature notes that William Hazlitt, a dear friend and contemporary of Lamb had attributed Lamb's success as a writer to his non conformation to the 'Spirit of the Age' in which he lived. While in one of his early essay Lamb had critiqued the idealisation of nature and the countryside, in his later works he was also quick to critique the evils of the London city and the changes that the machine age had brought in its wake. The literary output of Lamb had also encompassed much of the contemporary social criticism regarding child labour, poverty and apathy towards London's outcast i.e., the beggars, mendicants, vagabonds, orphans and the poor people.

Lamb shared a great rapport with the readers of his time mostly through a series of essays in the *London Magazine*. It was these essays which were collected and published in 1900 as *Essays of Elia* and *The Last Essays of Elia*. The learner will find that Lamb's literary works are full of wisdom and reflective insights on life and experiences of both the inner and the outer world. They reflect his exemplary role as a humanitarian and also as good human being. In fond remembrance of Lamb and in admiration of his religious piety and moral nature, his close friend William Wordsworth had also penned an epitaph-poem titled "Written after The Death of Charles Lamb" (1835) after his demise. Also, E.V. Lucas who was Lamb's biographer referred to Lamb as "the most lovable figure in English literature" in his *The Life of Charles Lamb* (1905).

5.7 LET US SUM UP

After having read through the text of the essay "Dream Children", and having going through the discussions in the unit, the learner will be more familiar with the major themes reflected in the essay. The learner will discover how the essay reveals itself as a reverie and the interesting play of memory and imagination. Further, it will enable the learner to analyse Lamb's style of writing and use of language together with the critical reception and the significance of his works, particularly with regard to the form of 'personal essay' which has almost become synonymous with the literary style and practice of the remarkable essayist Charles Lamb.

5.8 FURTHER READING

1) Abrams, M. H. (1993). *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. Bangalore: Prism Books.
2) Barnett, George Leonard. (1964). *Charles Lamb: The Evolution of Elia*. Indiana UP.
3) Benson, A. C. "The Art of the Essayist" in C. H. Lockitt (ed) (1949). *The Art of the Essayist.* Harlow: Longman.
4) Courtney, Winifred F. (1982). *Young Charles Lamb: 1775-1802*. New York: New York UP.
5) Haven, Richard. (1963). "The Romantic Art of Charles Lamb." *ELH* Vol 30, No.1.
6) Lucas, E. V. (1905). *Life of Charles Lamb*. London: Macmillan.
7) Park, Roy. (ed). (1980). *Lamb as Critic*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
8) Reiman, Donald H. (1964). "Thematic Unity in Lamb's Familiar Essays." *JEGP* 64: 470-78.
9) Tillotson, Geoffrey. "The Historical Importance of Certain Essays of Elia.'" in *Some British Romantics*. ed. (1966). James V. Logan, John E. Jordan, and Northrop Frye. Ohio State UP. pp. 89-116.

5.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Q No 11: In her heydays, she was held in great esteem as a dancer and was tall, upright and graceful in appearance. But with age and with cancer, her frame underwent considerable changes.

Ans to Q No 12: John who as a young boy exuded such a brave and adventurous persona also had a soft side to him, as he genuinely cared for everyone. He was especially very patient and attentive to his younger sibling, the narrator by carrying him on his back when he was lame-footed and being kind and considerate to him at all times. John was very tolerant by nature no matter how much his little brother bugged him.

Ans to Q No 13: They were so loving and generous towards him that their sudden absence amounted to extreme grief and sadness. The narrator himself was unaware that he was actually capable of such strong emotions. Their painful and untimely deaths had a great effect on his emotional well-being.

5.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q1. Make a detailed character sketch of the following a) great grandmother Field and b) John L.

Q2. Analyse the main themes pertaining to the text of the essay "Dream Children"

Q3. Discuss the style and language employed by Charles Lamb.

Q4. What is the striking revelation or twist at the end of the narration in the essay "Dream Children"?

Q5. Give a detailed summary of the essay "Dream Children" in your own words.

Q6. Give a detailed explanation with reference to context: "Such a distance there is betwixt life and death."

Q7. Explain the revelation at the end of the essay "Dream Children" with reference to the context: "We are nothing; less than nothing, and dreams. We are only what might have been."

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UNIT 6 : SAMUEL JOHNSON: “LIFE OF COWLEY”

UNIT STRUCTURE

6.1 Learning Objectives
6.2 Introduction
6.3 Samuel Johnson: The Biographer
6.3.1 His Life and Works
6.4 Text of the Essay “Life of Cowley”
6.5 Style and Language
6.6 Critical Reception
6.7 Let us Sum up
6.8 Further Reading
6.9 Answer to Check Your Progress
6.10 Model Questions

6.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- discuss theliterary genre of biographyin relation to Samuel Johnson’s “Life of Cowley”
- describe about the life of Cowley and his significance as a metaphysical poet
- appreciate the contribution of Johnson not only as abiographer but also as a critic
- read Johnson’s *Lives* in the context of the biographical writings of the eighteenth century

6.2 INTRODUCTION

This unit helps you to discuss the genre of biography with reference to Johnson’s “Life of Cowley”. Perhaps you know that biography was defined by John Dryden as the “history of particular men’s lives”. Today, the term is applied to “a relatively full account of a particular person’s life, involving the attempt to set forth character, temperament, and milieu, as well as the subject’s activities and experiences”(M.H.Abrams). Biography flourished in the recent decades with the introduction of new experimental methods concerning life writing. Although biography in its current form is comparatively recent, yet it has its origins in some of the older traditions of writing. The earliest biographies in England were written in Latin during the Middle Ages to glorify the saints or commemoratethe good rulers. However, with the coming of the Renaissance, emphasis was given on man as an individual, and it prompted the development of the biography in English. For example, Thomas More’s “Life of Richard-III” is filled with human details and first hand observations. Thomas North’s translation of Plutarch’s *Parallel Lives* in 1579 had considerable influence on English biography, particularly on Izzak Walton who wrote very well constructed

biographies of the lives of the poets like John Donne and George Herbert.However, it was in the eighteenth century that biography became really popular with numerous biographical collections such as Samuel Johnson's *Lives of the English Poets* (1779- 81). In this unit, you will not only get to read about the life and works of Johnson but will also read about one of his famous biographical accounts of the metaphysical poet Cowley.

6.3 DR SAMUEL JOHNSON: THE BIOGRAPHER

The eighteenth century which is also termed as the Augustan Age or the Classical Age of English literature has produced many literary luminaries such as Alexander Pope, Jonathan Swift, Edmund Burke and others. Among such luminaries one was Dr Samuel Johnson whose writings have considerably influenced and developed the English language. Johnson is known both for his poetry and prose works.

6.3.1 His Life and Works

Samuel Johnson was born on September 18, 1709 at Lichfield, Straffordshire to Michael Johnson, a bookseller and Sarah Ford Johnson. Both the parents were from considerably well-to- do families, but inspite of it, they had to undergo financial hardships. When he was three years of age, he was brought to London for the treatment of scrofula, a disease known as King's evil in the earlier times as it was believed that only the touch of a royal family member could cure it. There, he was touched by Queen Anne, but it did not cure the ailment and left scars on his body.

In the year 1717, he entered Lichfield Grammar School and became a child prodigy because of his ability to remember volumes of classical texts and authors. Johnson, however disliked the undue attention that he was receiving. By the time he was sixteen, he was given an opportunity o stay with his cousins, the Fords, at Worchestershire. Under the tutelage of Cornelius Ford, a renowned and successful academic of his times,Johnson acquired much knowledge of the classical works. After spending six months with his cousins, he returned to Lichfield but he was denied admission into his old school by the headmaster due to the long absence. Consequently, hejoined another school in Stourbridge which enabled him to spend more time with the Fords, and he began to do translations and write more verse. However, he once again returned to Lichfield.

According to his biographer, Johnson's family was faced financial hardships due to the debts of his father. So, Johnson too began working in his father's bookshop, stitching books for his father and also acquiring knowledge of books simultaneously.The young Johnson managed to get admission into Pembroke College in 1728 after inheriting some money from his cousin Elizabeth Harriott, after her death. However, after thirteen months he was forced to leave the college without a degree due to shortage of funds, and he returned to Lichfield. It was much later, in 1755, prior to the publication of his *Dictionary*,

that he received a Master of Arts degree from Oxford University. Further he was also awarded with an honorary doctorate in 1765 by Trinity College, Dublin, and by Oxford University in 1775.

During his time in Lichfield, he married the much older Elizabeth Porter, the widow of his close friend Harry Porter. The wide age difference between them caused much friction within the Porter family. With the help of his wife, he established school in Edial near Lichfield in1735. The venture was not successful as the school had only three students, and it cost his wife a substantial portion of her income. On March 2, 1737, the day his younger brother died, Johnson left for London with his former pupil David Garrick. Garrick had connections in London that enabled Johnson to write and communicate with some of the founders of periodicals and publishers. Soon he began writing for Edward Cave's *The Gentleman's Magazine* on regular basis, and brought his wife to London having established himself as a writer.A year later, his most important poetic composition *London* was published.Between the years 1737 and 1739, Johnson began living with the poet Richard Savage in Grub Street, and the two began living in taverns.Savage's friends tried to help him by attempting to persuade him to move to Wales, but Savage ended up in Bristol and again fell into debt. He died in 1743 in debtors' prison and a year later, Johnson wrote *Life of Richard Savage* (1744).

Johnson's reputation lies not only on his works but also on other aspects of his life. He had no children but he accepted many dependants such as Robert Levet, an unlicensed and alcoholic doctor who worked with the poor, and the blind Anna Williams, his wife's friend. After the death of Levet in 1782, Johnson wrote a famous elegy on the doctor. Further he was also generous with literary support for other writers, particularly women writers such as Elizabeth Carter, Fanny Burney, Charlotte Lenox and others. Samuel Johnson passed away in the year 1784 at his house in Bolt Court and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Samuel Johnson's literary career embarked with numerous essays that he contributed to *Birmingham Journal*, and the translation of the Portuguese work*Voyage to Abyssinia* in 1735.In 1737,he set off to London and there began to make regular contributions to *Gentleman's Magazine* in the form of prefaces, poems, Latin verses, biographies, and most notably *Parliamentary Debates,* which were widely accepted as authentic speeches by the great politicians of the day. In 1738, he published the poem *London* based in part on his friendship with the poet Richard Savage. Johnson wrote *The Life of Richard Savage* later in 1744 which was included in *The Lives of the English Poets*, and it reflected the pitfalls of Grub Street(a locality associated with amateur poets and writers). Then, in 1739, he wrote *Marmor Norfolciense* where he attacked Robert Walpole's governance. He further wrote *Compleat Vindication of the Licensers of the Stage,* a work that spoke against Stage Lincensing Act of 1737. Between the years 1743- 44, he wrote the *Harleian Miscellany* and the *Miscellaneous Observations on the tragedy of Macbeth* came out in 1745.

Johnson began his work on the *Dictionary* in 1747 and he dedicated it to the Earl of Rochester. The year 1749 saw the publication of *The Vanity of Human Wishes* which bore just his own name. His play *Irene* was produced by David Garrick; although the play was not very successful it brought him £300. Soon, in 1750, Johnson brought out his own periodical, the *Rambler*. He also began contributing regularly from 1753 to 1754 to John Hawkesworth's *Adventurer.*Soon, after nine years of hard work Johnson's *Dictionary* came out in 1755. This work established his reputation and importance as one of the most significant writer of his times. He continued writing essays, reviews and political articles for various periodicals. During the period 1758- 60, he wrote the *Idler* papers.

By this time he had gained considerable eminence, and became a member of the Club, a group that was founded in 1764, to hold regular meetings of literary men of eminence such as Oliver Goldsmith, Edmund Burke, Joshua Reynolds and others. In 1765, Johnson's edition of Shakespeare's works appeared, for which he received assistance from George Stevens who also helped with the later revisions of the work. The *Preface* of this work became one of the finest works of critical prose.

He also dedicated himself to political writings such as *The False Alarm* (1770),*Thoughts…Respecting Falkland Islands* (1771), *The Patriot* (1774), and *Taxation No Tyranny* (1775). Then, it was in 1777 that he undertook the project of writing *The Lives of the English Poets*, at the request of a guild of booksellers. This work remains the crowning glory of his old age, and still continues to be the most important biographical work produced during the eighteenth century.

LET US KNOW

In his seminal essay "On the Genius of Biography", Johnson wrote that, "No species of writing…can more certainly enchain the human heart by irresistible interest, or more widely diffuse instructionto every diversity of condition…We are all prompted by the same motives, all deceived by the same fallacies, all animated by hope, obstructed by danger, entangled by desire and seduced by pleasure."

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1:How was the family background of Johnson when he had been a child?
Q 2:List the name of a few works by Samuel Johnson.

6.4 EXPLANATION OF THE TEXT

The Lives of the English Poets was originally titled as Prefaces, Biographical and Critical, to the Works of the English Poets and it was written during the period 1779-81. In the year 1777, Johnson was invited by a deputation of booksellers to provide biographical

prefaces for an edition of the works of various English poets, from the period of John Milton onwards. This was a marketing ploy so as to eliminate all the rival cheap multi-volume collections which were published in Scotland. To this proposed edition, Johnson also added some minor poets. By the time it was published, it comprised of four volumes in 1781.

LET US KNOW

Biography :
The word biography has its origins in the Greek words 'bios', meaning 'life' and 'graphy', meaning 'writing'. So, the term 'biography' means 'writing about life'. Thus, the terms more or less encapsulates the nature and scope of the genre. Biography is that branch of literature, which is about the life of a human being.

The *Lives* contains much interesting biographical information, especially in those cases where the concerned poet was personally known to Johnson. However Johnson's work was at times controversial as it was marked by idiosyncrasy.Nevertheless the work is characterised by a deep appreciation of the achievements of the poets in their personal and historical situations. Thus, in spite of the flaws, *Johnson's Lives* remains a classic in the history of criticism.

Johnson begins the biography of Abraham Cowley by mentioning his predecessor Sir Thomas Sprat who had already produced a biographical work on Abraham Cowley. Johnson subtly criticises Sprat's work by claiming that it worked more in the manner of a panegyric. Minute details concerning the chronology of Cowley's life seems to be missing in Sprat's work. As such Johnson in the very beginning justifies the need for writing a well structured and chronological account of Cowley's life.

Samuel Johnson begins the life history of Cowley by speaking of his family background. Cowley's father is claimed to be a sectary,that is, a Protestant Dissenter who had nothing to do with the church. Johnson refers to another writer, Anthony Wood's essay, where it is claimed that Cowley was born after the death of his father, and his mother had to face much hardships while bringing up her son. In Sprat's account it has also been mentioned that Cowley greatly revered his mother and performed his duties as a son.

Within the essay, there are certain images from Cowley's life that Johnson intends to recreate in the minds of his readers. For example, he speaks of Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* that was diligently read by the young Cowley near the window of his mother's room. This image has the bearings of showing what Cowley was to become in the future - a poet. In this regard, Johnson writes that such incidents "produce that particular designation of mind, and propensity for some certain science or employment, which is commonly called Genius." The influence of one artist over another is duly expressed

when he speaks of how his friend, the famous painter of the eighteenth century Joshua Reynolds was inspired by Richardson.

Johnson, citing from Sprat's biography informs the reader that Cowley was never very good in mathematics in school, but he excelled in the study of language. He points out that such attribute is characteristically seen in the major poets of every age, whether it is Alexander Pope, John Milton or Abraham Cowley. The essayist gives examples of how Cowley started quite young. At the age of ten, he had composed *The Tragical History* of *Pyramus and Thisbe,* and two years later he wrote *Constantia and Philetus.* While he was in school, Cowley wrote a play called *Love's Riddle,* though it was publishedonly when he was in Cambridge; it was dedicated to Sir Kenelm Digby, an author, poet and patron of repute. In the year 1636, he moved to Cambridge where he worked rigorously and finished a greater part of Davideis. Cowley also became well-known when the play *The Guardian* was enacted in Cambridge during the presence of the prince who was much entertained by it. After attaining his master degree from Cambridge, Cowley was in St John's College in Oxford from where he published the satirical *The Puritan and the Papist.* Cowley particularly attracted the attention of the members of the royalty and those associated with them. In 1644, he left Oxford for Paris, where he was at the service of Lord Henry Jeremy at the court of Henrietta Maria In 1654, he returned to England, apparently as a Royalist spy, and was imprisoned briefly in 1655. During this period, he published *Poems* (1656) and in the Preface he expressed his desire to settle in some lonely American plantation and to forsake the world entirely. Johnson writes that Thomas Sprat has been generous in his representation of Cowley as it was well known that the poet had lost the trust of Royals. Soon after, he had obtained the guise of a physician which he justified as being necessary for his safety and went to France. He nevertheless obtained a degree of physic from Oxford, and Johnson writes that "at the same time were produced, from the same university, the two great poets, Cowley and Milton, of dissimilar genius, of opposite principles" By making a comparison between the two, Johnson also shows the differences in the ideals of the two poets. While Milton was interested in the traditional norms associated with the Classical poets and their writings, Cowley was keen on expressing his own beliefs and principles by using the diction of the ancient poets.

Johnson also writes about the disappointment of Cowley after the Restoration when he was not rewarded for the services rendered. And he spent the last days of his life in Barnes and Chertsey. Here we see that Johnson at times becomes highly cynical about the portrayal of Cowley's life. For example,when he cites Cowley's letter to Thomas Sprat that was written from Chertsey in 1665, there is an ironic tone. Cowley complained of the lack of comforts and companionship in Chertsey.But after he passed away in 1667, in Chertsey, Cowley was given a grand funeral, and was buried near Chaucer and Spenser, and was praised by King Charles that "Mr. Cowley had not left behind him abetter man in England." Johnson asserts that Sprat had to write the narrative of Cowley's life in a cautious way so that he does not offend any powerful figure of his times. There were things easily left out that often leaves the reader unsatisfied because Sprat had provided only a

chronological study of Cowley's life without going into the details of certain important aspects of his writings. As such Johnson admits that his essay was written with the purpose of supplementing Sprat's narrative.

He initiates his discussion of metaphysical poetry by defining the characteristics seen in metaphysical poetry. He specifically points out to the poets of the seventeenth century as metaphysical poets, poets who were men of learning, and made good use of their knowledge and in the composition of verses. Johnson, by referring to Aristotle writes that the metaphysical writers imitated neither imitated man, life or nature. They also did not represent the workings of the intellect, and in that they might lose their position as poets. Dryden himself stated that he and his contemporaries were below Donne in wit, but they surpassed him when it came to poetry. Citing Pope's definition of wit as "That which was often thought but never so well expressed", the essayist writes that the metaphysical never attained nor sought to be witty, but rather they were singular in their thought process and their language was nonchalant. You must note that Johnson's critical views on metaphysical poetry is significant. He states that Pope's definition of wit is incorrect or rather limited because if the reader reads the poetry of the metaphysical poets, he will find that the wit creates Discordia concors, that is it creates "a combination of dissimilar images, or discovery of occult resemblances in things apparently unlike". Further he also writes that varied ideas are joined together and the reader has to be mentally active to grasp the meaning of the poem. According to Johnson this kind of poetry can earn the admiration of the reader but the latter is seldom pleased.

The metaphysical poets simply looked upon human nature much like classical deities and chose to remark rather than rectify human behaviour.As such the poems they composed, did entertain but were indifferent in tone. Further great poets often achieve sublimity by writing things that escapes the attention of others. The metaphysical poets, however used their power of observation and knowledge in an analytical way. They tried to break up every image from nature or life to provide meanings of their own, and in doing so sublimity was never achieved.

In spite of the flaws, the metaphysical poets' endeavour and labour that went into their composition of poetry, and their position as poets cannot be sidelined. Johnson claims that in reading the works of this unique group of poets, the reader will always find something new to examine or study. Johnson believes that the metaphysical poets' ability to reflect and compare, and their wide use of knowledge is something to be admired.
John Donne and the other metaphysical poets borrowed this style of writing from the Italian poet Giambattista Marino and his followers who were known for their complex way of writing poetry. Johnson claims that even Ben Jonson wrote in a similar way by making use of irregular rhythmic lines.Their immediate successors such as Suckling, Waller, Denham, Cowley, Clieveland and Milton attempted to evolve this type of writing in their own way. Among all these poets, it was only Abraham Cowley who, Johnson opines, excelled than his predecessors in writing metaphysical poetry. Samuel Johnson, in order

to justify his claims made use of various examples. He cites lines from poems written by Abraham Cowley as well as John Donne and these examples are used to show how Cowley evolved metaphysical poetry by adding more sentiment and rhythm to it. Through these examples, Johnson shows the significance of their poetry but at the same time he also points out the flaws because of which metaphysical poets especially Cowley is not considered a great poet. He writes:

> *They were in very little care to clothe their notions with elegance of dress, and therefore miss the notice and the praise which are often gained by those who think less, but are more diligent to adorn their thoughts.*

While describing their subject, the metaphysical poets did not look for images, instead their attempt was to look for conceits. However when they wrote on common subjects, these poets instead of relying on scholastic knowledge,made use their fertile imagination. He gives an example from one of Cowley's poems where the poet speaks about Hope:

Hopes, whose weak being mind is,
Alike if it succeed and if it miss;
Whom good or ill does equally confound,
And both the horns of fate's dilemma wound;
Vain shadow! which dust vanish quite,
Both at full noon and perfect night!
The stars have not a possibility
Of blessing thee;
If things then from their end we happy call
'Tis Hope is the most hopeless thing of all.
Hope, thou bold tester of delight,
Who, whilst thou shouldst but taste, devour'st it quite!
Thou bring'st us an estate, yet leav'st us poor
By clogging it with legacies before!

Samuel Johnson is of the opinion that the general tendency in the metaphysical poets was to write about that which is considered "improper and vicious" and to represent them in an unusual way. From your earlier reading of poems written by metaphysical poets as well as the examples given in the essay, you will see that metaphysical poets always attempted to write in an unconventional way to earn the admiration of the readers. An amorous element is very much present in the love poetry of the metaphysical poets. But in doing so, they often fail to delight the readers.After looking into the general characteristics of the metaphysical poetry, Johnson speaks about Cowley who was the last of the "metaphysical poets" and is considered the best by Johnson. Cowley's *Miscellanies* contained varied styles written, Johnson believes, by a mind which was at leisure. He gives the example of "Ode on Wit" in which Cowley condemns the exuberance of wit.

Abraham Cowley is also known for having written many elegies that show the relationship and connections of the poet with some of the significant political and literary figures of his times. He wrote many a poems to Lord Falkland who was considered an important diplomatic figure of his times. Some of these compositions were an elegy on Henry Wotton, a diplomat and close friend of John Donne. Yet there was something missing in these verses. Johnson cites the example of the poem written after the death of his friend William Hervey, where there is more praise and less emotion involved. The essayist writes that Cowley "wishes to make us weep, he forgets to weep himself, and diverts his sorrow by imagining how his crown of bays, if he had it, would crackle in the fire." Yet there were also other poems belonging to a completely different order such as the verses written to Davenant that had hints of critical thinking. Johnson in this regard states that people have often read Cowley's poetry without really going through his critical ideas and view points that have been expressed in the Preface and notes added to *Davideis*. For example, in *Reason: The Use of it in Divine Matters,* Cowley speaks both for and against Reason. Cowley wrote that the purpose of reason is to judge the nature or reality of knowledge.

After his *Miscellanies*, Cowley is known for a volume of translated poems called *Anacreon* that projects the carpe-diem principle ("enjoying the present day"). These poems expressed festivity and merriment, which was very much different from the works he composed. Cowley's next collection of poems called *The Mistress* express the same kind of beauty and wit as expected in metaphysical poetry.The use of hyperbolic language in the expression of love fails to create the beauty and finesse associated with love poems. The conceits in *The Mistress*, Addison wrote once displayed mixed wit, that is there is thought which is true in one sense of expression and false on the other. As such it fails to recreate the emotion associated with love. Johnson admits that Cowley's *Pindaric* Odes are better compositions in comparison. In the Odes, Cowley has successfully recovered the ways of writing verses associated with ancient poets. The odes are elegant and inspire emotion.Cowley has followed the Pindaric tradition of composing and this evident in some of the examples given by Johnson:

Begin the song, and strike the living lyre:
Lo how the years to come, a numerous and well-fitted quire,
All hand in hand do decently advance,
And to my song with smooth and equal measure dance;
While the dance lasts, how long soe'er it be,
My music's voice shall bear it company;
Till all gentle notes be drown'd
In the last trumpet's dreadful sound.

After describing the works of Cowley that highlights the significance of Cowley as a metaphysical poet, Johnson then speaks about the flaws seen in the writing of Cowley as much as in other metaphysical poets. The use of metaphors at times diminishes the

spirit of the poem. In this regard, he speaks of the ode *Muse*.The labour and knowledge that Cowley applies in representing muse make the ode distasteful with unnecessary details and so the beauty of the subject is lost. After describing the works of Cowley that highlights the significance of Cowley as a metaphysical poet, Johnson then speaks about the flaws seen in the writing of Cowley as much as in other metaphysical poets. The use of metaphors at times diminishes the spirit of the poem. Apart from this, Cowley also experimented a lot with the verse length especially when he was translating the verses written by the ancient poets. Johnson states that the poet should have written those verses in the same form as they were originally written, and could have added only when the something was missing in those verses:

> *The great pleasure of verse arises from the known measure of the lines, and uniform structure of the stanzas, by which the voice is regulated, and the memory relieved.*

However, Johnson believes that such flaws do not diminish Cowley's importance as a poet.Davideis is given a position of significance by Johnson, and the latter states that like other great poets such as Virgil, Statius and Spenser, *Davideis* remained unfinished. Cowley originally wanted to extend the work to twelve books, but it was left at the fourth.As a critical writer, Johnson points out that unlike other celebrated works,Cowley's *Davideisis* hardly mentioned or discussed by scholars. He states that it is partly due to the choice of the subject and the performance of the work that it has remained neglected.Davideis suffers from the same flaws as those mentioned earlier. The abundant use of conceits diverts the attention of the reader rather than make him appreciate the imaginative power and the subject matter of the work. Cowley's description lacks the imaginative faculty that creates awe in the mind of the readers.The lines from the work show that it lacks poetical description. Here Cowley did not create images, rather he made inferences. This was mainly because he adopted a form that was in vogue during his contemporary time.

Johnson's essay on Abraham Cowley also serves as an example for the future poets to understand the importance of application of diction and imagination in the composition of poetry:

His diction was in his own time censured as negligent. He seems not to have known, or not to have considered, that words being arbitrary must owe their power to association, and have the influence, and that only, which custom has given them. Language is the dress of thought; and as the noblest men, or most graceful action, would be degraded and obscured by a garb appropriated to the gross employments of rustics or mechanics; so the most heroic sentiments will lose their efficacy, and the most splendid ideas drop their magnificence, if they are conveyed by words used commonly upon low and trivial occasions, debased by vulgar mouths, and contaminated by inelegant applications

Johnson concludes the essay by saying that it cannot be denied that Cowley contributed a lot in creating interest towards the ode. He chose not to directly translate and be a mere imitator of the Classical poets, instead he taught the future poets, the importance of adding one's own thoughts in those works. It showed that the process of versification could be improved even in translating the classical works. And the poetic specimens he has left behind could be improved by the later poets .

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 3: What was the original title of Lives of the English Poets?
Q4: How does Johnson begin his essay?
Q5: Which biographer's work does Johnson follow while writing Life of Cowley?

6.5 STYLE AND LANGUAGE

After reading the essay, you will find that Johnson's method of writing the biography is marked by chronicling the concerned poet's life, and then offering a critical assessment of his work particularly by exploring metaphysical poetry. If you go through some of the other biographical accounts from *The Lives of the English Poets*, you will see that it is true in case of all his biographical writings. Johnson draws on many firsthand accounts based on writings by his predecessors and relies on his own prodigious memory. While doing so, Johnson offers very interesting character studies of many important literary figures of the different ages starting from the Restoration period. It is equally important to note his critical comments on Cowley. The biographer-essayist's judgments display the particular prejudices of the Augustan Age where certain literary characteristics were considered as virtues in the writing of poetry. This includes strong but unforced rhyme scheme,a didactic tone, and elevated language with meaningful figurative language. Johnson shows great insight, however, into the strengths and limitations of most poets whose work he reviews. The significance of his commentary can best be seen in the single example of his essay on Cowley. Johnson had dismissed the 17th century Metaphysical Poets as people who wrote verses but failed to write good poetry that could inspire and touch the readers. That judgment remained as a canon until T. S. Eliot's celebration of the works of this group of poets in his seminal essay "The Metaphysical Poets".

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q6: Comment on Johnson's style and technique.

6.6 CRITICAL RECEPTION

Johnson's reputation as an 18th century biographer and the significance of his Lives of the English Poets are accepted by all. In his *Johnson's Lives* (1878), Mathew Arnold summarised Johnson's contribution as "The more we study Johnson, the higher will be

our esteem for the power of his mind, the width of his interests, the largeness of his knowledge , the freshness, fearlessness, and strength of his judgments." Johnson believed in maintaining an English literary cannon surpassing the literature of the other nations but that cannon was not supposed to be determined by any single critic. Unlike the modern critics like T. S. Eliot, F. R. Leavis, and Harold Bloom who believed in a certain kind of reordering of the English tradition, Johnson intermixed literary criticism, biographical information, and cultural context. Johnson was a great observer and the authority with which he expresses himself reveals his ability to observe. Thus, Johnson had received much acclaim from his contemporary critics as well as readers. James Boswell even made him the subject of what is often called the greatest biography in English, *The Life of Samuel Johnson, L.L.D.* (1791). Johnson was one of those writers to propose a kind of freedom from classical rules and prescriptions for literary composition. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, William Hazlitt, and the other critics of the eighteenth century criticised Johnson's neoclassical principles and disputed his evaluations of authors. Yet, his scope of writings made him what we may now call a public intellectual. In the 19th century, interest in Johnson was centered on his personality, which was also the subject matter of Boswell's biography. But it was only in the 20th century that his writings gained unprecedented attention.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 7: Write a note on the critical reception of the Johnson's *Lives of the English Poets*.

6.7 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, you learned about Samuel Johnson's life and works, and his significance as an eighteenth century writer. "Life of Cowley" not only helps you to understand Cowley's Life, rather it also throws light on the nature of Johnson's prose. Johnson as a literary figure of the eighteenth century, much like his contemporaries, gave importance to the purpose of writing. This biographical piece, more than just being a biographical writing, enlightens the reader about the characteristics of metaphysical poetry following which his views regarding metaphysical poetry, especially in relation to Abraham Cowley, becomes pertinent. By using the books suggested in the section below, you can learn more about this writer and his prose works.

6.8 FURTHER READING

Boswell, James. (2008). *The Life of Samuel Johnson (Penguin Classics.* Penguin Classics.
Boulton, T. James. (1971). Johnson: The Critical Heritage.Routledge.
Daiches, David. (1979). *A Critical History of English Literature:* The Restoration to 1800. New Delhi: Allied Publisher.
Fowler, Roger. (1973). *A Dictionary of Modern Critical Terms. London:* Routledge.

Johnson, Samuel. (1997).*Lives of the English Poets: A Selection.* New Delhi: Universal Book Stall.
Leitch, Vincent B. (ed). (2001). *The Norton Anthology:* Theory and Criticism. London: Norton & Company.
The New Encyclopedia Britannica, (Macropedia) Volume 22 , 15th Edition, 2005.
Wimsatt, W. K. *The Prose Style of Samuel Johnson.*

6.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: According to his biographer, Johnson's family was faring badly economically due to the debts of his father. So, as a child Johnson too began working in his father's bookshop, stitching books for his father and also acquiring knowledge of books simultaneously.

Ans to Q No 2: The poem 'London",*The Life of Richard Savage later in* 1744,the *Dictionary* in 1747, *Marmor Norfolciense, Compleat Vindication of the Licensers of the Stage,* the Idler Papers, *The False Alarm* (1770),*Thoughts…Respecting Falkland Islands* (1771), *The Patriot (*1774), *Taxation No Tyranny* (1775) *and so on.*

Ans to Q No 3: *The Lives of the English* Poets *was originally titled as Prefaces, Biographical and Critical, to the Works of the English* Poets and it was written during the period 1779-81.

Ans to Q No 4: Johnson begins the biography of Abraham Cowley by mentioning his predecessor Sir Thomas Sprat who had already produced a biographical work on Abraham Cowley. Johnson subtly criticises Sprat's work by claiming that it worked more in the manner of a panegyric. Minute details concerning the chronology of Cowley's life seems to be missing in Sprat's work. As such Johnson in the very beginning justifies the need for writing a well structured and chronological account of Cowley's life.

Ans to Q No 5: Thomas Sprat. But, Johnson subtly criticises Sprat's work by claiming that it worked more in the manner of a panegyric. Minute details concerning the chronology of Cowley's life seems to be missing in Sprat's work.

Ans to Q No 6: Johnson's method of writing the biography is marked by chronicling the concerned poet's life, and then offering a critical assessment of his work particularly by exploring metaphysical poetry.

Ans to Q No 7:Johnson is praised for maintaining an English literary cannon. Mathew Arnold in his *Johnson's Lives* (1878), summarised Johnson's contribution with very high regards to the writer. Unlike the modern critics like T. S. Eliot, F. R. Leavis, and Harold Bloom who believed in a certain kind of reordering of the English tradition, Johnson

intermixed literary criticism, biographical information, and cultural context. James Boswell even made him the subject of what is often called the greatest biography in English, *The Life of Samuel Johnson, L.L.D.* (1791).

6.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q1: What do you understand by the term biography? Discuss the role of Johnson as a biographer from your reading of Life of Cowley.

Q2: Critically analyse Johnson's role as a critic in the essay especially when he discusses the metaphysical poets.

Q 3: Write about Cowley's life as a poet from your reading of the "Life of Cowley".

Q 4: Write short notes on the following:

i. Biography as a literary genre

ii. Style and Technique in "Life of Cowley"

Q 5: Johnson's method of writing the biography is marked by chronicling the concerned poet's life, and then offering a critical assessment of his work. Discuss.

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UNIT 7 MAHATMA GANDHI: "PLAYING THE ENGLISH GENTLEMAN" (Chapter 15 from *THE STORY OF MY EXPERIMENTS WITH TRUTH)*

UNIT STRUCTURE

7.1 Learning Objectives
7.2 Introduction
7.3 Mahatma Gandhi: The Author
    7.3.1 His Life and Works
7.4 Introducing *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*
7.5 Chapter 15: Summary of the Text
7.6 Major Themes
7.7 Style and Language
7.8 Critical Reception
7.9 Let us Sum up
7.10 Further Reading
7.11 Answers to Check Your Progress
7.12 Model Questions

7.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- to discuss the genre of autobiographical writing
- to analyse with the writings of Mahatma Gandhi.
- explore the colonial discourse that shaped the identity of colonised natives.

7.2 INTRODUCTION

Autobiography is a form of writing which records the life of an individual by himself or herself. The term appears to have been first used by Robert Southey in 1809. According to Dr Samuel Johnson no man is better qualified to write his life than himself, but this is debatable. This is because memory may be unreliable and few can recall clear details of their early life and most are therefore dependent on other people's impressions, which are equally unreliable. Nearest to this form are the diary, journal, memoir and travelogue. Though these do not contain the full autobiographical elements, they contain many matters which reflect the life of their authors. It is to be distinguished from the memoir, in which the emphasis is not on the author's developing self but on the people and events that the author has known or witnessed, and also from the private diary or journal, which is a day-to-day record of the events in one's life, written for personal use and satisfaction, with

little or no thought of publication. Formal autobiographies offer a special kind of biographical truth: a life, reshaped by recollection, with all of recollection's conscious and unconscious omissions and distortions.

One's personal matters become the subject of an autobiography. It is a biography written by the subject about himself or herself.The first autobiography of any note was St Augustine's *Confessions* of the 4th century and it is an intensely personal account of spiritual experience and an extraordinary instance of deep psychological self-analysis of a kind that has become commonplace only in modern times. The purpose of autobiographical writings has been largely to inspire and disseminate ideas that would lead to progressive society. The subject of an autobiography largely understands his or her role in doing so.

In his *Ecclesiastial History,* Bede (c. 673-735) gave a brief account of his own life. Thereafter, there was not much noteworthy autobiographical work in the West. It was in 15th century that an unusual kind of spiritual autobiography in the shape of *The Booke of Margery Kempe* (1420) was produced by the mystic Margery Kempe. It was not until the 16th century that autobiographies became common. Some of the best known examples of autobiography produced in the Western countries include Benjamin Franklin's The *Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin,* Anne Frank's *The Diary of a Young Girl,* Nelson Mandela's *Long Walk to Freedom*, etc.

India is also known to have produced some of the most significant autobiographical writings that have influenced literature, thought and ideas universally. This include Mahatma Gandhi's *The Story of My Experiments with Truth,* Jawaharlal Nehru's *An Autobiography,* Nirad C Choudhuri's *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian,* Dr A.P.J.Kalam's *Wings of Fire* among others.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1. What is an autobiography?

Q2. Who used the word autobiography for the first time?

Q3. Give a few examples of autobiographies written by renowned people.

7.3 MAHATMA GANDHI: THE AUTHOR

7.3.1 His Life and Works

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (or Mahatma Gandhi as he came to be respectfully addressed by all Indians) wasborn on October 2, 1869, in Porbandar, India, a seacoast town in the Kathiawar Peninsula north of Bombay, India. His wealthy family was from one of the higher castes (Indian social classes). He was the fourth child of Karamchand Gandhi, prime minister to the raja (ruler) of three small city-states, and Purtlibai, his fourth wife. Gandhi described his mother as a deeply religious woman who attended temple (a place for religious worship) service daily. Mohandas was a small, quiet boy who disliked sports and was only an average student. At the age of thirteen he did not even know in

advance that he was to marry Kasturbai, a girl his own age. The childhood ambition of Mohandas Gandhi was to study medicine, but as this was considered beneath his caste, his father persuaded him to study law instead. After his marriage Mohandas finished high school and tutored his wife.

In September 1888, Gandhi went to England to study. Before leaving India, he promised his mother he would try not to eat meat. He was an even stricter vegetarian while away than he had been at home. In England he studied law but never completely adjusted to the English way of life. He became a lawyer in 1891 and sailed for Bombay. He attempted unsuccessfully to practice law in Rajkot and Bombay, then for a brief period served as lawyer for the prince of Porbandar.

In 1893 Gandhi accepted an offer from a firm of Muslims to represent them legally in Pretoria, the capital of Transvaal in the Union of South Africa. While traveling in a first-class train compartment in Natal, South Africa, a white man asked Gandhi to leave. He got off the train and spent the night in a train station meditating. He decided then to work to end racial prejudice. He had planned to stay in South Africa for only one year, but this new cause kept him in the country until 1914. Shortly after the train incident he called his first meeting of Indians in Pretoria and attacked racial discrimination (treating a certain group of people differently) by whites. This launched his campaign for improved legal status for Indians in South Africa, who at that time suffered the same discrimination as black people.

In 1896 Gandhi returned to India to take his family to Africa and to inform his countrymen of the poor treatment of Indians there. News of his speeches filtered back to Africa, and when Gandhi returned, an angry mob threw stones and attempted to lynch him. After his return to India in 1915, he set about organising peasants, farmers, and urban labourers to protest against excessive land-tax and discrimination. Assuming leadership of the Indian National Congress in 1921, Gandhi introduced the concept of Satyagraha and led nationwide campaigns for various social causes and for achieving Swaraj or self-rule. He strongly participated and spoke for the cause of religious unity, led masses to participate in non-cooperation movements as a way of protesting against British rule and favoured equality in all its forms.

His first achievement came in the form of the Champaran agitation in 1917 in which the local peasants raised their voice against the largely British landlords. This was followed by the Kheda Satyagraha which he actively participated with SardarVallabhbhai Patel. The Dandi March was another important part of the Non-Cooperation Movement initiated by Gandhi.Throughout his life, Gandhi preferred passive form of protest over brute force and violence.Even on the day of India's Independence, Gandhi spent the day not celebrating the end of the British rule but appealing for peace among his countrymen by fasting and spinning in Calcutta on 15 August 1947. This was because the Partition of India had gripped the Indian subcontinent with religious violence and the streets were filled with corpses. Gandhi, in despair because his nation was not responding to his plea for peace and brotherhood, refused to participate in the independence celebrations on August 15, 1947. On September 1, 1947, after an angry Hindu mob broke into the home where he

was staying in Calcutta, Gandhi began to fast, "to end only if and when sanity returns to Calcutta." Both Hindu and Muslim leaders promised that there would be no more killings, and Gandhi ended his fast. On January 13, 1948, Gandhi began his last fast in Delhi, praying for Indian unity. On January 30, as he was attending prayers, he was shot and killed by Nathuram Godse, a thirty-five-year-old editor of a Hindu Mahasabha extremist newspaper in Poona.

Gandhi was a prolific writer and his works had both a social and spiritual aim to fulfil. His first work was Hind Swaraj which was first published in 1909. It was translated into English the next year. He also edited several newspapers such as *Indian Opinion* in South Africa, and *Young India, Navajivan* and *Harijan* after his return to India. Gandhi's autobiography *The Story of My Experiments with Truth* covered the period from his childhood to his time in 1921.

7.4 INTRODUCING *THE STORY OF MY EXPERIMENTS WITH TRUTH*

The Story of My Experiments with Truth is the autobiography of Mohandas K. Gandhi, covering his life from early childhood through to 1921. It was written in weekly instalments and published in his journal *Navjivan* from 1925 to 1929. Its English translation also appeared in instalments in his other journal *Young India.* It was initiated at the insistence of Swami Anand and other close co-workers of Gandhi, who encouraged him to explain the nature of his philosophy and how his background has contributed a vital role in shaping him as the Mahatma.

The Introduction to his autobiography is written by Gandhi himself mentioning how he has resumed writing his autobiography at the insistence of Jeramdas, a fellow prisoner in Yerwada Central Jail with him. He ponders over the question a friend asked him about writing an autobiography, deeming it a Western practice, something "nobody does in the east".[1] Gandhi himself agrees that his thoughts might change later in life but the purpose of his story is just to narrate his experiments with truth in life. He also says that through this book he wishes to narrate his spiritual and moral experiments rather than political.

Autobiographers are motivated by different purposes - some have interest in telling their eventful lives, their ups and downs, their successes and failures, their struggles and frustrations and the complex human relations. Gandhi made an attempt in the autobiography to depict an image of simplicity and asceticism which are the essential qualities of a Mahatma. As a literary work the autobiography throws light on his interest in worldly affairs as much as his interest in spirituality. Gandhi's purpose in the autobiography was to tell the truth about himself and not to write history, even when he dwelt upon his reactions to the events of his time or shared some secrets which were of vital interest for historians

7.5 CHAPTER 15 : SUMMARY OF THE TEXT

The chapter titled "Playing an English Gentleman" narrates the dilemma faced by Gandhi during his time in London as a student.The chapter focuses on the "dietary experiments" of Gandhi in understanding the essence of life. In London, Gandhi's convictions regarding vegetarianism became even stronger when he read books written by Western authors

that proclaimed the benefits of vegetarian diet.From Howard Williams' *The Ethics of Diet,* he came to know that almost all philosophers and prophets since the beginning of civilisation, starting from Pythagoras to Jesus practised vegetarianism. Dr Allinson, a physician and an author, wrote books on dietary habits, health and hygiene. The writer prescribed a vegetarian diet to all his patients. Another writer's book which he read was Dr Anna's *The Perfect Way in Diet.* Gandhi, as a result of reading these books, began to take the role of health and food in life seriously. Later these readings enabled him to gain insight into religion as well.

In the meantime, Gandhi's host was persistent in his attempt to convert Gandhi into an Englishman. The former kept insisting that Gandhi should try consuming *meat as* he his physical constitution would suffer. Further he would never feel at home in England and end up being treated as a duffer. However, Gandhi politely refused the advice given by his friend. The friend made one last effort in reforming Gandhi so that he fit his immediate environment. Gandhi was invited to theatre and before the play began, they were supposed to dine out. They entered a restaurant called Holborn Restaurant which seemed very posh to the narrator. Inside, the duo was to have food in the company of other diners. Gandhi's companion believed the former would not dare to ask any question out of humility and have the food that was served. The first course comprised the soup and Gandhi wanted to ask what it was made of but his friend was separated from him by the large table between them and there were other diners sitting near him. So he decided to ask the waiter. This act, on Gandhi's part, offended his friend as it was not considered polite in Britain to question about the food that is served. He showed his annoyance by stating that Gandhi should have his food elsewhere since he was too clumsy for a decent society. This delighted Gandhi as he found a vegetarian restaurant nearby but to his misfortune, it was closed and he had to remain without food that night. Though his friend was cross at Gandhi's display of awkward behaviour at Holborn, the two remained friendly to one another. Therefore, Gandhi tried to appease his friend by absorbing those components of the British culture that did not radically defy his principles and practices. He began by accepting the sartorial practices of the British and dressing himself in a suit. He purchased a hat that cost him nineteen shillings and a suit from Bond Street for ten pounds. Gandhi felt that it was a waste of money but he made up his mind to merge in the British society as much as possible. He also requested his elder brother to send a double-chained gold watch. This gradual adaptation of elements from British social culture made Gandhi realise about the distinctive differences between Indian culture and the culture of the land he moved into for education. For example, he developed the habit of keeping his hair in place with his hand everytime he removed his hat.

Gandhi's adaptation of British culture was not merely confined to the sartorial practices. He was told that in order to become a perfect English gentleman, the person should also acquire the skills of dancing and elocution, and learn the French language. He began to take lessons in dancing but was unable to cope with it as his ear was unused to Western music. As such, he had to take another class for violin lessons for which he had to purchase

a violin and third, meant for developing. The teacher of the elocution class convinced him to buy a textbook called *Standard Elocutionist.* It was then, when Gandhi realised that he was not in England to spend his entire lifetime. He could learn violin even in India and he questioned himself how would dancing make a gentleman out of him. Realisation dawned upon him that he was in England to study law and it was his character which would shape him into a gentleman. Gandhi achieved more clarity about his ambition and discontinued his elocution and violin classes by explaining himself to the teachers. Nevertheless, his habit of remaining well dressed continued for many years but he was humbled by his experience and chose to ever remain a student and learn by experimenting in life.

7.6 MAJOR THEMES

Abstinence: One of the primary tenets of Gandhian philosophy and practice is abstinence. This includes abstinence not just only from violence of any form but also from the consumption of certain food such as meat and alcohol. Gandhi believed that abstinence or self restraint led to spiritual growth and the ability to live a disciplined life. He knew how to connect to the masses and so the confessions that he make in his autobiography essentially shows his ability to recognise his weaknesses and rectify them to lead a better life. The autobiography of Gandhi shows the power of abstinence or resistance towards an imposed witural tradition.

Conflict between Indian and Western Cultural Practices: In this chapter, the conflict that arises between Hindu cultural practices and the British way of life has been best represented in this chapter of *"My Story: Experiments with Truth"*. Gandhi's mind is in a state of conflict during his period of stay in London on account of the conflicting views between his own culture and British culture. This does not arise out of Gandhi viewing his own cultural practices as being superior to the other.

Resistance Posed by the Native: The autobiography seems to build up an entire discourse on how a native who initially wishes to imitate the life style of those who colonised his land, later poses a challenge to the practices of the same. Gandhi's refusal to accept non-vegetarian food in spite of being coaxed by friend strongly comes from his unshakeable belief in his principles. While the friend attempts to condition Gandhi into thinking that consumption of non-vegetarian food is the norm in England, Gandhi maintains his resistance. He decides to prove himself correct by engaging in an experiment. He reads books supporting a vegetarian diet which were written by authors from the same society that considered a vegetarian as an odd one . Gandhi also attempted to appease his friend by attempting to learn elements from the British culture such as dancing, music and elocution. But far from finding this learning process as fruitful and satisfying, he realises that he was in a way trying to imitate the British, perpetuating shallow materialism. As a young man, he would hardly develop his character by merely learning such skills sans any pleasure.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 4. What were the books read by Gandhi that increased his conviction regarding vegetarianism?

Q 5. Why did Gandhi's host/friend advised against maintaining vegetarianism in England?

Q 6. What classes did Gandhi take in England?

7.7 *STYLE AND LANGUAGE*

The language used by Mahatma Gandhi in this chapter from *"The Story of My Experiments with Truth"* is essentially simple and easy to comprehend. Like the other chapters in his autobiography, the chapter "Playing the English Gentleman" has also been written in a clear and concise manner, adding elements of humour too. For instance, his effort to blend with the British society and the blunders he commits has been described in a conversational tone. It humanises him and the reader sees Gandhi, not as the Mahatma, but as an everyman. He suffered the same kind of social awkwardness and commits the same social faux pas as any other Indian native who moved to a new land and tries to adjust with his surroundings. Gandhi maintains humility in his life narrative by frankly describing his flaws and the lessons he learnt through experiments in life.

This was done to reach out to the common masses of India and to express his spiritual ideas for a good cause. In the first part of the chapter, Gandhi informs the readers about his dietary experiments that led him to read numerous dietary books by Western authors who wrote on the benefits of vegetarianism. One of the most important goals of Gandhi was to make the Indians conscious of the relevance of self-discipline and self-rule. Gandhi believed that a person's habits affected not only his health but also his thought process and that in turn affected the society. As such, in his writings, Gandhi frankly writes about the problems he faced while attempting to remain a vegetarian in England and also his attempts to understand and blend with the British around him. The experiments enlightened him about his own identity, life path to be taken and the need to preserve his difference. He realises that is his character and principles that would make him a gentleman and not his attempts to imitate the British.

7.8 CRITICAL RECEPTION

When Gandhi began writing *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, it took almost five years to be completed. He continued writing the time he was imprisoned at Yerwada Central Jail near Pune, Maharashtra. Then it first appeared as a series in the weekly Gujarati magazine Navjivan during 1925-1928, which was published from Ahmedabad, India. Later it was translated in the English language. *The Story of My Experiments with Truth* was first published in the United States in 1948 by Public Affairs Press of Washington. Gandhi wrote in his autobiography that the three most important modern influences in his life were Leo Tolstoy's *The Kingdom of God is Within You,* John Ruskin's *Unto This Last*,

and the poet Shrimad Rajchandra. The work has been seen as an influential work in shaping global thought and ideas.

7.9 LET US SUM UP

To sum up, from this unit we come to know about the life and works of Mahatma Gandhi, his philosophy and the of behind the experiments with truth. We have also discused the varicrus experiences of Gandhi as reflected in the presribed text. In additon, we have highted some of the major themes as well style and language employed by Gandhi in his work.

7.10 FURTHER READING

1) Cuddon, J.A. *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory.* Penguin: London, 1999(Rpt).
2) Gandhi, Mahatma. *The Story of My Experiments with Truth.* Penguin: London, 2001(Rpt).

7.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q1: Autobiography is a form of writing which records the life of an individual by himself or herself.
Ans to Q2: Robert Southey in 1809
Ans to Q3: Benjamin Franklin's *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin,* Anne Frank's *The Diary of a Young Girl,* Nelson Mandela's *Long Walk to Freedom,* Jawaharlal Nehru's *An Autobiography,* Nirad C Choudhuri's *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian,* Dr A.P.J.Kalam's *Wings of Fire*.
Ans to Q4: Howard Williams' *The Ethics of* Diet, Dr Anna's *The Perfect Way in Diet* and Dr Allinson's book on health and hygiene.
Ans to Q5: Because Gandhi's physical constitution would be affected. Further he would never be at home in England and he would be considered a duffer by the people around in him.
Ans to Q6: Classes in dancing, playing violin and elocution.

7.12 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q1. Write an essay on autobiography
Q2. In what ways did Gandhi attempt to become an English gentleman? Illustrate with examples from the text.
Q3. Discuss the themes present in "Playing the English Gentleman".
Q4. Write a short note on the language and style used by Gandhi in "Playing the English Gentleman".

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UNIT 8: J. S. MILL: EXTRACT FROM *AUTOBIOGRAPHY* CHAPTER 1 ON CHILDHOOD AND EARLY EDUCATION

UNIT STRUCTURE

8.1 Learning Objectives
8.2 Introduction
8.3 J.S. Mill: His Life and Works
8.4 Summary of Chapter 1
8.5 Major Themes
8.6 Style and Language
8.7 Let us Sum up
8.8 Further Reading
8.9 Answers to Check Your Progress
8.10 Model Questions

8.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- provide an introductory note to J S Mill's Autobiography mainly to the chapter 1 entitled "Childhood and Early Education"
- discuss the life and works of J S Mill
- explain brief summary of the chapter "Childhood and Early Education"
- discuss the major themes of the text.
- gain a comprehensive idea of style and language of J S Mill's literary work
- appreciate the text in its totality

8.2 INTRODUCTION

John Stuart Mill is one of the great British philosophers of the Victorian world whose writings on social and political theories have been widely read by the readers through the ages. He is known for several writings on scientific methodology and logic as well as a great volume of essays on socio-political life.His book *Autobiography* is a clear elucidation of his early formative years of his life and his fascinating details of his education that has prepared him as one of the great thinkers of 19th century Western world. The book contains several parts starting with his educational journey of learning Greek and other languages upto his realisation of the need of emotional education side by side the lack of which cause a kind of chaos into the human mind. This book will definitely help those readers who are familiar with Mill's philosophical ideas and theories to know how he has built the foundation of his life surrounded by a kind of intellectual atmosphere where many famous personalities had been residing during the time. It is said that a man is known by

the company he or she keeps. J S Mill had the advantage to be around with wise people; no wise human being will have the fools and rogues around him.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1. Who is J. S. Mill?
Q2. What is the full name of J. S. Mill?
Q3. For which theory J. S. Mill is famous?
Q4. Write the name of the autobiography of J. S. Mill.
Q5. When did Mill start learning Greek?

8.3 J. S. MILL: LIFE AND WORKS

John Stuart Mill (1806-1873), born to James and Harriet Burrow Mill, was one of the leading political philosophers in the nineteenth-century intellectual life of London. He is rightly called as "the most influential English-speaking philosopher of the nineteenth century". He was a brilliant child from the early age of his life as he took interest in accumulating knowledge from diverse fields. In his autobiography, he clearly has talked about his education and discussed his interest in Greek as well as in English literature. He was well-acquainted with Lucian, Isocrates, Diogenes Laërtius and famous six dialogues of Plato. Along with Greek and English, he had also learned physics, arithmetic and astronomy.

J. S. Mill was a utilitarian, a naturalist as well as a liberal, whose writings reflect the outcome of a systematic empiricist attitude of an individual. The famous Utilitarian Jeremy Bentham has immensely influenced his views and philosophical ideas. Mill has massively contributed to the various fields of knowledge including ethics, economics and logic in the Victorian era. Though during his adult life he went through a kind of mental crisis eventually he had overcome the grave situation by opening himself up to the realm of poetry.

When sixteen years old, Mill started a debating society involving the Utilitarians to talk over and make popular the ideas acquired from his father James Mill, his friend Jeremy Bentham, and many others. He furthermore began to publish on various socio-political issues, writing almost fifty significant articles and reviews before he attained age of twenty. But in 1823, Mill cast off his focus on a political profession and accepted a respectable position at the East India Company where he continued to work for thirty-five years.At the age of twenty-five he has met another influential personality Harriet Taylor whose political philosophy had greatly shaped his thoughts. It seems that Mill's acquaintance with the issue of Utilitarianism was based on the writings of others, particularly John Herschel, William Whewell, Alexander Bain and August Comte. He was a member of the Liberal Party as well as the second member of Parliament (in 1832) to call for women's suffrage after Henry Hunt. He was a successful propant of Utilitarianism, the ethical theory developed by Jeremy Bentham. Mill was the first Member of Parliament to introduce a bill demanding for the woman to be given the vote.

Though he was beaten, he strongly safeguarded his position and it was an imperative milestone for the campaign demanding voting rights. Mill also called for the extension of the vote to all adult people as well as the introduction of the system proportional representation. Mill vehemently opposed the system of slavery and the atrocities of colonial rule in the West Indies. Even though Mill was allied to the Liberal party, he seemed to be more radical than other liberal members of the parliament. He became eminent as a writer, producing numerous significant political and philosophical works. In 1834 , he founded the *London Review* and just after two years later brought the *Westminster Review* - assimilating the two into an leading *London Magazine.*

J S Mill's most significant literary works are:

1 *System of Logic* (1843)
2. On Liberty (1859)
3. *Utilitarianism* (1861) and
4. *An Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy (1865)*

The main argument he puts forth in his famous essay, "On Liberty" is that there are some higher pleasures and that an individual should be educated to these higher forms of dreams. "On Liberty" involves an ardent defense of free speech. Mill maintains that free discourse is a necessary condition for the intellectual and social development. His work "Utilitarianism" is heavily influenced by the ideas he obtained from Jeremy Bentham and James Mill. Here he discusses principles of happiness. It gives the idea that a person must always act so as to yield the greatest collective happiness among all conscious human beings, within reason. He wrote a good number of treatises on the issue of women, such as *'The Subjection of Women'* (1861) as he was strongly advocating the right to vote extending to the women folk.Mill articulately wrote down how the subjugation of women was based on a set of biased views and ideas which were severely hampering the growth of humanity.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q6. Mention the parents name of J S Mill.
Q7. Name the birth place of J S Mill.
Q8. Who was the great personality who had influenced Mill a lot?
Q9. What were the subjects Mill was expert in?
Q10. Whose writings have tremendously influenced Mill regarding his belief in Utilitarianism?
Q11. What are the most significant literary works of J S Mill?

8.4 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 1

J. S. Mill begins his Autobiography with the essay "Childhood and Early Education" by systematically considering whether his description of his biographical details help readers

in their understandings. In this part he basically incorporates the issues related to his father who has immensely shaped the life of his son, his study of Greek and English language, logic, poetry, history and economics. Moreover, the chapter also deals with the issues related to the solitary childhood of the author as well as the education he received after being in touch with a circle of great personalities.This section of the book primarily concentrates on his early education in which his father being aware of his genius paved the path of his. Being a champion of utilitarianism Mill is concerned too much with practicality and usefulness of his description of his biographical details. Justifying the need of education that he had had in his childhood as "unusual and remarkable", the biographer says in the first chapter,*But I have thought that in an age in which education, and its improvement, are the subject of more, if not of profounder study than at any former period of English history, it may be useful that there should be some record of an education which was unusual and remarkable, and which, whatever else it may have done, has proved how much more than is commonly supposed may be taught, and well taught, in those early years which, in the common modes of what is called instruction, are little better than wasted.*

He strongly urges his readers not to proceed far while reading his work if they do not find any interest in it. At the inception of the chapter "Childhood and Early Education", Mill has elaborately discussed how his father, in spite of having so many hurdles of life, has provided him the proper intellectual ambience that helped him being in touch with different subjects from the very tender age of his life. He is the man who has tried "to give the highest order of intellectual education" to the author.

Mill began the study of Greek language at the age of three only and took up Latin between his seventh and eighth years. At that time, he started going through those Greek and Latin books including *Aesop's Fables,*Plato's *Dialogues*, Xenophon's *Anabasis and Cyropaedia* as well as *Memorials of Socrates.* His attentiveness and his close association with his father is best reflected when he started making notes on slips of paper while reading and telling its summary of it to his beloved father the following day. His close link with books of different disciplines including history books is well marked when he talks about great literary works like Robertson's histories, Watson's *The Reign of Phillip II* and *The Reign of Phillip III*, Hooke's *History of Rome,* Rollin's *Ancient History,* Burnet's *History of My Own Time,* Miller's *Historical View of English Government,* Mosheim's *Ecclesiastical History,* McCrie's *Life of John Knox,* and Sewel's and Rutty's *Histories of the Quakers.*

He was also familiar with numerous Latin and different Greek classical poets whose writings have tremendously influenced and provided him a great amount of knowledge. Some of the Latin works he has mentioned are Bucolics of Virgil and the first six books of the *Aeneid;* all of Horace apart from the *Epodes*; the Fables of Phaedrus; some plays of Terence; the first five books of Livy; all of Sallust; a substantial part of Ovid's *Metamorphoses;* several of Cicero's Orations and of his writings on oratory. He has also

read *Iliad* and Odyssey thoroughly. Alongwith the study of Greek and Latin language, J S Mill also tried his hand in writing poetry but not in Greek and Latin as his father did not want him to do it because being a calculative man as well as,an utilitarian he thought that was not worth the time that it required. Therefore, the verses he basically composed were written in English Language.

In the part "Self-conceit" J S Mill describes how his father has guarded him against boasting of his knowledge and taught him not to be 'self-conceited' because having too much pride on knowledge or power destroys the person. Mill's father seems to be the torchbearer of his son's life who taught him to be humble and submissive when it was necessary. He always guarded him from the evils hidden within our own selves like pride, self-conceit, vanity etc. We are more easily attracted by evil and vice than by virtue and goodness. Mill has comprehended that we have to curb that tendency because one evil act or company will lead us away to more evils. An individual should never compare his or her pool of knowledge with that of other individuals; one should not say to the self that 'I am such and such' or 'I can do so and so'. Everybody may not be having similar favorable ambiances to develop or to acquire knowledge in life. Mill had the 'unusual advantage' of having a father who had constantly been a friend, philosopher and a guide for him.

One of the major books that has contributed largely to Mill's education is undoubtedly *History of India* written by his father. In the section "History of India" he discussed how the content of the book has made him aware of the contemporary society, administrative system, history as well as human civilisation. In Mill's opinion of the book, it is "one of the most instructive histories ever written-if not the most-and one of the books from which most benefit can be derived by a mind engaged in making up its opinions". The book reveals the practical nature of his father who was appointed as one of the assistants of the Examiner of India Correspondence-officers under East India Company.

In the last section "Solitary Childhood" Mill discusses how he could not get the chance to have enough interactions with other boys of his age because his father was apprehensive of 'the contagion of vulgar modes of thought and feeling' that could have been exercised upon him by other boys. He admits the fact that being too much absorbed in education he had not been able to give emphasis on physical education at that time. His amusements were generally of quiet kind as he did not have boy companion for any physical activities. Unlike him, his father was very much energetic "but the children of energetic parents frequently grow up unenergetic, because they lean on their parents, and the parents are energetic for them."

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

12. What are the main topics as discussed in the first chapter of Autobiography by Mill?
13. What are the major history books Mill has gone through in his early part of life?
14. What are the major Latin works Mill seems to be well-acquainted with?
15. Who has played a major role in the life of J. S. Mill?

8.5 MAJOR THEMES

Utilitarianism:J. S. Mill is a firm believer in Utilitarianism, a set of principles based on the conviction that an action is morally right if it benefits the majority of people. In his Autobiography he discusses the formation of utilitarian society composed of youngmen agreeing in the vital principles-acknowledging utility as their standard in both ethics and politics.The standard of utility holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to encourage happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the opposite of happiness. Utilitarianism seems to be the major theme in most of his writings.

Unpretentiousness: One of the important motifs discussed in the Autobiogr aphy of J S Mill is undoubtedly his genuine approach to life. Nowhere in the work does Mill seems to be boasting of his voracious knowledge. He himself declares that "My state of mind was not humility, but neither was it arrogance". He is a man of discipline who comprehends well that pride and arrogance based on human knowledge can make a person vulnerable to ruin or destruction. His unpretentiousness shown throughout the work reflects his personality and his attitude towards life. He confesses that "I did not estimate myself at all."

Childhood: One of the major themes that play a significant role in his work Autobiography is undoubtedly the formative time period of Mill's life, i.e. Childhood. It was the time when his mental faculties were shaped by the famous personalities with whom he had close connection all through his life. But it cannot be considered that his life was totally molded by the shadows of those renowned personalities. In spite of being in touch with the most highly cultured and well-educated people in the society, especially with a political class of London, he shined in his life with his own efforts. Even though Mill was brought up in the Utilitarian school of Jeremy Bentham, he wished to provide a refined form to the philosophical idea of Utilitarianism. Mill sought to differentiate the higher and lower forms of happiness which was not done by that school. He mentions in his work "Utilitarianism", "It is better to be a human dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied."

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 16. Name two important themes in J S Mill.
Q 17. What is Utilitarianism?
Q 18. "It is better to be a human dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied." Who said this?

8.6 STYLE AND LANGUAGE

John Stuart Mill's prose style seems to be of very high quality that displays his vast array of knowledge.His narratives are the food for the intellectual minds only; he seems to

appeal to a particular section of the readers who are inquisitive of knowledge and ideas. Politics appear to be one of the important topics of discussion in his writings. He is a strong supporter of the theory of Utilitarianism. He believes in the principle of utility. None of his major writings seem to be independent of his political, moral or social agenda.

Mill's language is not so difficult to be understood though it has a kind of magnitude. For most of his literary works he has chosen serious subjects which can impart knowledge to the readers. They are full of wit and intelligence which can be noticed in the writings of Victorian masters. His political bent of mind is due to his position as a member of Parliament.His style of writings is enriched with precision and lucidity owing to his awareness of vast range of knowledge gathered from various sources including Greek and Latin. He does not use language ambiguously; he appears to have a clear cut vision what he actually wants to deliver to the readers.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 19. Write the name of the subject Mill has dealt mostly with in his writings.
Q 20. Is he a strong supporter of the theory of Utilitarianism?
Q 21. What is the nature of the language used by J S Mill?

8.7 LET US SUM UP

J. S.Mill is one of the firm believers of Utilitarianism and he started adopting utilitarian principles fromthe very early age of his life owing to his brilliant education and the constant support he got from various personalities of the Victorian period. His vast extent of knowledge was fortified by the books of different languages including Greek, Latin and English which had been referred by his father James Mill.Though initially he believed in the free market idea of Scottish economist Adam Smith, he was later influenced by utilitarian socialist principle and started supporting more the ideas of Socialism including eliminating the wage system and substituting with a co-operative wage structure.

Like a psychologist of the nineteenth century, he firmly believes that the performance and the character of a child are the result of the experiences he or she gathers as a child on earth. This fact is well-reflected if readers consider Mill's life, childhood and his journey of education. His display of proficiency as a writer as shown in the first part of his *Autobiography* is definitely the consequences of the lives of famous personalities he was encircled with and the experiences he collected from various situations.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 22. What does the performance and character of a child depend on?
Q 23. What were the languages in which Mill was an expert?
Q24. Who is Adam Smith?

8.8 FURTHER READING

1) Bain, C. (1904) *Autobiography,* London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1904.
2) Ball, T., (2010) "Competing Theories of Character Formation: James vs. John Stuart Mill", John Stuart Mill-Thought and Influence: The Saint of Rationalism, Georgios Varouxakis and Paul Kelly (eds.), London: Routledge.
3) Brink, D.(2013) *Mill's Progressive Principles*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
4) Brook, R.J.(1973) *Berkeley's Philosophy of Science.* The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1973.
5) Capaldi, N., (2004) *John Stuart Mill: A Biography,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
6) Clark, S.(2010) "Love, Poetry, and the Good Life: Mill's Autobiography and Perfectionist Ethics", Inquiry 53(6).
7) Devigne, R.(2006) *Reforming Liberalism: J.S. Mill's Use of Ancient, Religious, Liberal, and Romantic Moralities.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
8) Donner, W.(1991) *The Liberal Self: John Stuart Mill's Moral and Political Philosophy.* NY: Cornell University Press.
9) Jacobs, S.(1991) "John Stuart Mill on Induction and Hypotheses", Journal of the History of Philosophy. 29.
10) Kitcher, P. (1998) "Mill, Mathematics, and the Naturalistic Tradition", in J. Skorupski (ed.) The Cambridge Companion to Mill. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
11) Kuhn, T. (1962) *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions.* Chicago: Chicago University Press.
12) Loizides, A. (2013) *John Stuart Mill's Platonic Heritage: Happiness Through Character.* Plymouth: Lexington Books.
13) Losonsky, M. (2006) *Linguistic Turns in Modern Philosophy.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
14) Macleod, C. & Miller.(2017) *A Companion to John Stuart Mill.* Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
15) Reeves, R.(2007) *John Stuart Mill: Victorian Firebrand.* London: Atlantic Books.
16) Scarre, G.(1989) *Logic and Reality in the Philosophy of John Stuart Mill.* London: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
17) Zastoupil, L.(1984) *John Stuart Mill and India. Stanford,* CA: Stanford University Press.

8.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q1: J S Mill is one of the great British philosophers of the Victorian world whose writings on social and political theory have been widely read by the readers irrespective of time period.

Ans to Q2: John Stuart Mill

Ans to Q3: J S Mill is famous for the theory of Utilitarianism

Ans to Q4: Autobiography

Ans to Q5: At the age of 3 only.

Ans to Q6: James Mill and Harriet Burrow Mill
Ans to Q7: Answer: London
Ans to Q8: Jeremy Bentham.
Ans to Q9: Alongwith Greek and English, he was also expert in physics, arithmetic and astronomy.
Ans to Q10: Mill's acquaintance with the issue of Utilitarianism was based on the writings of others, particularly John Herschel, William Whewell, Alexander Bain and August Comte.
Ans to Q11: The most significant literary works of J S Mill are: *System of Logic* (1843), *On Liberty* (1859), *Utilitarianism* (1861) *and An Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy* (1865)
Ans to Q12: The main topics as discussed in the first chapter is Mill's Childhood and early education. Moreover, the chapter also deals with the issues related to the solitary childhood of the author as well as the education he received after being in touch with a circle of great personalities.
Ans to Q13: Mill's close association with the books of different disciplines including history books is well marked when he talks about great literary works like Robertson's histories, Watson's *The Reign of Phillip II* and *The Reign of Phillip III,* Hooke's *History of Rome*, Rollin's *Ancient History,* Burnet's *History of My Own Time,* Miller's *Historical View of English Government,* Mosheim's *Ecclesiastical History,* McCrie's *Life of John Knox,* and Sewel's and Rutty's *Histories of the Quakers.*
Ans to Q14: Some of the Latin works he seems tobe well-acquainted with are Bucolics of Virgil and the first six books of the *Aeneid;* all of Horace apart from the *Epodes;* the Fables of Phaedrus; some plays of Terence; the first five books of Livy; all of Sallust; a substantial part of Ovid's *Metamorphoses;* several of Cicero's Orations and of his writings on oratory. He has also read *Iliad* and *Odyssey* thoroughly.
Ans to Q 15: Mill's father James Mills is the torchbearer of his son's life who has taught him all the necessary lessons of life.
Ans to Q16: Unpretentiousness and Utilitarianism
Ans to Q 17: Utilitariansim is a set of principles based on the conviction that an action is morally right if it benefits the majority of people.
Ans to Q 18: J. S. Mill in his literary work "Utilitarianism".
Ans to Q19: Politics appear to be one of the important topics of discussion in his writings.
Ans to Q20: Yes, he is a strong supporter of the theory of Utilitarianism.
Ans to Q21: Mill's language is not so difficult to be understood though it has a kind of magnitude. It is marked by clarity and precision' no ambiguity can be noticed in it.
Ans to Q22: The performance and the character and of a child are the result of the experiences he or she gathers as a child on earth.
Ans to Q23:J S Mill's vast extent of knowledge was fortified by the books of different languages including Greek, Latin and English which had been referred by his father James Mill.
Ans to Q24: Adam Smith is a Scottish economist.

8.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q1. Why is J S Mill famous? Discuss.
Q2. Briefly discuss the theory of Utilitarianism as given by J. S. Mill.
Q3. How does J. S. Mill perceive the idea of happiness? Comment.
Q4. Name the books that J S Mill was well-acquainted with during his childhood days.
Q5. Discuss the contributions made by J S Mill in the field of literature and philosophy.
Q6. Make a note style and language of Mill's writings.
Q7. Discuss a major book that has greatly influenced J. S. Mill in his childhood.
Q8. Prepare a note on the childhood days of J. S. Mill.
Q9. How did the early education shape the mental faculties of J. S. Mill? Discuss.
Q10. What are the recurrent themes of Mill's work? Discuss.

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UNIT 9 : NIRAD C CHAUDHURI : "SHAKESPEARE IN TODAY'S ENGLAND"

UNIT STRUCTURE

9.1 Learning Objectives
9.2 Introduction
9.3 Nirad C. Chaudhuri: The Essayist
9.3.1 His Life and Works
9.4 Reading "Shakespeare in Today's England"
9.4.1 Explanation of the Text
9.5 Style and Language
9.6 Critical Reception
9.7 Let us Sum up
9.8 Answers to Check your Progress
9.9 Further Reading
9.10 Model Questions

9.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to

- develop an understanding of Nirad C Chaudhuri as an essayist
- form an idea on the works of the author
- appreciate the greatness of Shakespeare and his position in today's England
- discuss the style and technique of Nirad C Chaudhuri as a prose writer
- evaluate the critical reception of Chaudhuri

9.2 INTRODUCTION

In this unit we shall discuss the essay "Shakespeare in Today's England" by an eminent author Nirad C Chaudhuri. The essay that you are going to read is an excerpt from his second book titled *A Passage to England* published in 1959. The book is a collection of twenty- six essays containing the author's impressions of his short visit of five weeks to England, rounding it off with two weeks in Paris and one in Rome. It was his first visit abroad at the age of fifty-seven in the spring of 1955. In that short span of time, he saw more paintings, statues, and works of art in general, more plays, fine buildings, gardens and beautiful landscapes; he heard more poetry and music and altogether had a very exciting and interesting time. The essays that form the contents of the book have been arranged in four parts with the following titles for each part:

Part I: The English Scene

Part II: The English People
Part III : Cultural Life
Part IV : State of the Nation

The essay "Shakespeare in Today's England" is the first essay of Part III of the book. This essay, not unlike the other ones, brings out the author's deep understanding of English culture, Shakespearean theatre and audience and Shakespearean criticism through the ages. He had visited Stradford- upon Avon on a very special day. It was the 391st birthday of Shakespeare as started earlier. Even on his first visit he did not appear to be a stranger. He had carried with him to England a rich assortment of "book derived nations" from literature, history and geography. Accumulated since childhood, these ideas had built up a fairly comprehensive and homogenous picture of the country and its people. It is not surprising therefore that even in his first visit, he had been able to show an unusual awareness of the events that he saw happening around him.

A basic feature of Nirad C Chaudhuri's approach to the English scene, its celebrations, its cultural life and even the town of Stradford upon-Avon is his emphasis on the contrast that he brings out with India. It is this aspect of his writings that runs through the essay that we are going to discuss here. The essay has references to his visit to Paris where he spent two weeks as part of his European tour. He refers to his experience of watching a play by Racine, a French dramatist titled *Athalie* in the essay and tries to relate his experiences of watching Shakespeare's *As You Like It* at the Old Vic in London and *Twelfth Night* at the Memorial Theatre at Stratford. It is a very interesting essay that you are going to read in this unit.

9.3 NIRAD C CHAUDHURI : THE ESSAYIST

Nirad C Chaudhuri as an essayist has developed a love-hate relationship with his readers, especially his Indian readers. Yet, there are others who find it difficult to make up their minds about the essays of Chaudhuri. Interestingly in the West he had an excellent rapport. The *New Statesman* had a glowing tribute to his book *A Passage to England*:

"He has a poetical mind with a sceptical turn
and the English are lucky to have come under
His shrewd peeled gaze. He is at best direct
observation and writes like an angel..."

(Quoted from the Orient Paperback edition of *A Passage to England*)

The above quote makes two interesting points. First, Chaudhuri is a keen observer; he has a shrewd, peeled Gaze. Secondly, with his poetical mind with a sceptical turn, he "writes like an angel". Both these points are crucial in understanding his essays.

A basic character of his essays included in *A Passage to England* is his emphasis on the contrast between India and England. Even when he sat down by the bank of an English river, his thoughts were with the rivers of India he had known. The East-West divide is a defining factor of his essays. The essay taken for this unit can be seen as fairly representative of his writings included in this book. The essay, unlike those written on Shakespeare, reveals the originality of his approach to the subject. The essay shows a marked individuality in his approach. While watching the plays of Shakespeare or experiencing the modern- day Englishmen's attitude to Shakespeare, his main concern has been to find out for himself what is it that is in Shakespeare that makes the playwright so popular even today. In other words, he would like to find out why Shakespeare appeals to a modern audience. He had the same question in mind when he was watching a play by Racine in Paris. As an essayist, Chaudhuri had developed a distinctive style of his own. He was very conscious of the use of words and held the view that "the substance of a piece of writing cannot be separated from its style". He believes that "style is the subject itself". Yet, in India, he remains the most controversial author.

9.3.1 His Life and Works

Nirad C Chaudhuri was born on the 23rd November 1897 at Kishorganj in the Mymensingh district in East Bengal, now Bangladesh and died on 1st August 1999 after an eventful life of a hundred and one years. His writing life is equally impressive, extending so far over seventy- one years from 1925 to 1996, perhaps the longest in history. In its course, he had written fourteen books in English as well as Bengali, and poured out hundreds of articles and broadcasts.

He had his early schooling at Kishanganj where his father was a lawyer. He recalls that his father had taught him the use of the English language which he learnt "without tears but with tail". In 1910 when his family migrated to Calcutta, he stayed back in Mymensingh for his schooling, but a few months later he joined his family in Calcutta where he was admitted to a Bengali school. He passed the Matriculation in 1914. Even at that age, he had acquired a mastery of English syntax and idiom and an adequate vocabulary, so that when he entered college in 1914, he did not have to consult dictionaries for the meaning of words. In 1918 he took his BA degree with Honours in History at Scottish Church College, Calcutta and was placed in the 1st division. But somehow, he could not complete his MA in History from Calcutta University which sadly brought an end to his dream of becoming a Professor in History.

In 1921, he took up the position of a clerk in the Accounts Department of the Indian Army. That was the time when he began his writing career contributing articles for newspapers and magazines in Bengali and English. He got tired of his job in the Account Department and resigned his position there to start a career in journalism and editing. In 1932, he married Amiya Dhar, a well known writer herself. They had three sons. In 1938, he obtained

a job as secretary to Sarat Chandra Bose the brother of Subhash Chandra Bose as a result of which he was able to interact with eminent political leaders of India and from it he also gained knowledge of their ways, which he could never have otherwise. In an article on "The Gandhian Congress", he relates his experiences of his meeting with Gandhi when the great man stayed as a guest for several weeks in Sarat Chandra Bose's house. However, in 1941, he left Calcutta and moved to Delhi where he stayed on till 1970.

In Delhi, he worked as a commentator for All India Radio. But more than that, it was in Delhi that his writing career flourished with the publication of his first book *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian* in 1951. In 1955, he received an invitation from the British Council and the BBC for a five week visit to England, rounding it of with two weeks in Paris and one in Rome. He had presented a series of talks in the BBC of his experiences England and to Europe which came out in book form *A Passage to England* Published in 1959.

A list of his works with brief review notes on a few of them appears in the next section of the unit. Among his books *The Continent of Circe* received the Daft Cooper Award, a very prestigious literary award. He was the only Indian so far to have received the award. Another book *Scholar Extraordinary* received the Sahitya Academy Award in 1975. England too gave him due honours. He was honoured by the University of Oxford with the Degree of D.Litt. in 1990. But the honour that was close to Nirad C Chaudhuri's heart was the honour conferred on him by Queen Elizabeth II in 1992. He was made a CBE, commander of the order of the British Empire. It is an award given in Britain to some people for a special achievement. Moreover, he was awarded a Fellow of the Royal Literary Society. He stayed on in Oxford, living out a dream. Though over the years, he became more and more disillusioned with England. He died on the 1st of August 1999 barely two months short of his one hundred and second birthday.

Nirad C Chaudhuri was a prolific writer, writing both in English and in Bengali. He began publishing articles, in both these languages as early as the nineteen twenties when he was working in the Accounts Department of the Indian Army. Since then, he had been writing and had established his reputation as an ardent anglophile. His well known and much criticised dedication in *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian* was held as a proof of his love for the British people and British culture. He had dedicated his *Autobiography*

> *To the memory of The British Empire.... because*
> *all that was good and living within us was*
> *made, shaped and quickened by the same*
> *British Rule.*

It is beyond the scope of this unit on a single essay of the author to discuss all his works in detail here. Instead, attempt has been made to introduce you to the first six books

through brief reviews of each of these books. The other books are merely mentioned in passing. This does not intend to state that these books are of less value than the earlier ones. It is merely to minimise the load of this unit. Discussions on the books written in Bengali are not given either. He had written altogether seven books in Bengali:

1. *Bangla Jeabone Ramoni* (1968)
2. *Atmaghati Bangali* (1988)
3. *Atmaghati Rabindranath-I* (1992)
4. *Amar Devotwar Sampati* (1994)
5. *Atmaghati Rabindranath-II* (1996)
6. *Amar Desh Amar Shatak* (1996)

Nirad C Chaudhuri received international fame as a thinker and scholar mainly because of his books in English. Below an attempt is made to briefly present a review of the first six books:

1. *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian* (1951): The first monumental book *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian* brought Nirad C Chaudhuri to instant fame. The book is dedicated to 'the memory of the British Empire which conferred subject hood on us but without citizenship to which yet every one of us threw out the challenge…" The book describes the conditions in which India grew to manhood in the early decades of the 20th century. Though it is supposed to be an autobiography, the book turns out to be less of a personal story and more of a national history. Divided into four books, the first book "Early Environment" deals with the impressions formed in Chaudhuri's boyhood days of his birthplace Kishorganj, his ancestral village, his mother's village and England as gleaned from books and pictures that he come across. The second book covers the "First twelve years" of his life till his family left Kishorganj. Book III covers his education in Calcutta, his experiences of adolescence till his initiation into scholarship. On the other hand, Book IV brings him "into the world" Indeed *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian* is an extraordinary and penetrating study of the complex of social, political, racial and religious stresses of 20th Century India as seen through the eyes of Mr Chaudhuri.

2. *A Passage to England* (1959): The second book written by Chaudhuri is a collection of a series of impressions about his visit to Britain in 1955. This book divides into four parts beginning with "The English scene", followed by 'The English People', "Cultural life" and lastly "State of the Nation". A keen observer, Chaudhuri contrasts various perspectives of India ranging from its colours, culture and sensibility with those of the West. Naturally, a lover of everything that is British, Chaudhuri thinks highly of the different aspects of social behaviour of the English people. He is full of praise for the culture consciousness of the English people and equally sore at his countrymen's lack of sit. Similarly, he is full of praise for the English welfare state and laments that modern democracy in India has overlooked these vital issues. On the whole, the look is a perspective of the author's impression of the west vis-a-vis the East.

3. *The Continent of Circe* (1965): Chaudhuri's third book *The Continent of Circe* is sub-titled "an essay on the people of India". The book which the author calls on essay consists of 376 pages (Jaico). Besides an Introduction and an epilogue, the book is made up of fourteen chapters and two Appendices. The book is about the author's reflections on various issues related to India notably ethnicity and Hinduism. He presents his understanding of Indian life in which the Hindus figure as the singular character. In different chapters he deals with different aspects of Hindu life which he traces from the arrival of the Aryans to the sub-continent thousands of year ago from the West. He quotes extensively from the Vedas and the great Indian epics *The Ramayana* and *The Mahabharata* to support his thesis on the different aspects of Hindu way of life- the man-woman relationships through the centuries with the rise and fall of civilisation. Controversy apart, this is a very interesting book making enjoyable reading. This is the only book by an Indian author to receive the Duff Cooper Award.

4. *The Intellectual in India* (1967): This is Nirad C Chaudhuri's fourth book in which the author deals with the contemporary situation in India. As is obvious from the title of the book, the author first examines and describes the current conditions of intellectual activities and the situation facing the intellectuals in India. He observes that authoritarianism which runs deeps in politics and social life, hostility to intellectual activities, the precarious economic situation makes the intellectual feel frustrated if not wholly paralysed. He traces the history of three intellectual traditions– The Hindu, the Islamic and the Westernized traditions which formed part of a larger movement- the Indian Renaissance. Chaudhuri feels that the intellectual efforts of modern India had contributed towards the expansion in academic life, popularising of professions like medicine, law and teaching. He suggests the need for financial security of the intellectual and should produce at least half a dozen books during his active professional life so that he can settle down to live by his proper work. He suggests the importance of publishing in English. Besides one must write on such things on which the author feels deeply and sincerely. These suggestions make the book enjoyable.

5. *To Live or Not to Live* (1970): This is Nirad C Chaudhuri's fifth book. It is a relatively slim book consisting of 2015 pages , informal and discursive in approach. It deals with how we can have a happy social and family life under the conditions in which we are born in this country. This central theme of the book is presented in two parts: Part I dealing with Social life and Part II with Family life. The author recalls that when he first came to Delhi in 1942, the city consisted of two dominant elements: the Muslim traders and artisans and the Hindus of the trader "Bania' class who were segregated in separate *mohollas* and were equally important socially. But after independence and partition, the name Delhi was transformed into a Punjabi city overnight as the Punjabi refugees virtually swamped Delhi and gave it a new ethnic character. The author analyses the problems of a social life to thrive in such a heterogeneous society. He suggests that social life survives through communication between life minds.

Chaudhuri then moves on the role of the family in a happy life which constitutes part II of his book. He suggests that the joint family system must be swept aside both in theory and practice if any genuine satisfactory family life is to be built up in our society. He is prejudiced against the working women in the context of happy family life. What inspires the author here is a genuine concern for his countrymen, how they can be happy with others in their social and family life.

6. *Scholar Extraordinary* (1974): *Scholar Extraordinary* is a biography on Fredrich Max Muller who was a German Scholar and a thinker who made remarkable contribution to the study of Sanskrit and Sanskrit literature in Germany. The book had been the author's pain-staking labour stretching for a period of four years; but indeed, it was to him a labour of love. The author himself records in the book that it had been a memorable experience for him and not merely a task.

While introducing Max Muller, the author throws light on different aspects of the life of this celebrated Indologist who was a scholar and thinker. His prestige and profound scholarship has been acknowledged throughout the length and breadth of the globe. When he died on the 28th October 1900 messages of condolence began to power in from all over the world while writing the biography of such a celebrity, Mr Chaudhuri feels that a life of Max Muller is justified if it can show what the scholarly life and the scholar's personally really are. C.D. Narasimhaiah had considered this work of Chaudhuri an excellent work of scholarship.

Chaudhuri's other scholarly works include *Hinduism* (1979) in which he projects a number of his original ideas on Hinduism from a rationalistic parent of view. In 1987 he brought a post- script to his *Autobiography* is his *The Hand, Great Anarch!,* tracing the course of his life from 1921 when he was in search of a job and ends with an account of the writing and reception of his *Autobiography*. His *Clive of India* (1975), *Culture in a Vanity Bag* (1976), *The East is East and the West is West* (1996), *Three Horsemen of the New Apocalypse* (1997) and *From the Archives of a Centenarian* (1997) are other contributions to scholarship.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: What is the basic feature of Chaudhuri's approach to the English scene and its people?

Q 2: What do you mean by "love- hate relationship?

Q 3: What was the thought that came to Chaudhuri's mind when he was watching the two plays of Shakespeare?

Q 4: What was Nirad C Chaudhuri's aim in life? State whether he could achieve this aim.

Q 5: Briefly relate Nirad C Chaudhuri's work since his leaving college till his departure to Delhi.

Q 6: What were the honours conferred upon Nirad C Chaudhuri by
(a) The Queen of England and
(b) The University of Oxford?
Q 7: Why do you think that Chaudhuri's has been severely criticised?
Q 8: What is the book *A Passage to England* about? Answer within 100 words.
Q 9: What prize was awarded to the book a continent of Circe?
Q 10: Who is the *Scholar Extraordinary?*
Q 11: Name the second part of Chaudhuri's Autobiography.

9.4 READING "SHAKESPEARE IN TODAY'S ENGLAND"

9.4.1 Explanation of the Text

1. In the opening line of the essay, "this section of my account "refers to Part III of *A Passage to England*. The author gives the title "Cultural life" to this part of the book though he does not feel very happy about it. He is actually not happy with the word "Culture" because he has the apprehension that what he or for that matter an average Indian would consider to be "Culture", would turn out to the average Englishmen merely "amusement". He drew a sharp distinction between the terms amusement and culture.

2. The author visited Stradford upon- Avon, the birthplace of William Shakespeare on the day of the 391st birthday of the poet. Shakespeare was born on the 29th April 1564. So you can easily calculate the date of Mr Chaudhuri's visit to Stradford. Being the birthday of the poet and dramatist, Mr Chaudhuri expected that there would be some celebrations in honour of the birthday of the bard. He enjoyed the celebrations: there were speeches, procession, unfurling of flags, laying wreaths on the taint.

The author noted that the speeches were in the form of toasts meaning that the speeches were short mainly intended to wish aiming at wishing happiness (or success to somebody) while raising a glass of wine usually in course of a dinner.

The Menu for the luncheon was given in French since many of these dishes originated in France. This particular menu would read in English as follows:

Iced Melon
or
Meat Jelly
*
Cold Salman with asparagus and
mayonaise sauce
or
Cold Turkey and ham with salad
and new pototoes

*

Iced cake Shakespeare

*

Cheese

*

Coffee

The menu also included a choice of wines from a two-page wine list which for the honour of Stradford was qualified as the "Abridged wine list".

3. Chaudhuri found everything except the celebration of the birthday, in Shakespeare's relations with contemporary England quite novel to him. He found that the small town of Stradford was doing quite well on Shakespeare though he had the feeling that Shakespeare was dreadfully commercialised in that town. He was of course pleased to see that and even wrote about it to his family comparing Stradford with Kishorganj of his boyhood.

4-5. Here Chaudhuri draws a comparison between India and England. In India people and towns flourish on religion because religion is a living thing in India. An Indian town cannot flourish on a dramatist even Kalidas, unlike Stradford where Shakespeare has become popular entertainment.

6-8. The author recalls a visit to the Old Vic, a theatre in Waterloo Road London. Built in 1818, the theatre was famous for its notable productions of Shakespeare's plays. It was what is called a repertory theatre because every day the theatre offered several productions, a repertory of plays. In 1940, the theatre was bombed; but if was restored in 1950. In 1963, the National Theatre took over Old Vic and the Old Vic Company was dissolved.

The play that Chaudhuri saw at the Old Vic, *As you like It* is a light- hearted comedy. While watching the play, Chaudhuri had his eyes and ears on the audience too. He was amazed that the modern day film- viewing English audience could appreciate Shakespeare including the Elizabethan jokes.

9-10. At Stradford he saw *Twelfth Night* a comedy, and found it a delightful feast for his eyes on the lovely spectacles and to hear English spoken. Besides, Chaudhuri found Shakespeare had been able to please a modern audience as well.

11. The basic question that was uppermost in Chaudhuri was what Shakespeare appealed to a modern audience. He was not satisfied with the explanation given by the English. They usually told him that at Old Vic and at Stradford one had the best representation of Shakespeare by the best actors and producers. Chaudhuri liked to answer the question by stating that the English people have remained basically Elizabethan and had always been so.

12-15 The author recalls his experience of watching a French play in Paris. He was walking along Quai Malaquais, a street in Paris on the bank of the river Seine. At that moment his eyes were suddenly arrested by a placard in a newspaper stand which stowed that Racine's play *Athalie* was on at the Salle Richalieu. He rushed back to the hotel and got a seat booked. When he entered the theatre in the evening, he found the attendance to be even greater than at the Old Vic and at Stradford. Racine was a French playwright and *Athalie* is one of his later plays based on the Bible. The play was produced by Mme Vena Korene who also acted the part of *Athalie*. Chaudhuri found the play beautifully presented; the acting and elocution superb.

Here too Chaudhuri tried to find an answer to the question: the relation between a modern civilized people and their classics. He discovered that Frenchmen too could not give him a convincing answer. But Chaudhuri states he could find the answer by himself.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 12: Briefly describe how Stratford paid homage to Shakespeare on the391st birthday of the poet as perceived by Nirad C Chaudhuri.
Q 13: Where did Nirad Chaudhuri see *As you Like it*? Briefly describe his experience.
Q 14: Where did Nirad C Chaudhuri see *Twelfth Night*?
Q 15: Where did Nirad C Chaudhuri see *Athalie*? Briefly describe his experience.

9.5 STYLE AND LANGUAGE

In an essay titled "Apologio Pro Scripta Sua", Nirad C Chaudhuri talks about his style and technique of writing in vivid details. He states that he sets down in writing whatever comes to his mind. He tries to convert his mind into a camera to take the impression of whatever to which it is exposed, and thus create an exact equivalent of a photographic negative. His personal work is to develop the negative and then make a print. He does not allow anything of what was not present in the untouched negative to be in the print for pictorial effect.

This metaphor of the camera is central to Chaudhuri's writings. When the author books at a scene, he considers his situation to be similar to that of Wordsworth. What he was seeing was to him "an appetite; a feeling and a love". So when his English friends asked him about his impressions of his visit to a particular place, his reply was a camera metaphor: "I am carrying back exposed films. They will have to be developed before I say anything". (*Passage to England*, page 10)

The camera metaphor has affected the style of his essays in general and "Shakespeare in Today's England" in particular. A major portion of the essay is written in a descriptive prose that requires what the *New Statesman* review calls" a poetical mind", a "shrewd peeled gaze" and "direct observation". The description of the celebrations of

Shakespeare's 391st birth day which he had the privilege to see, is a striking example of his keen observation. He doesn't miss out "the speeches, the procession, unfurling of the flags, visit to the birthplace, laying of wreaths and posies on the tomb". Even the menu is a photographic replica of the one that might have been displayed for the benefit of the guests.

Chaudhuri's keen observation becomes evident in this description. The description is full of the imagery of sight (visual imagery), imagery of touch (tactile imagery), and imagery of small (olfactory imagery) among others. The description of the celebration of Shakespeare's birthday appeal birth to the eyes and the ears. The French words in the menu create the atmosphere of the festival often lightened up by playful humour.

Chaudhuri is at his wittiest when he observes the speakers in the celebration programme. He notes that the speeches were made by people who could be expected to know something about the poet. The speeches were convincing; they were sly remarks, not made by "politician or civil servants who thought they were conferring an honour on Shakespeare or of the most recommending his name for the Honours List". One can appreciate Chaudhuri's wit and human and his sly dig at politicians and civil servants.

Chaudhuri's critical bent of mind is never lost sight of even when he seems to "room delighted through the motley spectacle" of Stratford. He makes a very interesting observation on the bawdry jokes in Shakespeare's plays which traditionally Shakespeare critics were made to believe that Shakespeare had incorporated them with the aim of pleasing the groundlings. Chaudhuri points out that even a middle class audience that could easily pass as a film-watching audience thoroughly enjoyed the jokes.

His technique of presentation leaves a powerful impact on the reader's mind. His knowledge of the French language becomes obvious in the essay. He quotes French extracts giving the idea that he had read these works in their original and not in the English translation. He could appreciate Racine's play in French and even quotes a few lines from the play towards the end, whose English rendering would run as follows:

O promise! O Threat! O dark mystery!
What evils, what blessings are by turn predicated?
How can so much anger
Agree with so much love?

In fact Chaudhuri's scholarship gives shape to the style of his essay.

LET US KNOW

Metaphor: It is a figurative device used in spoken or written language where a comparison is not made very obvious, but is implied. The "metaphor of the camera" refers to Chaudhuri's attempt to take in the scenes around him in the way a camera takes in the

scenes or images that are within the range of the lens. Words like "negative", "exposed films" etc. belong to the area of photography.

Imagery: Language that produces pictures in our minds of people reading or listening. For example when one reads the description of the celebrations and the luncheon menu, the images of the food items are produced in the mind. We get the sight, smell, touch and taste of the items on display.

9.6 CRITICAL RECEPTION

The critical reception that Nirad C Chaudhuri had received has been a mixed one. At one side there are eminent literary critics. William Walsh and Jan Jack, Harish Trivedi and Khuswant Singh and on the other side, very few of course is C. D. Narasimhiah and V.S. Naipaul and a few others, each making an individual assessment of the author and his works and trying to arrive at a critical opinion about him.

Professor Bhabatosh Chatterjee of Calcutta University while introducing a research work on Nirad C Chaudhuri by Dr. Tara Sinha very rightly makes this point at the beginning when he says, "It is indeed difficult to make up one's mind about the work and the personality of Nirad C Chaudhuri..." Professor Chatterjee is rather unhappy with a lot of what Chaudhuri had written and does not hesitate to think of them as bearing "Traces of Juvenile irresponsibility". At the same time he feels that "the fact remains that we can't ignore him or dismiss him outright" Professor Chatterjee further states: "Whether Mr Chaudhuri has an original mind is a question not easy to answer but that his writings show a marked individuality, none will dispute. Again, his essays are extremely well written, and to say that he is an accomplished Journalist is not a disparagement".

This is indeed a high tribute by Professor Chatterjee to Nirad C Chaudhuri as an essayist. Dr Tara Sinha, whose book Professor Chatterjee is introducing had done a fairly objective assessment of Nirad C Chaudhuri and his works, though her critical study is comprised only to the first five English books. She finds Chaudhuri a man of letters comparable with some of the great literary figures and social thinkers and she has presented her finding with an academic conviction. She argues her views intelligently in her sociological study of his works. The stylistic study which constitutes Part III of the book is perhaps the best part of her work in which she forcefully places Chaudhuri's style of writing on a very high pedestal. Her study of the imagery and the Lexis in the narrative style of Chaudhuri makes enjoyable reading.

Professor William Walsh, a former Professor of commonwealth Literature at the University of Leeds, makes a comprehensive study of some of the works of Nirad C Chaudhuri. In *A Passage to England* Professor Walsh sees Chaudhuri as a writer with a gift for registering fresh impressions of what he observes about him and also as one capable of some highly subjective analysis of the British Welfare State.

In this context it would be interesting to refer to a critical response of Professor Walsh to Chaudhuri's *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian*. Professor Walsh's observation on Chaudhuri's style deserves special mention: "It is written in a masculine confident English of long balanced sentences, which combine a degree of formality with considerable ease and lissomness, and its oddity is a curiously Celtic use of continuous tenses. It is an idiom which is distinctly late Victorian in flavour..." (P 45-46) Chaudhuri believes that "the substance of a piece of writing can't be separated from its style". (Apologia) Thus, his style in *The Autobiography* is "wholly consistent with the period and sensibility of the writer".

However Professor C. D. Narasimhaiah does not seem to share the views of Professor Walsh. He finds Chaudhuri's style defective and is not at all happy with the book though he has the fullest praise for Nehru's Autobiography. This essay is referred to here because the views belong the contrary 'pole' and students can find a rope to debate on the issues raised. Interestingly, noted British author Ian Jack has called Nirad C Chaudhuri "the world's last Englishman" and considers him as "one of the world's finest writers of English. To support his claim, Jack refers to Chaudhuri's two volumes of autobiography without of course discounting his other writings, by stating that his works "have given the twentieth century a brave, unconventional and necessary witness" (P 41). It is indeed a significant appreciation by a British author on Chaudhuri's work.

However, in order to understand Nirad C Chaudhuri the man and the writer, one is constantly reminded of another critical response to his works by Professor Harish Trivedi. The title of Professor Trivedi's essay provides a paradox to Ian Jack's essay. Professor Trivedi calls Chaudhuri "The last Bengali Babu" not because "after a Life-time of perfecting an English style", he had chosen to write in Bangla "while keeping presumably to the same non-Bengali diet" but because he finds that his flair for collective flagellation and self excoriation seems to work even better in his own language then in English. Professor Trivedi seems to jokingly remind his readers of the Bengali meaning of babu which correlates with the very British apparel that he dons when he is out of home.

Finally, one would like to refer to the critical response to Chaudhuri's work by his life- long friend, the noted author Khuswant Singh who had the highest regard for his scholarship "No Indian, living or dead, had written the English language as Nirad C Chaudhuri", states Singh in open admiration of his works. Referring to *A Passage to England*, Singh observes that the book received the most glorious reviews in the English Press. Three editions were rapidly sold out and it had the distinction of becoming the first book by an Indian author to have become a best-setter in England. Singh considers Nirad C Chaudhuri as "a scholar extraordinary."

9.7 LET US SUM UP

The primary focus of the unit is on the essay "Shakespeare is Today's England". But before taking up the essay, attempt was made to introduce the author by looking at his merits as an essayist followed by an account of his life. We also discussed briefly a few of his books written in English before taking up the essay whose full text is given in the unit. The text of the essay is followed by a discussion on the main issues of the essay covering every paragraph and glassing the difficult words. The French extracts have been rendered into English for the comprehension of the readers. In a separate section the style and technique of the author is discussed in the context essay. This discussion is followed by a selection of some critical reception to the author and his works. It is expected that these responses would sharpen your sensitivity towards the author and his works.

9.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: See 4.2 paragraph 3.
Ans to Q No 2: It is a relationship in which your feelings for somebody are a mixture of love and hatred.
Ans to Q No 3: He wanted to find out for himself what is if that is in Shakespeare that makes the playwright so popular even today. (see 4.3)
Ans to Q No 4: He wanted to be a Professor of History. No, he could not achieve his aim as he could not complete his MA in History.
Ans to Q No 5: See 4.3.1
Ans to Q No 6: (a) The commander of the order of the British Empire in 1992.
(b) The degree of D.Litt.in 1990.
Ans to Q No 7: Because of the dedication to the memory of The British Empire.
Ans to Q No 8: his visit to Britain in 1955. (see 4.3.2 p.2)
Ans to Q No 9: Duff cooper Award
Ans to Q No 10: Fredrich Max Muller
Ans to Q No 11: Thy Hand, Great Anarch (1987)
Ans to Q No 12: See point 2 of 4.4.1
Ans to Q No 13: See point 6-8 of 4.4.1
Ans to Q No 14: See point 9-10 of 4.4.1
Ans to Q No 15: See point 12-15 of 4.4.1.

9.9 FURTHER READING

Chaudhuri, Nirad C. (1952). *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian*. New Delhi: Jaico Book.
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Walsh, William. (1990). *Indian Literature in English.* Longman. pp. 45-53.

9.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

1. Give brief answer to the following questions:
   (a) "I have given the title 'Cultural Life' to this section of my account.. .... "
   (i) What does the author mean by 'account' here?
   (ii) Is the author happy with the title?

   (b) Nirad C Chaudhuri considers himself to be one of the last surviving Bengalis who were brought up in that cult.
   (i) Give the meaning of 'cult'.
   (ii) What cult does the author refer to?

2. Why did the author find nothing unusual in the celebrations which he saw at Stratford-upon- Avon?
3. Briefly state how Nirad C Chaudhuri compares Stradford-upon-Avon with Kishorganj.
4. What is Nirad C Chaudhuri's view on Kalidas?
5. What is the Old Vic? Relate the author's experience at the Old Vic.
6. Discuss the author's observation on the audience that came to Old Vic.
7. Discuss the author's observation on the behaviour of the audience during the performance of *As You Like It.*
8. What is the "typical stage trick" that the author refers to in the context of Rosalind's speech in the epilogue?
9. What does the author state about the performance of *Twelfth Night*?
10. Why, according to Nirad C. Chaudhuri, does Shakespeare appeal to a modern audience?

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UNIT 10: BERTRAND RUSSELL: "THE IMPULSE TO POWER"

UNIT STRUCTURE

10.1 Learning Objectives
10.2 Introduction
10.3 Bertrand Russell: The Essayist
10.3.1 His Life and Works
10.4 Reading "The Impulse to Power"
10.4.1 Explanation of the Text
10.5 Style and Language
10.6 Critical Reception
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:

- discuss Russell's life and works in sufficient detail
- outline Russell's philosophy on the concept of power
- summarise the basic intellectual preoccupations of Russell
- trace Russell's development as a major intellectual of the twentieth century
- appreciate the lucid and logical style of his writing

10.2 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, you will get an opportunity to read the essay "The Impulse to Power" written by the Nobel winning author and scientist Bertrand Russell. Russell was born on May 18, 1872, at Trelleck, Monmouthshire, England. His full name was Bertrand Arthur William Russell. He was an English logician and philosopher and was known more for his social and political campaigns supporting both pacifism and nuclear disarmament. Russell received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1950. Known mostly for his campaigning for peace, he spent his life as a popular writer on social, political, philosophical and moral subjects. During his lifetime, he published more than 70 books and about 2,000 articles, married four times, became involved in innumerable public controversies, and was honoured and hated in almost equal measure throughout the world. In the essay "The Impulse to Power" Russell is primarily concerned with the concept of power. He believes

that all the major courses of human history have been the result of power. While others talk of economic or military forces, for Russell, all these forces are but elements of that larger whole—power. He firmly believes in the need to understand both the concept and the role of power. For the social sciences, understanding this is a must. He also traces the roots of power to the human imagination which knows no barriers and distinguishes man from animals on the basis of this. Whereas animals are happy to merely live and reproduce, man's capacity for imagination makes him dissatisfied. He longs for whatever his imagination can think of. This is the basis for his hankering after power.

10.3 BERTRAND RUSSELL: THE ESSAYIST

10.3.1 His Life and Works

Bertrand Russell was born on 18 May, 1872 at Ravenscroft (now Cleddon Hall), Trellech, Monmouthshire, in Wales. His paternal grandfather, John Russell, 1st Earl Russell, was the second son of John Russell, 6th Duke of Bedford. Queen Victoria had wanted Russell's grandfather to form a government, serving her as Prime Minister in the 1840s and, later, in the 1860s. Such was the prominence of the family. In fact, the Russells had come to power and had been raised to the level of the aristocracy many centuries earlier, when England had been ruled by the Tudor dynasty. They were one of Britain's leading Whig (Liberal) families, participating in great political events such as the Dissolution of Monasteries in 1536-40, the Glorious Revolution in 1688-89, and the Great Reform Act in 1832.

Russell's mother was Katherine Louisa (1844 - 1874). She was the daughter of Edward Stanley, 2nd Baron Stanley of Alderley, and the sister of Rosalind Howard, Countess of Carlisle. In defiance of the strict moral codes of the age, Russell's father, Viscount Amberley, was an atheist. His mother had an affair with Douglas Spalding, the biologist, with her husband's conse nt. Both advocated birth control at a time when this was considered taboo. Russell's godfather was John Stuart Mill who died the following year Mill's writings had a great effect upon Russell's life. Frank, Russell's brother was about seven years older than him, and his sister, Rachel, was four years older. Russell's mother died of diphtheria in 1874. Soon after, Rachel, too, passed away. In January 1876, Russell's father died of bronchitis following a long period of depression. Frank and Bertrand came to stay with their grandparents, who lived at Pembroke Lodge in Richmond Park. John Russell, 1st Earl Russell, his grandfather, died in 1878. As a result, his widow, the Countess Russell (née Lady Frances Elliot) dominated Russell's childhood and youth.

Conservative in her views on religion, the countess did not want her grandsons to grow up as agnostics as was stipulated in Amberley's will. She petitioned a British court and had that clause set aside. In other areas, however, she held progressive views and accepted Darwinism and supported Irish Home Rule. She had a great influence on Bertrand

Russell's outlook on social justice. Perhaps it was this that made him stand up for his principles, without compromise, in his later life. Her favourite Bible verse, 'Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil' (Exodus 23:2) was to be his guiding spirit, too. The childhood of Frank and Bertrand, however, was not totally free of complications. The emotional repression and formality of Pembroke Lodge caused Frank to rebel, but the young Bertrand learned to hide his feelings.

LET US KNOW

Russell's *Autobiography* tells us how lonely he was and how he often contemplated suicide. But for his interest in Euclid—a contribution of Frank who introduced him to the work—and his grandfather's vast library, Russell had little to occupy his fertile mind. His major interests, he tells us, were sex, religion and mathematics, and he claims that it was his passion for mathematics that kept him away from committing suicide.

A scholarship for the Mathematics Tripos at Trinity College, took him to Cambridge in 1890. Here, he befriended G. E. Moore and came under the influence of Alfred North Whitehead. Through the latter he gained admittance to the Cambridge Apostles. He soon displayed his brilliance, graduating with a B.A. in mathematics in 1893 and adding a fellowship in philosophy in 1895. He also met the American Quaker, Alys Pearsall Smith, when he was seventeen years old and soon became a friend of the family. He travelled with them to the continent and visited the Paris exhibition of 1899 besides climbing the Eiffel Tower after its completion. Falling in love with Alys, he married her on 13 December, 1894, much against the wishes of his grandmother.

Alys was a graduate of Bryn Mawr College near Philadelphia. Soon after, in 1901, Russell tells us how, while he was out on his bicycle, it struck him that he no longer loved her. When she actually asked him if he loved her, he replied that he did not. Russell also disliked Alys's mother whom he found controlling and cruel. The marriage began to fall apart and they finally divorced in 1921, after a lengthy period of separation. During this period, Russell had passionate (and often simultaneous) affairs with a number of women, including Lady Ottoline Morrell and the actress Lady Constance Malleson.

During the First World War, Russell engaged in pacifist activities. Convicted under the Defence of the Realm Act, Russell was dismissed from Trinity College in 1916. A later conviction resulted in six months' imprisonment in Brixton prison. He was released in September 1918. He traveled to Russia as part of an official delegation in August 1920. The delegation had been sent by the British government to investigate the effects of the Russian Revolution. Here he met Lenin and had an hour-long conversation with him, but, as he says in his autobiography, he found Lenin rather disappointing and he sensed an "impish cruelty" in him. He also cruised down the Volga on a steam-ship. Russell's lover Dora Black also visited Russia around the same time. She was very enthusiastic about the revolution, but Russell's experiences destroyed whatever little support he had for it earlier.

Soon after, Russell went to Beijing to lecture on philosophy for one year, accompanied by Dora. In China, Russell fell ill with pneumonia, and the Japanese press released incorrect reports of his death. Later, when Russell and Dora visited Japan on their return journey, Dora notified the world that "Mr. Bertrand Russell, having died according to the Japanese press, is unable to give interviews to Japanese journalists." This, of course, did not find much favour with the Japanese press who did not appreciate the sarcasm. Back in England by 26 August, 1921, with Dora six months pregnant, Russell had to arrange a quick divorce from Alys. He married Dora six days after the divorce was finalised, on 27 September, 1921. Two children were born to them—John Conrad Russell, 4th Earl Russell, born on 16 November, 1921 and Katherine Jane Russell (afterwards Lady Katharine Tait) born on 29 December, 1923. During this period Russell found himself writing popular books, explaining matters of physics, ethics, and education to the layman. There were rumours around this time that he was also having an affair with Vivien Eliot, who was T. S. Eliot's wife. He also founded the experimental Beacon Hill School in 1927 with Dora, who continued it until 1943. Russell had left it in 1932.

Russell was famous all over the world by now, even outside academic circles. He wrote frequently for magazines and newspapers—and was as frequently written about. Often his views on wide ranging subjects were solicited, and he found himself speaking in programmes broadcast by the BBC. In 1948, while he was on his way to Trondheim to deliver a lecture, his plane crashed. Of a total of 43 passengers, 24 survived—and Russell was one of them. In the King's Birthday Honours of 9 June 1949, Russell was awarded the Order of Merit. The following year he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature. At the time of bestowing the Order of Merit, King George VI was somewhat embarrassed because had been in jail. He said, "You have sometimes behaved in a manner that would not do if otherwise adopted." Russell merely smiled. Later on he claimed that he almost replied, "That's right, just like your brother"!

Meanwhile, his marriage to Peter was proving to be a very unhappy affair and, in 1952, the two were finally divorced. This resulted in an estrangement from Conrad, his son by Peter. It was only in 1968 that Conrad decided to meet his father again—a decision that led to a permanent rift in his relations with his mother. On 15 December 1952, Russell married for the fourth time. This time the lady was Edith Finch, who had been a teacher of English literature at Bryn Mawr College and whom he had known since 1925. Edith remained with him until his death. This one time, at least, the marriage seems to have been a happy one. Proof of this can be found in an unlikely fact. John, Russell's son by Dora, was seriously ill mentally, and so was his wife, Susan. Dora had frequent disputes with her erstwhile husband over this. Later on, two of the three daughters of John and Susan were also diagnosed with schizophrenia. Notwithstanding all such unpleasantness, Edith and Russell became the legal guardians of the three girls. This would argue a close, understanding, trusting and supportive relationship between the two.

Political causes, primarily related to nuclear disarmament and the Vietnam War, occupied Russell during much of the 1950s and 1960s.. The Russell-Einstein Manifesto of 1955 was a document calling for nuclear disarmament and was signed by 11 of the prominent nuclear physicists and intellectuals of the time. Many world leaders also received letters from him during this period. Lionel Rogosin's anti-war film *Good Times, Wonderful Times* had his unstinted approval and Russell was constantly in touch with Rogosin during the making of the film. To many of the youthful members of the New Left, Russell was a hero. America's aggressive policies in the 1960s met with Russell's stern disapproval and he became increasingly vocal in his criticism of American policy. In 1963 he became the very first recipient of the Jerusalem Prize, an award honouring writers who were concerned with the freedom of the individual in society. In 1965 he tore up his Labour Party card when he felt that the party was going to send soldiers to support the Vietnam War.

The three volumes of Russell's *Autobiography* were published in the years 1967, 1968, and 1969. Although he became frail, he remained lucid and clear thinking till the day he died. On 23 November, 1969 he wrote to the Times newspaper stating his 'alarm' over the preparation for show trials in Czechoslovakia. That month itself, he wrote an appeal to the Secretary General of the United Nations, U. Thant, to support an international war crimes commission to investigate allegations of "torture and genocide" by the Americans in South Vietnam. Then, a month later, he lodged his protest with Alexei Kosygin over the expulsion of Alexander Solzhenitsyn from the Writers Union.

On 31 January, 1970, Russell issued a statement condemning Israel's aggression in the Middle East and asked Israel to withdraw from territory it had occupied in 1967. This is what he said:

"The tragedy of the people of Palestine is that their country was "given" by a foreign power to another people for the creation of a new state. The result was that many hundreds of thousands of innocent people were made permanently homeless. With every new conflict their numbers increased. How much longer is the world willing to endure this spectacle of wanton cruelty? It is abundantly clear that the refugees have every right to the homeland from which they were driven, and the denial of this right is at the heart of the continuing conflict. No people anywhere in the world would accept being expelled en masse from their own country; how can anyone require the people of Palestine to accept a punishment which nobody else would tolerate? A permanent just settlement of the refugees in their homeland is an essential ingredient of any genuine settlement in the Middle East. We are frequently told that we must sympathise with Israel because of the suffering of the Jews in Europe at the hands of the Nazis. […] What Israel is doing today cannot be condoned, and to invoke the horrors of the past to justify those of the present is gross hypocrisy."

This was to be Russell's final political statement. It was read out a day after his death at the International Conference of Parliamentarians in Cairo on 3 February, 1970. The next day, 1 February, at his home, Plas Penrhyn, in Penrhyndeudraeth, Merionethshire, Wales, Russell spent a quiet time. However, on the morning of 2 February Russell claimed he

felt unwell and remained in bed until almost noon. That evening, while he was reading, he suddenly fell ill. His wife and nurse called his doctor, got him to bed and gave him oxygen, but it was too late. Russell died of influenza before the doctor arrived. Upon his death, his peerage descended on his eldest son, John, Viscount Amberley, who became the fourth Earl. Russell was cremated at Colwyn Bay on 5 February, 1970. According to his wishes mentioned in his will, there was no religious ceremony. His ashes were scattered over the Welsh mountains.

He was undoubtedly the founder of Analytic Philosophy and he had great influence on mathematical logic. Perhaps among his major contribution is his making language—or, at least, how we use language—a central part of philosophy. He had a lot of faith in science and, as such, made it one of the principal components of his philosophy. Indeed, his entire method of enquiry was scientific. It could be that this belief in science made Russell write a great deal on matters ethical and religious. He firmly believed that established religion, with its inability to change with the times, posed as a barrier to knowledge and to progress. Undoubtedly Russell's influence on philosophy has been nothing if not major.

Besides this, Russell was vocal on many issues. He was a leading political activist, vocal, bold and severe in his criticism. At a time when the entire western hemisphere was totally involved in the war, Russell spoke out loud in favour of peace. His pacifism as well as his views on nuclear weapons is evident in a number of his essays. Indeed, the essay "The Impulse to Power" is one such example. Russell had great hopes on Communism, but his visit to Russia made him disillusioned with the experiment. As a member of the Fabian Society—a group that wanted to bring about socialism through parliamentary reform—Russell remained a staunch supporter of the socialist cause. He also wrote in favour of Women's suffrage and against racism. His views on sexuality outraged the prim and proper Victorian society. He, for instance, spoke in favour of trial partnerships before marriage, and of easy divorce in marriages where no children had been born. Such ideas may no longer be considered shocking in our own times, but to Russell's contemporaries they were outrageous and he had to suffer often for his views.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Who was Russell's god father?

Q 2: What does Russell's *Autobiography* tell about him?

Q 3: How is Russell connected to Ludwig Wittgenstein?

Q 4: Which branch of philosophy is known by the name of Russell?

Q 5: Do you agree that Russell was a political activist who campaigned for peace? Discuss.

Let us begin with a clear understanding of the fact that it is impossible to write about Russell's work in just a page or two. So vast was the area of this giant's activity that it would need volumes to just list his work.

In the previous section, you have already gained some ideas regarding the works of Russell. Russell began publishing his work in 1896 with *German Social Democracy*. This was to be the beginning of a lifelong interest in political and social theory. In 1896, he taught the German social democracy at the London School of Economics. In 1937 he also lectured on the science of power in the same institution. In 1902, the Fabian campaigners Sidney and Beatrice Webb had started the Coefficients dining club of social reformers. Russell, too, became a member.

He wrote the essay "On Denoting" in 1905 and it was published in the philosophical journal *Mind*. In 1908 Russell became a fellow of the Royal Society. The first of three volumes of *Principia Mathematica*, written with Whitehead, was published in 1910. Along with the earlier *The Principles of Mathematics*, this soon made Russell world famous in his field. In 1911, he became acquainted with the Austrian engineering student Ludwig Wittgenstein. In Wittgenstein Russell found a genius and he hoped that this brilliant man would continue his work on logic. Wittgenstein often suffered from various phobias and had frequent bouts of despair. Attending to these often drained Russell's energy, but he continued to be fascinated by him and encouraged his academic development. This constant care resulted in the publication of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus* in 1922.

Russell's marriage to Dora was not destined to survive. Her having an affair with the American journalist, Griffin Barry—and the two children who resulted from the affair—caused the relationship to break apart. They separated in 1932 and finally divorced. Never able to remain single, four years later, Russell married his third wife, an Oxford undergraduate named Patricia ("Peter") Spence. She had been his children's governess since the summer of 1930. Russell and Peter had one son, Conrad Sebastian Robert Russell, 5th Earl Russell, who was to become a prominent historian and one of the leading figures in the Liberal Democrat party in his own turn.

After the Second World War, Russell taught at the University of Chicago for some time, and then at the University of California, Los Angeles. He was appointed professor at the City College, New York in 1940. However, a protest begun by the mother of a student of the college resulted in a public outcry. The protest was due to his views relating mainly to sexual morality, which he had written about ten years earlier in his *Marriage and Morals.* The matter went to court and Russell was judged to be 'morally unfit' to teach. His appointment was annulled Many intellectuals protested his treatment and Dewey and Horace M. Kallen edited a collection of articles on the CCNY affair in *The Bertrand Russell Case*. He soon joined the Barnes Foundation, lecturing to a varied audience on Russell soon began a series of lectures on the history of philosophy for the Barnes Foundation—a series that would turn out to be the basis for his phenomenal work, *A History of Western*

Philosophy, which was published in 1945. This book became a bestseller and provided him with a steady income for the rest of his life. His relationship with the eccentric Albert C. Barnes, however, was an eccentric one. Russell soon discovered that it was impossible for him to get along with the man, and so he returned to Britain in 1944 to rejoin the faculty at Trinity College.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 6: What were some of the works of Russell that had a profound effect on the study of various subjects?

10.4 READING "THE IMPULSE TO POWER"

10.4.1 Explanation of the Text

Men are different from animals both intellectually and emotionally. The major difference between man and other animals is that the actions of animals arise from hunger, fear or the need to reproduce. Some sleep and only wake up to feed. Others stay awake to feed or to escape from enemies. It is only man who experiences desire that are without limits. Most men have to work hard to earn a living and do not have any time for other activities. However, even when men do not have to work for money, they still remain active. Russell cites examples from history to show that even when their livelihood was taken care of, men still carried out other activities ranging from conquering nations to writing scientific treatises, to founding religious orders. Most men have this trait. He cites a common example of women who want to look better than others or men who hanker for recognition – even in the form of a knighthood. Such desires are fuelled by the imagination and men go to great lengths to turn them into reality. It is because of imagination that we restlessly seek satisfaction—even though we know that perfect satisfaction is something that man can never have. Only God can have it because he has the ultimate in kingdom, power and glory. Men only have that which is transient. Nothing in the world of man is everlasting. Yet men still seek infinite power and glory in a finite existence.

Animals are content with living and reproducing. Man, on the other hand, wants all that his imagination can dream of—even to the extent of being God! Russell refers to John Milton's depiction of Satan in *Paradise Lost* and says that men too are similar in their desire for power and their refusal to acknowledge that there is a limit to what man can achieve. It is because of this that men wish to become all powerful. The problem with this is that when all men want to become all powerful there can be anarchy. This is why we need government, compromise, restraint, and at the same time we also have rebellion and violence. This is also why we need morality—for the sake of restraining one's own desire for power.

The foremost desire of man is power and glory. Although the two are different, usually power brings glory. Therefore they are pursued equally and, for this very reason, Russell is of the opinion that they may be treated as one. Whereas Karl Marx and other economists believed that man's basic need was for commodities and that these needs could be easily fulfilled, Russell believes that this is far from the truth. Man's desires are driven by his need for power. This is seen in his quest to be a lawmaker or a collector of great paintings. Money, for Russell, is merely the means to power. Russell believes that only when we understand this central fact against the mistake of the economists that we shall be able to understand history in its proper perspective.

Russell states his intention of proving that 'power' is a fundamental concept just as 'energy' is in physics. He contends that power, like energy, can have many forms, and that each is interlinked with the rest. For instance wealth may result from military power; but it may just as well result in military power. The laws of social dynamics, says Russell, can only be stated in terms of power—not in terms of any individual fragment of power. The usual tendency is to look at either economic power or military power or even the power of propaganda as the only power that has created our history. Therein lies the error. Just as, in physics, one needs to understand that energy continually changes from one form to another, similarly, in the study of social sciences, it is important to understand that power, too, constantly changes from one form to another. Only then will we stop committing the same errors.

Different societies have different equations of power—in the sense that the power of the individual or the power of the government may be different under different forms of rule. Thus, for instance, hereditary monarchy, the needs of the church, democracy or war can produce four different kinds of eminent individuals.

If there is no such system as a monarchy to limit the number of individuals who rise to power, then it is likely that the ones who desire power more than the others will generally attain it. Love of power is not the same in all individuals. For many other desires are more important than power. This is why the changes that come about in society are dictated by those who love power and, therefore, possess it. Since it is the business of the social sciences to study these changes, it must be well understood that the motive for power is chiefly responsible for these changes.

The laws of social dynamics, Russell contends, can only be stated in terms of various forms of power. Hence, all forms of power need to be classified, and the way in which organisations or individuals have gained control over other men need to be studied. In a bid to emerge out of the eighteenth and nineteenth century into the modern period, Russell proposes to introduce a different method of analysis than that of the economists. This, he believes, will make the present and the near future more intelligible. He stresses on the

need to understand both ancient and medieval history—just as he stresses on the need to emerge from the mores of thought of the nineteenth century—for the sake of progress.

Thus, you will find that in this essay Russell is primarily concerned with the concept of power. He believes that all the major courses of human history have been the result of power. While others talk of economic or military forces, for Russell, all these forces are but elements of that larger whole—power. He firmly believes in the need to understand both the concept and the role of power. For the social sciences, understanding this is a must. He also traces the roots of power to the human imagination which knows no barriers and distinguishes man from animals on the basis of this. Whereas animals are happy to merely live and reproduce, man's capacity for imagination makes him dissatisfied. He longs for whatever his imagination can think of. This is the basis for his hankering for power.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 7: In what ways, does Russell contrasts men with animal?
Q 8: How does Russell views the idea of power?

10.5 STYLE AND LANGUAGE

His clear and logical style contributes to the lucidity of his prose. This capacity for clear and precise thought is also displayed in his division of paragraphs. Each paragraph has one central idea that develops organically from what precedes. His vast knowledge makes it possible for him to glide effortlessly through different disciplines and to talk of a concept from one discipline to demonstrate another concept from a different discipline. A case in point is his use of the concept of 'energy' from Physics to illustrate the concept of 'power' from the social sciences. Moreover his language is also simple and fluid—resulting in the eminent readability of his writing. Considering all this, it is not difficult to understand why Russell is considered one of the greatest thinkers in the world.

Russell himself comments that a style is not accepted unless it is an intimate and almost an involuntary expression of the personality of the writer. Russell's own prose style determines his own personality. Proper organisation of materials, the use of anecdotes, humorous use of language are some of his qualities as a prose writer. He likes to write in a simple and short sentences, his anecdotes add to a more 'informal' style and a sense of immediacy helps Russell in reconstructing the lives of his parents who died just after his birth. However, 'authenticity' is presented by their verification by written documents like letters written to and by his parents. This generates a believability in the representation and telling of the narrator.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 9: Comment on Russell's style of writing.

10.6 CRITICAL RECEPTION

You have learnt that Russell is generally recognised to be one of the important founders of Analytic Philosophy. At the beginning of the 20th century, alongside G. E. Moore, Russell was considered responsible for the British "revolt against Idealism". Russell was particularly critical of a doctrine of internal relations which held that in order to know any particular thing, we must know all of its relations. Russell's logical work with A. N. Whitehead continued this project. Russell's *Autobiography* exemplifies his intuitive nature trying to reach at the core of the issues. His metaphysical idealism and scientific nature as expressed in the Autobiography and other writings invited critical attention. The last volume of Bertrand Russell's *Autobiography* received little attention when it first appeared, not long before his death. Yet it raised a number of questions and doubts which were relevant to the thinking of radicals and liberals in the United States and in Western Europe. His views regarding politics and religion are still valid and contextual in the contemporary world. A great deal of philosophical discussions in the contemporary English speaking world can be traced back to Russell. In fact, the works of Russell founded the basis of modern logic. Although his works were basically concerned with the principles of mathematics and logic, it implications could be visible in the world of philosophy in general. Thus Russell came to have an enormous influence on the twentieth century thought.

10.7 LET US SUM UP

By now, you must have gained sufficient ideas on the kind of a man Bertrand Russell is. Bertrand Russell is often recognised to be one of the important founders of Analytic Philosophy and a great thinker of the 2oth century. Besides being a philosopher, Russell was also a vocal and bold political activist. During World War I, he spoke out loudly in favour of peace. His pacifism as well as his views on nuclear weapons is evident in a number of his essays. The essay "The Impulse to Power" is one such example. In the essay Russell is primarily concerned with the concept of power. He believes that all the major courses of human history have been the result of a never-ending thrust for power. As a prose writer, Russell displays logical clarity—a style of writing that contributes to the lucidity of his prose.

10.8 FURTHER READING

1) Anderson, Linda. (2001). *Autobiography*. London: Routledge.

2) Clark, Ronald W. (1978). *The Life of Bertrand Russell*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
3) Monk, Ray. (1997). *Bertrand Russell: The Spirit of Solitude.* London: Vintage.
4) Moorhead, Caroline. (1992). *Bertrand Russell: A Life*. London: Sinclair-Stevenson.
5) Russell, Bertrand. (2004). *Power: A New Social Analysis*. London: Routledge.
6) The New Encyclopedia Brittanica. (Micropedia). Volume 10, 15th Edition, 2005.

10.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: Russell's godfather was John Stuart Mill. Mill's writings had a great impact upon Russell's life.

Ans to Q No 2: Russell's *Autobiography* tells us how lonely he was and how he often contemplated suicide. He was interested in Euclid and his grandfather's vast library. His major interests, he tells us, were sex, religion and mathematics, and he claims that it was his passion for mathematics that kept away him from committing suicide.

Ans to Q No 3: With *The Principles of Mathematics*, Russell became world famous in his field. In 1911, he became acquainted with the Austrian engineering student Ludwig Wittgenstein in whom he found a genius and he hoped that this brilliant man would continue his work on logic. But, Wittgenstein often suffered from various phobias and had frequent bouts of despair.

Ans to Q No 4: Russell was the founder of Analytic philosophy and he had great influence on mathematical logic. He had a lot of faith in science and, as such, made it one of the principal components of his philosophy. Indeed, his entire method of enquiry was scientific.

Ans to Q No 5: Russell was a vocal and bold political activist. During World War I, Russell spoke out loud in favour of peace. His pacifism as well as his views on nuclear weapons is evident in a number of his essays. Indeed, the essay "The Impulse to Power" is one such example.

Ans to Q No 6: *Principia Mathematica, Marriage and Morals, Autobiography, A History of Western Philosophy*

Ans to Q No 7: The major difference between man and other animals is that the actions of animals arise from hunger, fear or the need to reproduce. It is only man who experiences desire that are without limits. Animals are content with living and reproducing. Man, on the other hand, wants all that his imagination can dream of—even to the extent of being God! The problem with this is that when all men want to become all powerful there can be anarchy. This is why we need government, compromise, restraint, and at the same time

we also have rebellion and violence. This is also why we need morality—for the sake of restraining one's own desire for power.

Ans to Q No 8: Russell believes that all major courses of human history have been the result of power. While others talk of economic or military forces, for Russell, all these forces are but elements of that larger whole—power. He firmly believes in the need to understand both the concept and the role of power. Men long for whatever his imagination can think of. This is the basis for their hankering for power.

Ans to Q No 9: Russell is clear and logical in his style. He likes to write in simple and short sentences. Each paragraph has one central idea that develops organically from what precedes. However, his interest in maintaining 'authenticity' generates a believability in the representation and telling of the narrator.

10.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q1. Describe the contributions of Bertrand Russell to the field of modern English prose.
Q2. "His clear and logical style contributes to the lucidity of his prose". — Discuss in relation to any of the prose pieces by Russell you have read.
Q3. What idea of power do you get after reading Russell's essay "The Impulse to Power"? Discuss.
Q4. Give a summary of the essay "The Impulse to Power" by Bertrand Russell in your own words.
Q5. Discuss the life and works of the famous essayist and mathematician, Betrand Russell.
Q6. Comment on the critical reception of Bertrand Russell as an essayist.
Q7. Attempt an analysis of Bertrand Russell as a political activist with reference to "The Impulse to Power".

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UNIT 11 : ANNE FRANK: *SELECTED ENTRIES FROM THE DIARY OF A YOUNG GIRL* I

UNIT STRUCTURE

11.1 Learning Objectives
11.2 Introduction
11.3 Anne Frank: The Diarist
11.3.1 Her Life and Works
11.4 The Context of Anne Frank's Diary
11.5 Selected Entries from the Diary
11.6 Let us Sum up
11.7 Further Reading
11.8 Answers to Check Your Progress
11.9 Model Questions

11.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- provide an introduction to the Anne's diary writing
- gain an insight into the life of Anne Frank
- discuss the writings of Anne Frank as an avid diarist
- explain the context in which Anne Frank wrote her diary
- appreciate the significant genre of diary writing
- explain the content of both her introductory entries in her personal diary
- grasp the times in which she lived and wrote
- further explore the experiences recorded in the diary

11.2 INTRODUCTION

The present unit takes up selected entries from the diary of Anne Frank published as *The Diary of a Young Girl,* with the aim of stirring deep interest in the learner towards exploring the life of this young soul and her timeless diary. Anne's diary records some of the precious moments of her short-lived life, her moving experiences during the time of Jewish persecution and remains as a testimony written during one of the darkest periods of world history- the holocaust. It stands as a priceless document that not only records her own personal experiences but also that of those around her and the grave crises that had shattered the lives of the Jewish people. Thus, the unit discusses Anne Frank's diary entries in the context of this period and takes up selected entries from her diary to reflect on the experiences that she had recorded.

The learner may have certainly read or heard about the 'Holocaust' which by far is one of the greatest human tragedies that involved mass genocide of the Jewish people

by the Nazis under the dictatorship of Adolf Hitler during the time World War II. The Nazis had persecuted over six million European Jewish people and also those of Romani and Slavic origins as well from the period of 1941 to 1945. Antisemitism or in simple words racial and religious hatred was an acute problem among the Germans who considered themselves racially superior and politically powerful enough to decide on arriving at what they referred to as a 'final solution' of exterminating or in other words eliminating an entire race i.e. Jews in particular in German occupied Europe.

11.3 ANNE FRANK: THE DIARIST

Diary writing is a form of reflective writing that falls under the broad category of life writing. The personal diary is like a record of one's subjectivity that includes a person's feelings and experiences, intellectual thoughts and ideas, information and observation among a range of other significant aspects. The person who maintains a diary with relevant diary entries or records is known as a diarist. Where it concerns a personal diary, it is more like a personal journal or account that is generally written without the intent of publication or a wide readership. Diaries are in a way autobiographical in terms of its content although autobiography as an established literary genre differs from the same. This spontaneous form of self-expression is interesting in its own way and provides sufficient material or information for various literary forms and genres both fictional and non-fictional. Although, diary writing is an age old practice, one of the most important diarists in the history of English literature is Samuel Pepys who worked for the English navy and his diary entitled *Diary of Samuel Pepys* (1660) had provided sufficient information on some of the major events that took place during the Restoration period. There were many other posthumous (after the demise of the diarist) publications in the 19th century which included journals of the English novelist Fanny Burney published in and the diary of an English lawyer, Henry Crabb Robinson's *Diary Reminiscences and Correspondences Henry Crabb* (1869). The 20th century saw an increase in political diaries and one of the incredible diaries to have emerged from the century was the diary of Anne Frank whose personal diary accounted the socio-political turmoil of the second World War.

What is it that makes Anne Frank such an inspiring figure of optimism and good cheer even in the face of all odds? To answer this question- the life of Anne Frank (12 June 1929- February or Mach 1945) is exemplary and extremely inspiring given the fact that her diary records the voice of a young person who held such optimism and courage despite the multiple odds that had ruined her family life and that of her community during the Holocaust. Anne's diary is incredible given the fact that it is one of the informative documents to have survived and emerged from this period. The excruciating experience of the Jewish people finds a representation in her writings and therefore Anne Frank represents the collective voice of her people and that of the many Anne's who had had similar experiences. Her life and writing shall always continue to inspire readers across time and space, through the passing of years and decades to come.

Let us gain an insight into the inspiring life of Anne Frank, her approach towards life and the times in which she lived. The following subsection traces those difficult years under the German occupation of Netherlands in the Second World War that brought about drastic changes in the lives of countless Jewish families like her own family.

11.3.1 Her Life

Born as Annelies Marie Frank and better known as Anne Frank was the youngest daughter of Edith and Otto Hienrich Frank. She was raised in a liberal Jewish family along with her sibling Margot Frank in the peaceful neighbourhood of mixed communities in Frankfurt, Germany. In a mass migration that took place in between the years 1933 to 1939, like many other Jewish families, the Frank family had shifted to Amsterdam with Anne's father joining a new company known as the Opekta Works. The family thus, had settled down in Amsterdam and the girls were enrolled in local schools. Anne joined the Montessori School in Amsterdam with a penchant for creative writing and a love for books that stemmed from her early years of being surrounded by books at home in Frankfurt. Both, Edith and Otto who shared a love for reading had their own personal library and a good collection of books. Eventually, Anne's father had joined a new company and the Frank family had an easygoing and comfortable life until the socio-political turmoil swept across Germany and drastically changed the lives of the Jewish people.

With the invasion of Netherlands by the Germans in May 1940 in the wake of the second World War, the Jewish people had turned subject to the mindless persecution and segregation from the non-Jewish people by the new government in power. This was the time that spelled a doom for the Jewish communities and as the learner can imagine, many Jewish families were distressed with the consequences of being identified and listed by the government that was bent on stripping them of their fundamental rights. During this time, it was risky for the American embassy or consulate to process any application for Visa given the changing circumstances and even as Otto Frank had officially applied for a Visa to emigrate with his family to America, it did not actualise.

Therefore, with the turn of circumstances, the Frank family took to hiding in an abandoned office building above the Opekta office at Prinsengracht that housed the 'Secret Annexe' also referred to as the *Achterhuis*, a bookcase that hid a passage which led to a secret hiding place underground, with space enough for two families to hide. They received the generous help of their close acquaintances and four trustworthy friends (employees of Opekta) who kept it all a secret. The learner will certainly agree that even under such shattering circumstances with the Frank family compelled to leave behind their home, their possessions and their loving pet Moortje behind

The one incredible work that Anne Frank as a young diarist had left behind in her short-lived years was her personal document- *The Diary of a Young Girl* which was originally written in the Dutch language entitled *Het Achterhuis* before being translated into English. The diary accounts for the years that she had spent in the Secret Annexe with her family and records her personal reflections, experiences during that period and

the dreams that she had envisioned for the future. The original version of her diary in Dutch was published in Holland in the year 1947.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1. Write a few lines on Anne Frank's early life.
Q2. Why were the Jewish people subject to segregation in 1940?
Q3. Where did the Frank family hide to protect themselves from the persecution of the Nazis?

11.4 THE CONTEXT OF ANNE FRANK'S DIARY

Before we gain an insight into Anne's experiences recorded in the select entries for this unit, let us gain a brief idea on the Holocaust which remains one of the darkest chapters in the pages of world history.

Het Acterhuis which literally translates as "the house behind" refers to the hiding place that Anne's family had taken during these difficult times. The diary which was gifted to her by her parents was her constant companion through the two years in their hiding. At the beginning of her diary here is what she lovingly writes, "I hope, I shall be able to confide in you completely, as I have never been able to do in anyone before, and I hope that you will be a great support and comfort to me". Let us then read into the reflections of this brave heart whose writings reveal that a little candle can light the darkness, that there is a reservoir of strength and courage in the human heart.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q4. In language did Anne Frank originally write her diary?
Q5. Write a few lines on the tragedy of the Holocaust.
Q6. What does the original Dutch title *Het Acterhuis* mean?

11.5 SELECTED ENTRIES FROM ANNE FRANK'S DIARY

The unit takes up two selected entries from the diary of Anne Frank which shall provide the learner with an idea on her personal thoughts and feelings, her everyday experiences and observations as well as her little joys and dreams. The first diary entry selected for the unit is dated Sunday 14 June, 1942 followed by the entry on Saturday 20 June, 1942 which reflects some of the happier times that she had known with her family.
Sunday, 14 June, 1942: Anne Frank recalls the 12th of June, when she woke up at six in the morning and it was her birthday. However, she was not expected to wake up at that early hour and therefore, she had to hold her excitement until it was quarter to seven. After that Anne got out of bed and went in to the dining room where her little cat named 'Moortje' snuggled up to her and gave her a warm welcome. She took note of the time and went into her parent's room at seven and to her delight brought the presents that she

received from them to the sitting room in order to unwrap them in her curiosity. To her surprise Anne found that the first one to greet her was a new diary, "possibly nicest of all" (1). Bunches and bouquets of flowers had poured in throughout the day filling their tables with roses and peonies that must have made their home fragrant on the special day.

Anne recollected the plenty of presents that her parents and some of her close friends had gifted her which included Camera Obscura, a party game, jigsaw puzzle, brooch, money, sweets, chocolates and books namely *Tales and Legends of the Netherlands* by Joseph Cohen and Daisy's *Mountain Holiday*. The next purchase that she had planned was *The Myths of Greece and Rome* which highlights her love for reading. That morning she went to school with her good friend named Lies and treated her school friends to sweet biscuits during break time and attended her regular classes. Following this she had summed up her first entry for the day by expressing her sweet hope in her new friend, her birthday diary with the promise- "we're going to be great pals!" (1).

In the entry that follows her first diary entry Anne had recounted the joyful time she had spent the Sunday afternoon following her birthday when she had watched films like the 'Lighthouse Keeper' and 'Rin-Tin-Tin' with her school friends. Also, she had expressed her innocent and secret liking for one of her school friends named Peter Wessel. Her mother often teased her wanting to know whom would she wish marry if she were given the choice and although Anne had often shied away from that question, in her heart she undoubtedly wished it was him. Her best friends were Lies Gossen and Sanne Houtman and they went to school together.

Saturday, 20 June, 1942: In this new entry Anne had expressed her guilt for not having written for a couple of days. It was perhaps, one of those pensive moods when she chose to ponder about her little diary. She thought to herself that it was rather strange for her to start writing a diary of all things not only owing to the fact that she had not done so before but also due to her wondering on who would possibly be interested to know about the "unbosomings" (2) of a thirteen-year-old schoolgirl. However, at such demotivated moments like these, she would again reassure herself that she wanted to 'write' wholeheartedly and pour out all the secrets that were buried deep in her heart. One of the profound thoughts that had struck her on one of her sad days when she was bored all by herself yet undecided on whether to remain in her room or step out for a breath of fresh air that "paper is more patient than man" (2). Anne thus wrote, "I don't intend to show this cardboard-covered notebook bearing the proud name of "diary", to anyone, unless I find a real friend, boy or girl, probably nobody cares. And now I came to the root of the matter, the reason for my starting a diary: it is that I have no such real friend" (2-3).

Anne felt that no one had or would take her seriously and that a girl of her age could feel so lonely in spite of being surrounded by friends. These were perhaps the gradual and early stirrings of Anne's intellectual maturity that waited to unfurl and blossom way before her age. Those who were close to her were her doting parents and her elder sister Marguerite who was sixteen years of age. She thought of her school friends and in

her imagination counted around thirty friends which included several boys who secretly admired her. Anne had loving aunts and uncles too and a happy home filled with abundant blessings that one could ask for, yet she felt incomplete. This was perhaps because in her opinion she had never found the opportunity to share her true inner world with anyone.

Even with the friends of her age, Anne never found the scope to open up or do anything other than indulge in their jokes and light hearted fun. Although, she thought that it was perhaps, owing to her lack of confidence in herself, yet if we analyse her reflections Anne comes across as a sensitive and a matured person without knowing that this were the special qualities that had set her apart from others girls and boys of her age. Her pervading sense of loneliness and self-directed guilt that she was perhaps at fault made her feel that her diary filled in that gap. Thus, she had decided to open herself to being best friends with her dairy as she writes, "I don't want to set down a series of bald facts in a diary like most people do, but I want this diary itself to be my friend, and I shall call my friend 'Kitty'. No one will grasp what I'm talking about if I begin my letters to Kitty just out of the blue…" (3).

Thus, she had started by providing a brief idea about her family. Anne's father Otto Van Frank had married her mother with an age gap of several years and were blessed with a daughter in 1926 whom they named Margot born in Frankfort-on-Main and another in 1929 i.e. Anne herself. As they were of Jewish descent, the family had moved to Holland for a more secured life in the year 1933 where her father was appointed Managing Director of Travies N.V. Firm which was also associated with another firm that he partnered named Kolen & Co located in the same place. By this time their lives were considerably affected with Hitler's anti-Jewish laws which constantly troubled and worried the family with regard to their security. In fact, in 1938, two of her maternal uncles had escaped to America while her old grandmother who was seventy-three years old had joined their family. In her observations of the rapid changes that were taking place she wrote, "After May 1940 good times rapidly fled: first the war, then the capitulation, followed by the arrival of the Germans, which is when the sufferings of us Jews began" (4). This captures the tension that came to prevail in their lives following the declaration of the anti-Jewish laws.

According to the newly introduced law, it was mandatory for Jews to wear yellow six pointed stars on their arms so that they could be easily identified. All Jews had to hand over their bicycles and were prohibited from riding in trams and driving. There were strict timings within which they had to complete their marketing or shopping and the same in "Jewish only" shops. Jews were expected to remain indoors by eight in the evenings which meant they could not step out even into their own gardens after that hour. They were not permitted to have access to any place of entertainment, public-sports or facilities. The segregation or separation was so rigid that Jews were not even allowed to visit Christian homes and schools were not spared of such discrimination either. Gradually, the Jewish population began to experience the weight of these oppressive laws. Anne took consolation in the fact that they tried to live within these restricted laws to the best of their abilities and adapt to such drastic changes as best they could.

Sadly, she had lost her grandmother in January 1942, who had left a gap in their lives that no one could fill in. Anne missed her terribly and expressed her love for the departed soul. She had been to Montessori Kindergarten in 1934 but owing to the school segregation had to bid farewell to her school friends and teachers that had deeply saddened her heart. Thus, she joined the Jewish Secondary School along with her sister Margot like many other Jewish children. One can imagine the kind of difficulties that had come to envelope their lives and the sadness that tugged at her tender heart and yet the expression that we meet are her words of optimism despite the odds as she wrote, "So far everything is all right with the four of us and here I come to the present day" (4).

Thus, from the cheerful account of her opening diary entry to the rapidly changing circumstances for her family in midst of the Anti-Jewish laws and segregation, we notice the quick succession of changes that took hold of their lives. Let us quickly find out a little about the unbelievable accounts of the 'Secret Annexe' which had turned into their secret retreat for two families. The learner may find it interesting to read through the 'Secret Annexe' rules as recorded in the entry dated Tuesday, 17 November, 1942 to simply gain an inkling of the limited provisions and safety rules that the hiding members were to follow as given below:

PROSPECTUS AND GUIDE TO THE "SECRET ANNEXE"

Special Institution as temporary residence for Jews and suchlike.
Open all the year round. Beautiful, quiet, free from woodland surroundings, in the heart of Amsterdam. Can be reached by trams 13 and 17, also by car or bicycle. In special cases also on foot, if the Germans prevent the use of transport.
Board and lodging: Free
Special fat-free diet.
Running water in the bathroom (alas, no bath) and down various inside and outside walls.
Ample Storage rooms for all types of goods.
Own radio center, direct communication with London, New York, Tel Aviv, and numerous other stations are forbidden, on the understanding that German stations are only listened to in special cases, such as classical music and the like.
Rest hours: 10 o'clock in the evening until 7.30 in the morning. 10.15 on Sundays. Residents may rest during the day, conditions permitting, as the directors indicate. For reasons of public security rest hours must be strictly observed!!
Holidays (outside the home): postponed indefinitely.
Use of language: Speak softly at all times, by order! All civilized languages are permitted, therefore no German!
Lessons: One written shorthand lesson per week. English, French, Mathematics, and History at all times.
Small Pets: Special Department (permit is necessary) Good treatment available (vermin excepted).
Mealtimes: breakfast, every day except Sundays and Bank Holidays, 9 A.M. Sundays and Bank Holidays, 11.30 A.M. approximately.

Lunch: (not very big): 1.15 P.M. to 1.45 P.M.
Dinner: cold and/or hot: no fixed time (depending on the news broadcast).
Duties: Residents must always be ready to help with office work.
Baths: The washtub is available for all residents from 9.A.M. on Sundays. The W.C., kitchen, private office or main office, whichever preferred, are available.
Alcoholic Beverages: only with doctor's prescription.
(pg. 51-52)

The above guidelines are a reflection of the shrinking space and quality of their lives from the happy lives that they had known earlier. Anne had also provided a blueprint or rather a layout of the building and the hiding place that it housed in one of her entries. Life in that hiding place must have undoubtedly been extremely difficult given the fact that they had to take extra care of all the little details of their secret existence so that none of the hiding members would give away even the slightest hint to the outside world. The world outside this hiding place was rife with torment and hostilities with many Jewish people suffering the tragedies of forced separation from their families and transportation off to concentration camps. In one of her entries she thus wrote, "It seems like the slave hunts of olden times. But it's certainly no joke, it's much too tragic for that. In the evenings when it's dark, I often see rows of good, innocent people accompanied by crying children, walking on and on, in charge of a couple of these chaps, bullied and knocked about until they almost drop. No one is spared "old people, babies, expectant mothers, the sick"each and all join in the march of death" (52-54). Therefore, the learner can imagine the atrocities that had affected the lives of the persecuted Jewish population by the Nazis, about which we shall reflect further in the following unit on Anne's diary entries.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q7. What were some of the gifts that Anne had received for her birthday as recorded in her first diary entry?
Q8. Why did Anne feel incomplete despite all the blessings that she had?
Q9. What were the prohibitions stated in segregation laws for Jewish people?

11.6 LET US SUM UP

After having studied the unit thoroughly, the learner will be able to discuss the life and the times in which Anne Frank had lived as well as her writings that had inspired millions of readers across the world through her remarkable story of optimism and courage that was recorded in her diary which shall always remain a timeless literary treasure. Also, the learner will be familiar to the context in which Anne Frank wrote her diary which will supplement the learner's reading of the selected diary entries in the present and the following unit. The unit will enable the learner to trace the rapid changes that had stealthily invaded the lives of many Jewish families like Anne's. In the next unit, the learner will find

three more diary entries that reveal the more on the escape of the Franks and their family friends and their experiences in hiding before they fell into the clutches of the Nazis.

11.7 FURTHER READING

1) Frank, Anne. (1967) *The Diary of a Young Girl*. Doubleday. New York.

11.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q1: Born as Annelies Marie Frank and better known as Anne Frank was the youngest daughter of Edith and Otto Hienrich Frank. She was raised in a liberal Jewish family along with her sibling Margot Frank in the peaceful neighbourhood of mixed communities in Frankfurt, Germany. In a mass migration that took place in between the years 1933 to 1939, like many other Jewish families, the Frank family had shifted to Amsterdam with Anne's father joining a new company known as the Opekta Works.

Ans to Q2: With the invasion of Netherlands by the Germans in May 1940 in the wake of the second World War, the Jewish people being subject to persecution and segregation from the non-Jewish people by the new government in power.

Ans to Q3: The Frank family took to hiding in an abandoned office building above the Opekta office at Prinsengracht that housed the 'Seecret Annexe' also referred to as the *Achterhuis*, a bookcase that hid a passage which led to a secret hiding place underground, with space enough for two families to hide.

Ans to Q4: The diary was originally written in the Dutch language.

Ans to Q5: The Holocaust was one of the darkest chapters in world history.

Ans to Q6: *Het Acterhuis* which literally translates as "the house behind" referring to the hiding place that Anne's family had taken during these difficult times.

Ans to Q7: Anne had received plenty of presents that her parents and some of her close friends had gifted her which included Camera Obscura, a party game, jigsaw puzzle, brooch, money, sweets, chocolates and books namely *Tales and Legends of the Netherlands* by Joseph Cohen and Daisy's *Mountain Holiday*.

Ans to Q8: Anne had all the blessings in the world that one could ask for yet she felt incomplete, perhaps because she had never found the opportunity to share her inner world with anyone. Even with the friends of her age, she had never really found the scope to open up or do anything other than indulge in jokes and light hearted fun.

Ans to Q9: According to these segregation laws, Jews were to wear yellow six pointed stars on their arms so that they could be easily identified. They had to hand over all their bicycles and were forbidden to ride trams or to even drive. There were strict timings in between which they were to complete their marketing or shopping that too in "Jewish only" shops. Jews were expected to remain indoors by eight in the evenings which meant that they could not step out into their own gardens after that hour. They were not permitted

to have access to any place of entertainment, public sports or facilities. In fact, the segregation or separation was so rigid that Jews were not even allowed to visit Christian homes and schools were not spared either from such discrimination.

Ans to Q10: The guidelines meant for the 'Secret Annexe' are a reflection of the shrinking space and quality of their i.e. the lives of the Franks and their friends in hiding from the happy and comfortable lives that they had known earlier.

11.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q1. Give a brief introduction to Diary Writing as a literary practice.
Q2. Describe the life of Anne Frank and the times in which she wrote her diary.
Q3. Discuss the literary merit of Anne Frank's *The Diary of a Young Girl*.
Q4. Explain the context in which Anne Frank wrote her diary.
Q5. Explain the content of the introductory diary entries by Anne Frank dated 14 June, 1942 and 20 June 1942.

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UNIT 12 ANNE FRANK: SELECTED ENTRIES FROM *THE DIARY OF A YOUNG GIRL* II

UNIT STRUCTURE

12.1 Learning Objectives
12.2 Introduction
12.3 Explanation of Selected Entries
12.4 Major Themes
12.5 Style and Language
12.6 Let us Sum up
12.7 Further Reading
12.8 Answers to Check Your Progress
12.9 Model Questions

12.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- discuss the content of the selected entries from Anne Frank's diary
- explain the emergent themes from the text of the diary
- analyse the style and language employed in Anne Frank's writing
- read and explore Anne Frank's diary which is a literary treasure and serves as a surviving document of the times in which she lived and wrote.

12.2 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, the learner was introduced to the life and writings of Anne Frank and in continuation with the discussion of the two selected diary entries, the present unit will take up three more diary entries in order to gain a deeper insight into her experiences in the Secret Annexe. Anne Frank had a natural flair for writing and she greatly valued her diary which she named 'Kitty' which was a birthday gift from her parents. She considered her diary as special as her dearly held fountain pen gifted by her grandmother which she opined had an "interesting pen life" (116). Thus, there was nothing as comforting to her as putting pen to paper in order to narrate her personal thoughts and reflections. The almost unbelievable accounts of life in the secret hiding place that the Franks had chosen captures the wonder of the reader almost at once given the fact that the veracity or truth of their story captured in Anne's words. Let us then gain an insight into some of these selected entries and find out more about their experiences. It is hoped that the learner shall be inspired to further read the diary of Anne Frank and gain a complete insight into her remarkable work.

12.3 EXPLANATION OF SELECTED ENTRIES

Despite the dangers looming large on their fate, the hiding members of the Secret Annexe had found much comfort and solace in each other, finding joy in little things and being grateful for the tiniest of things that anyone and even they would have otherwise taken for granted. The learner will certainly agree that only in captivity the heart realises the true value of freedom. In the two years of hiding, the entire family depended and sustained themselves with the food supplies that their close friends had secretly helped them with along with other basic necessities. These close friends worked in the same building in which they were secretly housed and were namely Mr. Koophius and Mr. Kraler, Miep Van Santen and Ellis Vossen who closely guarded their secret. All the hiding family members had to adhere to strict meal and other timings, exercise caution at all times, avoid any kind of unnecessary attention and remain alert at all times without failure. The learner can imagine the tremendous psychological pressure that they had to live with notwithstanding the hardships of this entire plan.

Their hiding place the Secret Annexe was situated in an office building at Prisengracht; a large book shelf on the middle floor could be opened like a door which revealed a flight of small steps that that led to the secret hiding place. The eight members in hiding only stirred during night time after the working staff in the ground floor of the building had left. Let us then take up another set of her diary entries to examine a day in her life at the Secret Annexe and find out a little more about the members that included the Franks, the Van Daans and Dr. Dussel living together as one family in the most difficult of times.

Monday, 9 August, 1943: The diary entry on this date reveals the regular timings for their evening meals. Anne provides a brief description of each of the members at the table starting with Mr. Van Daan who was usually served first among all the members. The man in Anne's observation had a healthy appetite and always expressed his opinions without considering that of others. In case he was questioned, it made him angry like a cat and this was a warning to others that no one was to argue with him. Mr. Van Daan thought highly of himself and regarded his knowledge superior than that of anyone else and so she says, "All right then, he has got brains, but 'self-satisfaction' has reached a high grade with this gentleman" (100).

However, this was only a passing observation and Anne was fond of the gentleman as she was of all others. The next person described is Mrs. Petronella Van Daan who was moody by nature and if she was to have one of her bad moods, one could not even glance at her face. In most of her arguments, Mrs. Van Daan was the guilty one and yet there was a sense of amusement in observing her as well. During meal times, she had the habit of picking up the best of the all that was served and chattering while eating whether others were interested or not. Anne writes "One, she is industrious, two gay, three, a coquette"and, occasionally, pretty" (101). However, their son was the quiet one without drawing too much of attention and with the ability to gulp down twice the share of what was served on his plate.

The next member described is her own sister Margot who ate very little and did not talk much except fruits and vegetables. The Van Daans considered Margot as a fussy girl or rather "spoiled" (101) but her parents opined that it was a lack of fresh air and freedom to enjoy being outdoors like earlier. Her own mother Mrs. Frank was jovial and had a good appetite. She did all the washing and polishing while Mrs. Van Daan took charge of cooking. Anne felt that there was nothing much to say about her father Mr. Frank "the perfect example" (101) who was a selfless and caring person always ensuring that the children had the best of the food that was served and that they were all well-fed. As for herself, she thought she was the "bundle of nerves" of the Secret Annexe, restless, impulsive and carefree.

The next person described was Dr. Dussel who was reserved by nature, keeping his thoughts to himself and concentrating more on his food. There was never a "No" from him where it concerned anyone taking more than their share of food in extra helpings. He kept himself occupied at his little table, constantly working taking afternoon naps in between. Also, Anne describes how the old man often occupied "his favorite spot" (101) the wash-room several times during day time without a care in the world which made the others in line completely restless. They were so accustomed to his habits that Anne had literally jotted down the usual timings when he blocked the rest of the members from visiting the washroom with what she funnily calls as his "regular sitting times" (101).

There was yet another occasional member Elli who was not part of the 'Secret Annexe' family but accompanied them in their meals with her healthy appetite, accepting anything that was served to her. Anne describes her as easy-going, cheerful, good-tempered, willing and good-natured which made everyone fond of Elli. Anne's account thus, provides us a little description of the family almost as a distraction from all that was going on outside their hiding place. The short descriptions of the members are witty and also expresses Anne's interest in the loving people who surrounded her, each of whom were different by nature and yet united as one family in times of great crises that had taken their life by storm.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1. What did Anne Frank name her diary? Who had gifted the diary to her?
Q2. How does the diary entry of Monday 9 August 1943?
Q3. What is the description of Margot that we receive from this diary entry?
Q4. What is highlighted in the diary entry of Monday 9 August 1943?

Monday evening, 8 November, 1943: Addressing her diary as Dear Kitty, Anne makes an entry of her thoughts that disturb her sense of self before she can cheer up herself all over again as she always did. She opens her heart to reveal that if Kitty were to read her letters, she would be surprised by the different moods in which Anne had penned them down. This time it was not her usual funny side rather it was her disappointed self, where she had found herself sad about not being able to break free from the confines of her existence. In fact, it was the same for all other members who had their own share of

depressing moments when their own vulnerable condition disturbed their peace of mind. Anne had reasoned that she was probably depressed because she was confronted with paralysing fear or even a sort of cowardly feeling.

That evening there was a loud ring at the door which had almost scared the life out of her however, it was nothing to worry about. Nevertheless, all the members were mindful of their secret presence. A certain sense of fear had taken a deep seat in her heart and she wrote of imagining herself alone in a dungeon at night without her parents; sometimes imagining herself out in the streets; at other times imagining their hiding place on fire or the Nazi Gestapo or police taking them all away. This highlights the constant insecurity that constantly haunted her consciousness at all times which was the same for all the other members.

Thus, there was a nagging fear underlying their relatively tranquil existence in the Secret Annexe as she writes "I simply can't imagine that the world will ever be normal for us again. I do talk about "after the war", but then it is only a castle in the air, something that will never really happen. If I think back to our old house, my girlfriends, the fun at school, it is just as if another person lived it all, not me" (115). To her the eight members of the family were like "a little piece of blue heaven, surrounded by heavy rain clouds" (115) and without them she would have lost heart to live. While their hiding place felt safe in many ways than they would have been in some other underground hiding places (as some Jewish people did) yet their safety was under constant threat. They knew that the world outside was replete with merciless killings and violence all around in comparison to their little world, their hiding spot where they were spared such tortures. Even as they felt the weight of such an existence and the burden of an uncertainty, with the fear that they might be caught by the Nazis any day, they still did not give up their hopes of surviving it all. However, in her own moments of weakness, these thoughts had saddened Anne's heart and brought her tears many a times. At such times, she would pray that they would all be free of such difficult times.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q5. What were some the imaginary fears that disturbed Anne's sense of peace?
Q6. What were their collective experience while living secretly in their hiding place?

Tuesday, 1 August, 1944: In what had turned out to be her last letter to Kitty, Angelou begins with the words "Little bundle of contradictions" (265). The diary entry that preceded this final entry bore the same words i.e. "little bundle of contradictions" all for nothing!" (265) referring to her mind and her nature. She had long pondered on the word 'contradiction' noting that it meant two things, i.e. contradiction from without and contradiction from within" (266). The first reference to 'contradiction from within' referred to the characteristic of not letting go easily, considering one's knowledge as the best and always winning without letting go- which she had felt described all the unpleasant qualities about her own nature. And as far the second meaning was concerned it had been her own little secret that no one had really known. This secret was the feeling of being a 'dual

personality' as she wrote, "One half embodies my exuberant cheerfulness, making fun of everything, my high spiritedness, and above all, the way I take everything lightly…This side is usually lying in wait and pushes away the other, which is much better, deeper and purer" (265). And then she had revealed that no one had really known her inherent nature which was pure and good owing to which everyone found her so disagreeable. The irony was that even if she revealed her inherent inner nature, everyone would still find her disagreeable as they were accustomed to her outward nature, the Anne that they knew on the surface.

Thus, she had described this feeling of being in a constant tussle between her lighter and her finer nature. Sometimes, she had felt restless trying to push away one Anne from the other, feeling divided between her dual natures. She felt that it was pointless for her to try and hide one side for the other side to emerge as it could never work well. Moreover, she thought that she would be seem unlike her natural and spontaneous self in front of the other members in her little world. Thus, in reality, she was afraid that everyone would find it difficult to accept her as a different kind of person than the one that they had always known. The truth was that no one had discovered her for who she really was. She was afraid of being laughed at, not being taken seriously and being ridiculed by everyone.

While the 'lighthearted' Anne could take such negative response with relative ease the 'deeper Anne' (or her more sensitive and refined side) could in no way bear the same. There were moments when the 'good Anne' according to her would shrink the moment she was given the stage to express herself; while the 'bad Anne' (which was bold and outspoken) would leave no trace of the good version. For the same reason, the good Anne would never be found amidst company and only appear when left to herself, all alone and thus she wrote, "And perhaps that's why, no, I'm sure it's the reason why I say I've got a happy nature within and why other people think I've got a happy nature without. I am guided by the pure Anne within, but outside I'm nothing but a frolicsome little goat who's broken loose" (267).

Thus, she describes the opposite extremes of her nature without really knowing that it was absolutely normal for a person. She had begun to feel as if she were her own enemy and suffered bouts of guilt in her heart for she felt at unease with herself or was made to feel the same. For an instance, when she was quiet and serious, wanting to listen to everyone rather than talk, everyone would make her feel like she was not being her normal self until she would be compelled to utter something funny to please them all. Again if she was reserved and thoughtful, her parents would think that she was probably unwell or in a bad mood. That was where the trouble was, for it made her restless trying to keep up appearances instead of being her natural self. For these reasons, she was bold and defensive on the outside in order to protect her inner self, a side of her that only she had known. In the closing words of this entry, she wriote "…and finally I twist my heart round again, so that the bad is on the outside and the good is on the inside and keep on trying to find a way of becoming what I would so like to be, and what I could be if…. There weren't any other people living in the world" (267-68).

Endnote: Anne Frank's diary precisely ends with these words and this was her last entry. All the secretly hiding members were arrested shortly after and were among the remaining

thousands of Jews to be shipped to Auschwitz from Holland in September 1944. Following the experiences of living in hiding, the eight members of the family were discovered by the Gestapo with the information provided by a Dutch informer on August 4, 1944. Following the arrest, Mr. Koophuis and Mr. Kraler were taken to the Gestapo headquarters in Amsterdam while the entire family were transported to Westerbrook, While Mr. Koophius was allowed medical care after a few weeks of imprisonment, Mr. Kraler was made to labour for a period of eight months at a camp.

Life in the concentration camp was fraught with extreme challenges of survival. Mrs. Frank passed away in her loneliness and starvation at the camp; Mr. Van Daan was taken to the gas chambers to meet his end; Mr Dussel who was sent to Germany died in the Neuengamme camp; Peter Van Daan was taken away by the Nazis; Mrs Van Daan and Margot passed away a few months after at Belsen followed by Anne who died peacefully. The only one to have survived it all was Anne's father Otto Frank who was rescued by the Russians and their friends Miep and Elli had retrieved Anne's diary, her writings and sketches which they had handed over to him. Thus, Anne's diary was published in Amsterdam in June 1947 in her loving memory and their entire family.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q7. Briefly describe Anne's constant feeling of experiencing the tussle between her lighter and her finer nature.

Q8. What happens after the hiding members of the Secret Annexe are arrested?

12.4 MAJOR THEMES

Some of the emergent themes from the text of Anne Frank's diary are discussed below. However, the learner may come up with their own readings of the diary in its entirety.

Optimism and Hope: Anne Frank's story is undoubtedly one of immense courage, optimism and hope. Despite Anne's nagging concerns for the entire family in hiding, she would always find a way to redirect everyone's mind towards anything funny and try to lift up everyone's spirit which created a difference in her own. To her the Secret Annexe was her little safe world tucked in from the hostile world outside as she wrote "The "Secret Annexe" is an ideal hiding place. Although it leans to one side and is damp, you'd never find such a comfortable hiding place anywhere in Amsterdam, no, perhaps not even in the whole of Holland" (20). Throughout her accounts, she maintains that it was the safest place to be in and always felt grateful for all that they had while countless families like them lost everything in life. She always took note of the little joys and the "extraordinary things" (35) that happened to people in hiding. In fact, they together imagined to the first things that they would do once they would be free and step out of their secret existence. . Surely the ty

Despite their sufferings, the family stood united as one, standing by each other at all times and never losing their hope of a better future even at times when their hopes seemed to waver with the violence outside. In a matured way, Anne saw even their sufferings as yet another step towards salvation and felt that someday their people would regain their freedom and dignity as she wrote, “We have been pointedly reminded that we are in hiding, that we are Jews in chains, chained to one spot, without any rights, but with a thousand duties. We Jews mustn’t show our feelings, must be brave and strong, must accept all inconveniences and not grumble, must do what is within our power and trust in God. Sometime this terrible war will be over. Surely the time will come when we are people again, and not just Jews” (207). It was not as though she was not afraid of her present circumstances and yet it could not prevent her from envisioning a brighter future for everyone.

When in school, Anne had been a bright student and her parents were simply happy that she did so well for herself without ever passing on their expectations on her unlike most parents at her school. And even during the time that she was in hiding, she engaged herself in reading a range of different books, translating, writing her diary, listening to news and classical music on the wireless radio, practicing shorthand, studying family trees and making biographical/historical notes among other things. She was so optimistic that while she kept herself occupied at all times, she expressed her longing for the day when she could enjoy freedom of access to all the books that she wanted to read writing thus, “I can hardly wait for the day that I shall be able to comb through the books in a public library” (198). Otto Van who was a loving father encouraged Anne to make the best of what she had and count her blessings saying: “Don’t you worry” (13). It is tragic that a promising young girl and many like her did not live long to experience the full bloom of youth. Yet Anne has lived on through her writings just as she had aspired in life” to be remembered.

The Value and longing for Freedom: At the human heart is the deep desire to be free and relentless in all pursuits throughout the journey of life. As the human history is witness to the struggles of the oppressed, it can be said that the value of freedom is perhaps realized the most when it is denied or taken away. For the Jewish people who were oppressed, persecuted, exploited and subject to genocide or mass murders by the German Nazis, perhaps death for many was the only freedom that they could imagine as they must have known that they hardly stood any chance of escaping that living nightmare. However, there were few surviving stories to have emerged from such a space that operated under brutal oppression. Sadly, the Franks and their hiding friends did not live long to experience the freedom that they had a better chance of experiencing than the countless Jewish families who were taken away to designated concentration camps. Somewhere in their hearts they were hopeful and held the dream that life would restore their longing for freedom. They had gone so far to risk their lives to hide till the country was in peace so that they would experience the joy of freedom, enjoy the open skies and the fresh air that they had not known for the two years in hiding.

In fact, Anne felt a deep longing to be free; free from their helplessness and anxieties, the limited circumstances and their insecurities. Thus, she wrote in one of her entries, “The sun is shining, the sky is a deep blue, there is a lovely breeze and I’m longing –so longing –for everything. To talk, for freedom, for friends, to be alone” (151). Sometimes when she reflected to the earlier life in freedom, she felt that everything seemed so unbelievable and “unreal” (168). Life had taken the most unexpected turn for her and yet despite here is what Anne had written towards the end of her diary: “In addition to this, I have lots of courage, I always feel so strong and as if I can bear a great deal, I feel so free and so young! I was glad when I first realized it, because I don’t think I shall easily bow down before the blows that inevitably come to everyone” (260).

12.5 STYLE AND LANGUAGE

Anne Frank’s writing is spontaneous and conversational in style given the fact that she poured out all her thoughts and feelings into her secret diary like a confidant whom one can share each and everything under the stars. She felt an accountability to her diary and wrote down her stream of thoughts or reflections without any being self-conscious or careful for it was a personal exercise and not intended for future publication. Her flow of thought and the clarity of her expressions brings alive a complete picture of what life before and while hiding must have been like in the mind of the readers. She had an intense experience of being able to observe herself from outside her body as an observing bystander and analyzing each and everything around her. This also made her self-conscious and self-critical in a way which made her feel like there were several aspects about her that she would have liked to improve. For an instance in an account she writes of the inner workings of her mind, “This “self-consciousness” haunts me, and every time I open my mouth I know as soon as I’ve spoken whether that ought to have been different” or “that was right as it was.” There are so many things about myself that I condemn; I couldn’t begin to name it all” (260). Perhaps, for the same reason she must have found ‘writing’ the best way of expressing herself where she did not have to be so conscious or guilty about her expressions or choice of words.

Anne’s intellectual stirrings and her perspectives on life around her are the qualities that find expression in her reflective diary entries and her sense of wit combined with her cheerful optimism endear her to the readers. Her diary was held a soft spot in her heart and she found it comforting that she could narrate herself and also pour out all her confessions in it as she wrote in one of her entries, “I have two things to confess to you today, which will take a long time. But I must tell someone and you are the best one to tell, as I know that, come what may, you always keep a secret” (128). She narrated her personal self without withholding anything and her secret diary particularly in the days of hiding in the Secret Annexe was a hiding place within a hiding place that gave her the freedom to be completely herself.

Despite the fact that one gets to read Anne’s diary in English, there can be no question regarding the credibility of the translated version. In a concise and informative

manner, Anne transferred all her thoughts into her diary as though she were writing letters to her friend Kitty. This was her personal space that allowed her to be herself, something that she found so difficult in front of her family and friends. It gave her the scope to give expression to the inner Anne that she often hid from everyone as no one would take her seriously. She felt that she often engaged in "long-winded descriptions" (19) and yet could not resist her obligation to Kitty and always came back to her to narrate all that went on. She had a flair for language and even in her free hours she spent translating chapters from books, making notes of words that she learnt newly in order to increase her vocabulary. She even practiced shorthand and filled her hours reading and writing in order to keep her mind well occupied. In her diary entries one will find a wide range of descriptions such as her happier school days, her close-knit family, carefully planned life in the Secret Annexe and the political updates aired on the radio. Her personal and political opinions, her keen observations and narrations of everything that took place within herself and around her find interesting reflections of Anne as a person. Most of her writings captured her different moods and each were interesting in their own way although she found it rather strange to experience such changes in her tone and intensity of her writings which at times would be deep and soulful or restless and confused and other times light-hearted and witty.

12.6 LET US SUM UP

After a thorough reading of both the present and the previous units which takes up Anne Frank's writings through five selected entries from her diary, the learner will gain an insight into the mind of this brave young girl who found a friend in her little diary and much solace in pouring out her personal reflections while enduring the most difficult of circumstances with her family. The unit provides a glimpse of what it must have been like inside the 'Secret Annexe' for each of the eight hiding members and the challenges that they had to live through although they were arrested by the Gestapo had no way of knowing that her work would transcend time and space.

12.7 FURTHER READING

1) Frank, Anne. (1967) *The Diary of a Young Girl*. Doubleday. New York.

12.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q1: Anne Frank's diary named her diary 'Kitty'. It was a birthday gift from her parents.

Ans to Q2: This entry reveals the regular evening meal time of the family members. Anne provides a brief description of each of the members at the table starting with Mr. Van Daan who was usually served first. He had a healthy appetite and always expressed his opinions without considering that of others. In case he was questioned, it made him angry as a cat almost as if warning others not to argue with him.

Ans to Q3: The next member described is her own sister Margot who ate very little and did not talk much except fruits and vegetables. The Van Daans considered her as a fussy girl rather "spoiled" (101) but her parents opined that it was a lack of fresh air and freedom to enjoy outdoors.

Ans to Q4: The next person to be described was Dr. Dussel who was reserved by nature, keeping his thoughts to himself and concentrating on his food. There was never a "No" from him where it concerned anyone taking more than their share or larger helpings of food. He kept himself occupied at his little table, constantly working with afternoon naps in between.

Ans to Q5: Anne's account thus, provides us a little description of the family almost as a distraction from all that was going on outside their hiding place. The short descriptions of the members are witty and also expresses Anne's interest in the loving people that surrounded, each of whom were different by nature and yet united as one family in times of great crises.

Ans to Q5: Anne Frank writes of her imagining herself alone in a dungeon at night without her parents; sometimes she would imagine herself out in the streets; at other times their Secret Annexe on fire or the Nazis taking them all away. This highlights the constant fear that nagged their senses at all times, never leaving them even for a second.

Ans to Q6: While their hiding place felt safe in many ways yet their safety was under constant threat. They know that the world outside is filled with violence all around in comparison to their little world, their hiding spot. They felt the weight of such an existence and the burden of an uncertainty, living in the fear that they might be caught by the Nazis.

Ans to Q7: She describes this feeling of being in a constant tussle between her lighter and her finer nature. Sometimes, she felt restless trying to push away one Anne from the other, feeling divided between her dual natures. She felt that it was pointless to try to weaken one side for the other to emerge for it did not work well and it was being unlike her natural and spontaneous self. In reality, she was afraid that everyone would find it difficult to accept her as a different kind of person than the one that they had always known. The truth was no one had discovered her for who she really was.

Ans to Q8: Following the experiences of living in hiding, the eight members of the family was discovered by the Gestapo with the information provided by a Dutch informer on August 4, 1944. They were arrested by the Gestapo together Mr. Koophuis and Mr. Kraler being taken to the Gestapo headquarters in Amsterdam. While the eight hiding members including the Franks, the Van Daans and Mr. Dussel were shifted to Westerbrook. Mr Koophius was allowed medical care after a few weeks of imprisonment and Mr. Kraler made to labour for a period of eight months at a camp.

12.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q1. Give a detailed explanation of the selected diary entries from Anne Frank's *The Diary of a Young Girl.*

Q2. Discuss the content of the following diary entries from Anne Frank's diary as mentioned below:

i) 9 August 1943

ii) 8 November 1943

iii) 1 August 1944

Q3. Discuss the major themes that emerge from the text of the selected entries from Anne Frank's *The Diary of a Young Girl.*

Q4. Analyse the style and language that is reflected in Anne Frank's diary writing.

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UNIT 13 : ROBERT BROWNING: SELECT LETTERS OF BROWNING

UNIT STRUCTURE

13.1 Learning Objectives
13.2 Introduction
13.3 Letter Writing: An Introduction
13.4 Robert Browning
13.4.1 His Life and Works
13.5 The Letters of Robert Browning
13.5.1 Summary of the Letters
13.6 Let us Sum up
13.7 Further Reading
13.8 Answers to Check Your Progress
13.9 Model Questions

13.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- discuss the life and works of Robert Browning
- read through the text of the letters discussed and gain an insight into the intellectual exchange found in the letters of Browning

13.2 INTRODUCTION

The present unit deals with the selected letters of Robert Browning written to Elizabeth Barrett Browning who was also a contemporary poet. Their intimate correspondences reveal interesting aspects of their personality and significant facets of their life. Robert Browning had developed a rapport with Elizabeth Barrett by way of his letters through which their friendship had transformed into love. Elizabeth Barrett as a young lady had suffered from a major accident while riding a horse which had led to serious complications and left her bed-ridden for a long time. Her father Edward Barrett, a strict disciplinarianin his grief and a protectivesense towards herhad confined herto a gloomy life of comfort at home. She had known happier days at their country home but with the turn of events, her life had completely altered things for her.

The Barretts had shifted to a new but a gloomy residence at Wimpole Street. Her father tended to her health and fervently prayed for her but mixed no words about ever allowing her to be courted or married to anyone. Elizabeth Barrett who had been an active young woman was not a complete invalid. Despite her sufferings, she had a cheerful spirit and a creative bent of mind with a gift for writing which she explored and engaged in through her poetry and her letters to Robert Browning. A glance at their correspondences reveal shared interests in poetry, literature and the arts. And thus, it shall not be justified to

assume that they were only love letters which contained their emotional outpourings. As you read through his Browning's letters, you will find that they reveal intellectual exchanges and fruitful literary discussions without leaving out on the emotional, spiritual or even the day-to-day aspects of their life.

13. 3 LETTER WRITING: AN INTRODUCTION

"Letter writing" is a personal and an intimate form of correspondence and communication which is why the contents of a 'letter' reveals a 'letter writer's' personality, intellect and emotions and often is a window to his or her soul. With the advent of technology, our regular ways of corresponding and communicating has undergone tremendous changes to the point of almost replacing our older ways of keeping in touch with others. Today, various other forms of communication have taken over our daily lives and in this fast pace of life, one hardly finds time to spare or indulge in the exercise of letter writing. A.G. Gardiner's essay "On Letter Writing" discusses how the very art of letter writing is a long lost tradition and the engagement of writing, receiving and reading letters is a joy that is unknown to many. The letter is now considered a 'snail-mail' in comparison to other forms of modern communication.

Ancient history reveals the tradition of 'epistles' (or letters) and the genre of letter-writing which was formal, instructional and informative. The Pauline Epistles in the New Testament were also in the mode of epistles. If you look at our own ancient Indian history, it reveals how the written word of communication was given much value and importance. These were often in the form of hand-written rolled parchments which served the purpose of both a common and an urgent mode of communication. You may know that our own Indian kings and queens had royal messengers to carry and deliver such parchments on horseback on behalf of the royalty. In fact, even birds like pigeons were trained to carry letters and messages in the ancient times. Have you ever wondered how a letter need not travel across places in the globe and can simply be 'written' to your immediate family, your kith and kin, your intimate friend, community elders or next-door neighbours? Or, have you discovered the joy of 'receiving' a letter sitting in an envelope waiting to be revealed?

Just the sight of an envelope containing a letter and bearing ones name and address in a familiar hand-writing feels like an exciting invitation. And to add to it, the arrival of letters also turns into a double joy for those who have the hobby of collecting stamps which is also known as 'philately.' This is often the case for those who have pen-friends across the world. Those who form friendships and become acquainted with each other through letters are known as pen-friends or pen-pals. Also, in addition to letters or mails, there goes a popular belief that seeing a mail-van pass by indicates good luck for the day. Do you take notice of the red letter-boxes and the red mail-vans whizz by in and around your locality? Well at some point in your life, you may have experienced the joy of pouring your thoughts, ideas, reflections and feelings on to the pages of a letter.

LET US KNOW

The unit will unravel the kind of correspondences that the poet Robert Browning shared with his beloved Elizabeth Barrett Browning. They shared a common intellectual wavelength, had a deep understanding of each other and were very much in love. Also, they discussed each other's literary interests and provided constructive criticism to each other by way of these letters. Their letters were often sent or exchanged in secret and sometimes Browning also sent flowers inside the envelopes, simply to express his love for her and to cheer her up, in the confined existence of her room. As Elizabeth suffered from a delicate health condition, his letters often came to her as a source of encouragement, strength and moral support and needless to say, much happiness. Their personal correspondences were both inspiring and enriching to each other as they grew familiar to each other's persona through the very means of these treasured letters.

13.4 ROBERT BROWNING

The following subsections will introduce you to the life and works of Robert Browning before we move on to discuss the texts of the selected letters.

13.4.1 His life and Works

Robert Browning (7 May1812 - 12 December1889) was born to Sarah Anna Wiedermann and Robert Browning. His father was a well-paid clerk who worked for the bank of England and their family was well off. Even as his paternal grandfather, Margaret Tittle was a wealthy slave owner in the West Indies, his own father was an Abolitionist in supporting the end of slavery. Browning's father had been sent to the West Indies to work on a sugar plantation but soon returned to England, appalled by the widespread slavery that he saw. According to an anecdotal family story, his paternal grandfather was rumoured within the family to have had some Jamaican mixed race ancestry but there was also little evidence for the same. Browning's mother, who was a talented musician, was the daughter of a German ship-owner, who had settled with his Scottish wife at Dundee.He had a younger sister named Sarianna, who was very gifted.Browning's father had amassed an extensive library of around six thousand books, in several languages and many of these were rare. These were the chief literary resources that gave him an easy access, to develop his literary interests. His father encouraged his children's interests in literature and the arts. He was very close to his mother and it was his sister, who had become his close companion in his later years.

Browning wrote a book of poetry at the age of twelve, which he later destroyed when no publisher could be found. He was a very sensitive child and showed a dislike towards school life. After attending one or two private schools, he was educated by a home tutor with the help of the literary resources in his father's library. Thus, by the age of fourteen he was fluent in French, Latin, Italian and Greek and this was the time when he became a great admirer of the Romantic poets, especially Shelley. In his admiration and influence

of Shelley, he too became vegetarian and an atheist, both of which he gave up later. At the age of sixteen, he studied Greek at University College London but left after his first year. He did opt to study ateither Oxford University or at Cambridge University as they were both open to the members of the Church of England. Also, his mother's evangelical Protestant faith and her devout non-conformism, in not following the beliefs of the established Church of England were the major reasons of altering his options.

He composed arrangements of various songs and had inherited musical abilities from his mother. He chose to stay at home, financially dependent on his parents, until the age of 34, after which he had married. Until then he had even refused to a formal career, ignoring his parents' critical protests to his serious inclination to poetry. In 1845, he married Elizabeth Barrett, who was elder to him by six years and a semi-invalid in her father's house at Wimpole Street, London. Their regular correspondence slowly developed into a romance and finally they eloped on 12 September 1846. Initially their marriage was a secret because Elizabeth had a dominating father who disapproved marriage for any of his children and he even disinherited Elizabeth like each of his children who had married. Elizabeth Barrett was a sweet and innocent young woman who suffered her father's endless tyranny and cruelties for the sake of discipline.

LET US KNOW

Elizabeth Barrett (1806-1861)was a well received poet of her time, began writing poetry when she was barely eleven years old. She was an intelligent and well read young woman who knew Greek, Latin and Hebrew. It was her fellow poet and friend Robert Browning who through his optimism and loving support, brought out the best in her and much against her father's wishes they were both secretly married in the year 1845. Her *Sonnets From the Portuguese*(1850)written just before her marriage contain a collection of her intense poetry and forty four sonnets on the theme of love. Some of her other known works are *Casa Guidi Windows* (1851) and *Aurora Leigh* (1857). She was very much a Victorian poet but had also strains of romanticism in her poetry.

The Brownings lived in Italy, residing first in Pisa for a year and then an apartment in Florence (now a museum to their memory). Their only son Robert Wiedermann Barrett Browning nicknamed "Penini" or "Pen" was born in 1849. During the years they lived there, his fascination led him to learn much about Italian art and culture. In his later life, he also described Italy as his University. Later, he brought a home in Asolo, outside Venice. In their home in Italy the couple was very comfortable and their relationship together was happy.

He returned to England only after the death of his wife in1861 and became a part of the London literary scene, even as he kept visiting Italy frequently. Gradually, he received recognition for hisworks and it brought him the literary success that he had sought for nearly forty years. The Robert Browning Society was formed in 1851and his work was recognised as belonging within the British literary canon. The last years of his life saw

him travel widely and he even joined a British diplomatic mission to Russia in 1834.In 1878, for the first time in seventeen years since his wife's death, he returned there on several occasions. Browning breathed his last at his son's home in Venice on 12 December 1889. He was buried in Poet's corner in Westminster Abbey, where his grave lay adjacent to that of poet Alfred Tennyson.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: How did Robert Browning develop a rapport with Elizabeth Barrett?
Q 2: Why misfortune did Elizabeth Barrett suffer as a young woman?
Q 3:What do the letters between Robert Browning and Elizabeth reveal?
Q 4:What were the chief literary resources that the Browning accessed as a young boy?
Q 5:Why did Browning not attend both Oxford and Cambridge University?
Q 6:What did their regular correspondences eventually lead to?
Q 7:Briefly describe the experiences of the Browningsin Italy.

Browning's writing career began with the publication of the anonymous poem "Pauline". His long poem "Paracelsus" based on the renowned doctor and alchemist, received the notice of Thomas Carlyle, Wordsworth and other men of letters. This gave him the reputation of being a promising poet in the London literary scene. During this time, he came to be acquainted with Charles Dickens, John Forster, Harriet Martineau, Thomas Carlyle and Charles Macready too.

He was encouraged to write the play *Strafford* performed in 1837 by Charles Macready and Helen Faust and even as it was no great success, he was encouraged to try again. He went on to write eight plays in all, which included *Pippa Passes* (1841), *A Blot on the Scutcheon* (1843) and A Soul's Tragedy (1846). A troubled production of *A Blot on the Scutcheon,* followed by the publication of the experimental and politically radical poem "Sordello" (1840) were both met with widespread dislike. And this caused him such a setback that his reputation would not rise again for 25 years. "Sordello" was a complex psychological poem about a 13th century troubadour or a travelling poet.

Further, Browning was critically dismissed by patrician or Aristocratic writers such as Charles Kingsley for his leaving the shores of England to live in Italy. It was in Florence from early 1853 that Browning worked on the poems that eventually comprised his two volume Men and Women (1855) and these works increased his reputation only after he returned to England. In 1868, after five years of work, he completed and published the long poem The Ring and the Book in blank-verse, which was based on an extremely complex murder case from the Rome of the1960s.The poem is composed of twelve books, with an introduction and conclusion by him and ten lengthy dramatic poems narrated by the various characters in the story, reflecting their responses to the events. It was long even by his own standards, being over twenty thousand lines and this has been his most ambitious project and praised as an accomplished achievement in poetry. This was published separately in four volumes from November 1868 to February 1869 and this

poem was a success both critically and commercially, bringing him the recognition that he had sought for nearly forty years.

After a series of long poems published in the early 1870s, the poems "Fifine at the Fair" and "Red Cotton Night Cap" were well received. The volume *Pacchiarotto and How He Worked in Distemper* included an attack against Browning's critics and in particular the Poet Laureate Alfred Austin. In 1887, Browning produced the major work of his later years *Parleyings With Certain People of Importance in Their Day.* It presents the poet speaking in his own voice, engaging in a series of dialogues with long-forgotten figures of literary, artistic and philosophic history and this collection baffled the Victorian public.

Browning then returned to writing short, concise lyric for his last volume Asolondo (1869) which was published on the day of his death. He had a rewarding writing career and he was awarded many distinctions. He was made L.L.D of Edinburgh, a life Governor of London University and had also the offer of the Lord Rectorship of Glasgow. Browning's fame today rests mainly on his dramatic monologues in which the dialogic voice conveys not only the setting and action but also reveal the speaker's character. This was the form that he was known to have significantly mastered and innovated in his works.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 8: Name a few of the early plays by Robert Browning.
Q 9:What is the poem "Sordello" about?
Q10:Briefly describe the content ofThe Ring and the Book. When was itpublished?
Q 11:Mention how many books is The Ring and the Book divided into?
Q 12:What is the literary form or device for which Browning is known for today?

13.5 THE LETTERS OF ROBERT BROWNING

In this unit, the three selected letters of Robert Browning is taken from the first of the two volumes titled *The Letters of Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett Browning1845-1846.*The volume contains the correspondences between Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett Browning during this period and is arranged in a chronological order for the ease of reference. The selected letters were written by Robert Browning to his beloved in the year of 1845. It captures the essence of their flowering friendship, their growing love and their intellectual development. While Robert Browning was struggling hard to establish himself as a writer and a poet during this time, Elizabeth Barrett struggled and suffered a frail health in the confines of her room. Both of them found solace and hope in the other through the medium of these letters. As the letters reveal, Robert Browning played a positive role in her life as a tender and kind friend who brought out the best in her as a gifted poet and an intellectual in her own right. The text of the letters is provided below for your reference.

Letter 1:

New Cross, Hatcham, Surrey.
[Post-mark, January 10, 1845.]

I love your verses with all my heart, dear Miss Barrett,-and this is no off-hand complimentary letter that I shall write,-whatever else, no prompt matter-of-course recognition of your genius, and there a graceful and natural end of the thing. Since the day last week when I first read your poems, I quite laugh to remember how I have been turning and turning again in my mind what I should be able to tell you of their effect upon me, for in the first **flush** of delight I thought I would this once get out of my habit of purely **passive** enjoyment, when I do really enjoy, and thoroughly justify my admiration-perhaps even, as a loyal fellow-craftsman should, try and find fault and do you some little good to be proud of hereafter!-but nothing comes of it all-so into me has it gone, and part of me has it become, this great living poetry of yours, not a flower of which but took root and grew-Oh, how different that is from lying to be dried and pressed flat, and **prized** highly, and put in a book with a proper account at top and bottom, and shut up and put away ... and the book called a **'Flora**,' besides! After all, I need not give up the thought of doing that, too, in time; because even now, talking with whoever is worthy, I can give a reason for my faith in one and another excellence, the fresh strange music, the affluent language, the exquisite pathos and true new brave thought; but in this addressing myself to you-your own self, and for the first time, my feeling rises altogether. I do, as I say, love these books with all my heart-and I love you too. Do you know I was once not very far from seeing-really seeing you? Mr. Kenyon said to me one morning 'Would you like to see Miss Barrett?' then he went to announce me,-then he returned ... you were too unwell, and now it is years ago, and I feel as at some **untoward** passage in my travels, as if I had been close, so close, to some world's-wonder in **chapel** or **crypt**, only a screen to push and I might have entered, but there was some slight, so it now seems, slight and just sufficient **bar** to admission, and the half-opened door shut, and I went home my thousands of miles, and the sight was never to be?

Well, these Poems were to be, and this true thankful joy and pride with which I feel myself.
Yours ever faithfully,
Robert Browning.

Glossary:

Flush: a glow on ones face when pleased
Passive: accepting and allowing without opposing
Thoroughly: completely
Prized: something of great value
Flora: the plants of a particular area or period of time
Untoward: unexpected or unusual
Chapel: a part of a large church with its own altar

Crypt: an underground room (vault) beneath a church used either as a chapel or as a burial place
Slight: just a little
Bar: something that stops or delays

Letter 2:
New Cross, Hatcham, Monday Night.
[Post-mark, January 28, 1845.]

Dear Miss Barrett,-Your books lie on my table here, at arm's length from me, in this old room where I sit all day: and when my head aches or **wanders** or strikes work, as it now or then will, I take my chance for either green-covered volume, as if it were so much fresh **trefoil** to feel in one's hands this winter-time,-and round I turn, and, putting a **decisive** elbow on three or four half-done-with 'Bells' of mine, read, read, read, and just as I have shut up the book and walked to the window, I recollect that you wanted me to find faults there, and that, in an unwise hour, I engaged to do so. Meantime, the days go by (the **whitethroat** is come and sings now) and as I would not have you 'look down on me from your white heights' as promise breaker, evader, or forgetter, if I could help: and as, if I am very **candid** and **contrite,** you may find it in your heart to write to me again-who knows?-I shall say at once that the said faults cannot be lost, must be somewhere, and shall be faithfully brought you back whenever they turn up,-as people tell one of missing matters. I am rather **exacting,** myself, with my own gentle audience, and get to say spiteful things about them when they are backward in their dues of appreciation-but really, really-could I be quite sure that anybody as good as-I must go on, I suppose, and say-as myself, even, were honestly to feel towards me as I do, towards the writer of 'Bertha,' and the 'Drama,' and the 'Duchess,' and the 'Page' and-the whole two volumes, I should be paid after a fashion, I know.
One thing I can do-pencil, if you like, and **annotate,** and **dissertate** upon that I love most and least-I think I can do it, that is.

Here an odd memory comes-of a friend who,-**volunteering** such a service to a sonnet-writing somebody, gave him a taste of his quality in a side-column of short criticisms on sonnet the First, and starting off the beginning three lines with, of course, 'bad, worse, worst'-made by a generous mintage of words to meet the sudden run of his **epithets,** 'worser, worserer, worserest' pay off the second **terzet** in full-no 'badder, badderer, badderest' fell to the Second's allowance, and 'worser' &c. answered the demands of the Third; 'worster, worsterer, worsterest' supplied the emergency of the Fourth; and, **bestowing** his last 'worserestest and worstestest' on lines 13 and 14, my friend (slapping his forehead like an emptied strong-box) frankly declared himself **bankrupt,** and honourably**incompetent,** to satisfy the reasonable expectations of the rest of the series!

What an **illustration** of the law by which opposite ideas suggest opposite, and contrary images come together!

See now, how, of that 'Friendship' you offer me (and here Juliet's word rises to my lips)-I feel sure once and for ever. I have got already, I see, into this little pet-handwriting of mine (not anyone else's) which scratches on as if theatrical copyists (ah me!) and Bradbury and Evans' Reader were not! But you shall get something better than this nonsense one day, if you will have patience with me-hardly better, though, because this does me real good, gives real relief, to write. After all, you know nothing, next to nothing of me, and that stops me. Spring is to come, however!

If you hate writing to me as I hate writing to nearly everybody, I pray you never write-if you do, as you say, care for anything I have done. I will simply assure you, that meaning to begin work in deep **earnest,** begin without **affectation,** God knows,-I do not know what will help me more than hearing from you,-and therefore, if you do not so very much hate it, I know I shall hear from you-and very little more about your 'tiring me.'
Ever yours faithfully,
Robert Browning.

Glossary:

Wanders: walk or move about casually
Trefoil: a small plant with yellow flowers
Decisive: settling an issue quickly
Candid: truthful and straightforward
Contrite: sorry or regretful for having done wrong
Exacting: making great demands on one's endurance or skill
Annotate: add explanatory notes
Dissertate: extended discussion
Volunteering: a person who freely offers to do something
Epithets: a word or phrase used to describe the most important thing or quality of a person
Terzet: a composition in three voice parts
Bestowing: award or give something (an honour, a right or gift)
Bankrupt: declared in law as not having money to pay one's debts
Incompetent: not successful enough to do something successfully
Illustration: make clear and help in explaining something
Copyists: those who make copies by profession
Earnest: very seriously and sincerely
Affectation: putting up a false pretense of speaking or writing

Letter 3:
[Post-mark, June 14, 1845.]

When I ask my wise self what I really do remember of the Prize poem, the answer is-both of Chapman's lines a-top, quite worth any prize for their quotes-then, the good epithet of 'Green Europe' contrasting with Africa-then, deep in the piece, a picture of a **Vestal** in a vault, where I see a dipping and winking lamp plainest, and last of all the **ominous** 'all was

dark' that dismisses you. I read the poem many years ago, and never since, though I have an impression that the versification is good, yet from your commentary I see I must have said a good deal more in its praise than that. But have you not discovered by this time that I go on talking with my thoughts away?

I know, I have always been jealous of my own musical faculty (I can write music).-Now that I see the uselessness of such jealousy, and am for loosing and letting it go, it may be cramped possibly. Your music is more various and exquisite than any modern writer's to my ear. One should study the mechanical part of the art, as nearly all that there is to be studied-for the more one sits and thinks over the creative process, the more it confirms itself as 'inspiration,' nothing more nor less. Or, at worst, you write down old inspirations, what you remember of them ... but with that it begins. 'Reflection' is exactly what it names itself-a re-presentation, in scattered rays from every angle of **incidence,** of what first of all became present in a great light, a whole one. So tell me how these lights are born, if you can! But I can tell anybody how to make melodious verses-let him do it therefore-it should be exacted of all writers.

You do not understand what a new feeling it is for me to have someone who is to like my verses or I shall not ever like them after! So far differently was I circumstanced of old, that I used rather to go about for a subject of offence to people; writing ugly things in order to warn the **ungenial** and **timorous** off my grounds at once. I shall never do so again at least! As it is, I will bring all I dare, in as great quantities as I can-if not next time, after then-certainly. I must make an end, print this Autumn my last four 'Bells,' Lyrics, Romances, 'The Tragedy,' and 'Luna,' and then go on with a whole heart to my own Poem-indeed, I have just resolved not to begin any new song, even, till this grand clearance is made-I will get the Tragedy transcribed to bring-

'To bring!' Next Wednesday-if you know how happy you make me may I not say that, my dear friend, when I feel it from my soul?

I thank God that you are better: do pray make fresh endeavours to profit by this partial respite of the weather! All about you must urge that: but even from my distance some effect might come of such wishes. But you are better-look so and speak so! God bless you.
R.B.
You let 'flowers be sent you in a letter,' everyone knows, and this hot day draws out our very first yellow rose.

Glossary
Vestal : pure
Vault : a chamber in a church or in a graveyard used for burials
Ominous : suggesting that something bad is about to happen
Incidence : an occurrence, rate or frequency of something
Ungenial : someone who is not friendly or cheerful
Timorous : lacking in courage or confidence
Transcribed:make a copy of something in another language or alphabet

Endeavours : try hard to do or achieve something
Respite : a short period of relief

13.5.1 Summary of the Letters

The following is an attempt at understanding the gist of the letters Browning wrote to Elizabeth.

Letter I

In the first letter of this unit dated 10 January, 1845 (which is also the second letter in the first volume of the letters), Browning reveals a love for the verses of Elizabeth Barrett who was a poet herself. Through this letter, he sincerely compliments her and acknowledges her genius. He expresses the thoughts he had been carrying for the entire week before he had begun reading her poems, wondering how best to express the powerful effect of her work on him and laughing all by himself at the very thought. In his first rush of delight, he thinks that he would for once step out of his tendency to purely enjoy poetry passively and instead read actively (be involved) into them as he truly enjoys their essence. He also thinks of providing her constructive criticism and to justify his admiration of her work, like a truly loyal fellow-craftsman (fellow-because he is also a fellow contemporary poet). Hence, he expresses his eagerness to find any kind of shortcomings in her work in order to help her better herself and guide her so that she can enrich her creative work and be proud of them later.

But, he is unable to pin down any shortcoming as such and is infactdeeply absorbed to the point offeeling her 'living poetry' flow into his being and grow as a flower. He likens or compares this enriching experience to a living plant that takes root, grows and flowers. He also contrasts it to that of a dried and pressed flower. The joy of a real living flower is quite different from that of the prized and pressed flower kept between books and volumes, shut and stacked away in the old dusty shelves. Although, the beauty of a real flower is short lived, its natural existenceis cherished forever. In a lighter vein, he asks her to imagine the irony of a 'dried and pressed flower' in a book titled 'flora' (a term of general classification used for 'natural' plants and trees). The irony is that dried flowers which are often kept in remembrance are soon forgotten with time.The word flora evokes a visual sense of living plants and flowers as contrasted to the keep-sakes of dried flowers.

With the passing of time, he does not give up the idea of assuring his faith in a worthy talent (Elizabeth) and the recognition of excellence, through what he calls the characteristics of "fresh strange music," "affluent language," "exquisite pathos" and brave new thought. Through this letter, he confesses how for the first time, he experiences a rush of feelings effecting his sense of 'reasoning'. And he is rather overwhelmed in addressing the value of her work, as well as, his love for her. He reveals how he had almost been close to seeing her in personwhen Mr. Kenyon had asked him one morning if he would like to see Miss Barrett. But having gone inside to inform her of Browning's visit, the man returned with news that she was unwell which is why he had lost the opportunity of meeting her.

This he discloses had been several years ago and he 'compares' this experience to "some untoward passage" during a travelor journey. To him this experience felt as if he had been very close or almost on the verge of seeing some kind of a 'wonder of the world' such as a chapel or a crypt with a dividing/ pasting screen which he just had to draw to enter but almost missed out on.

There was some kind of a hindrance or hesitation as he introspects from the present point-of-view, just a slight restriction from entry.Thus, he compares this opportunity to a half-opened door which he was unable to enter to returns home through thousands of miles without the privilege of so much as a glimpse or a glance even. Then he ends the letter with a compliment on the Poems which almost personifies its living quality and thanks her for the joy and pride which he feels.

Letter 2:

The second letter in this unit is dated 28 January, 1845. He opens the letter with a description of her books lying on his table, just kept at an arm's length, within his reach in his old room, where he almost spends his entire day. And whenever he suffers a headache or his mind wanders off, as it often does, he reaches out for any of those green-covered volumes which feel like a fresh trefoil flower during wintertime. And then, he turns around and takes to reading the half done drafts of Bell Poems, concentrating and reading them intensely at his study. And when he shuts the book to walk to the window, he remembers herearlier request for him to point out any faults or shortcomings in her work. Browning expresses how difficult it is to engage in such a taskand to position himself as the critic of her works. Although, he has a knack for criticismwhich came naturally to him, in case of her works, he felt that he required an effort to engage in the same. He also describes how a 'whitethroat' bird visits his window-sill to singto him every now and then, and how his days passed by in general.

In a light vein, he writes that he can never even dream, to have her look down upon him,from her white heights (her room was housed upstairs at her Wimpole residence) as though he were a 'stranger' and she a 'heart breaker' or some kind of an 'evader' who ignored him to the point of forgetting him. And again imagines that in the case of such an event, she would consider writing to him again to only find him frank and apologetic. But once again you are to note that this is only his imagination at work and he only imagines such an unlikely situation (which is why he says "who knows?")

Coming back to her creative works, he assures her that if there were any faults they could never be lost, and wouldonly be hiding somewhere which he would surely and faithfully bring to her notice, as and when they appear. He even compares these hidden shortcomingsto 'missing cases' which people came up with. He jokingly says that unlike her, he would rather judge his own work in relation to his own readers and say unpleasant things about those readers who do not display a standard sense of critical appreciation. But on a more serious note, he also wonders on his own ability to honestly examine andcritically analyse his own works himself. He had done this as in the case of 'Bertha',

the'Drama', the 'Duchess' and the 'Page' along with the entire two volumes and feels that he had done justice to them.

He goes on to suggest that if she would allow him, he would rather underline her texts with a pencil and 'annotate' as well as 'dissertate' upon the parts he loved most and the parts he loved the least. At this, he cites an odd and funny memory of his friend who had volunteered such a service (i.e., to critique or edit) to help an acquaintance who wrote sonnets. In this one incident, Browning's critic friend in his concise criticism gave an idea of the quality of the work in a side column of the first sonnet.His comments on the first three lines of the starting sonnet began with the use of 'epithets' (a descriptive word or phrase): 'worser, worserer, worserest!'And in the second terzet he was compelled to write in full- 'no badder, badderer, badderest.' By the time he reached the third his comments changed into -'worster, worsterer, worseterest.' And finally, the last part ended with an exhausted set of comment: 'worserestest and worsetester!' Thus, by the end of the poem, his critic-friend had ended up slapping his forehead like an emptied box and finally declaring himself bankrupt to mean his loss of words and almost incompetence to satisfy any kind of expectation inthe remaining series of sonnets! Browning exclaims at the way contrary images came together and the way opposite ideas functioned!

He talks of their Friendship (alluding to Romeo and Juliet) which makes him feel much secured. Thus, he takes to his habit of writing in his own handwriting. He requests her patienceto read him, as it does him real good and provides him true relief to express and pour his thoughts through his writing. As they are new acquaintances and she is yet to understand him, to get to know him, he expresses his optimism saying "spring is to come however!"He further says that in case she disliked writing to him in anyway, as he himself did to nearly everyone else he knew, he would respect her decision not to write to him. Because, he feels that if she did write to him then he would rather want it to be out of her genuine concern for anything he might have ever done for her.

He assures her that he intends to begin work sincerely without pretending to try too hard.Also he expresses his faith that God alone knew how nothing else would help him more than hearing from her again. And if she did not have any problem of writing to him, he believes that he would hear from heryet again and also hear less of her telling him that she might be 'tiring' him.By the end of the two letters you will notice how the letters opens without any formal greetings. This is precisely because they wrote and responded to each other very frequently which also explains the familiarity that they shared.

Letter 3:

The next letter is dated 14 June, 1845 in which Browning starts off by referring to all that he remembers of Chapman's lines, much valuable for their quotes and variousstriking epithetsthat he recalls like that of the 'Green Europe' (contrasted with Africa) and images like the Vestal in a vault described in the middle of the piece in which he sees a 'dipping and flickering lamp' and not to forget the foreboding dark that envelopes the reader.

He says that he had read the referred poem several years before and since then had an impression that the versification was good. But from her response feels that Browning may have also overestimated or praised it more than required. And then he poses the question whether she has discovered or noticed how his continuous stream of thoughts find a flow of expression through his letters. This indicates his growing comfort levels and ease of sharing his thoughts and feelings with Elizabeth Barrett with the passing of time. Then, he jots downhis thoughts regarding his musical abilities, telling her that earlier he had also 'written' music. But his inherent musical talentshad gradually begun to slacken over the years remaining bottled up in him perhaps, due to a lack of practice. He then takes to praising the musicality of Elizabeth'spoetic verses which is pleasing to his ears than any other modern writer. He expresses his belief that one should study the theory of art in its entirety because according to him, the more one sits to ponder about the 'creative'process; the more it gets rooted as an inspiration.

Sometimes, when suffering a writer's (mental) block, one tends to recall and write down whatever little he remembers through memory or recollection. Reflection he says is always a form of're-presentation', fragmented and scattered like rays at varied angles presenting itself in a new light. He is curious to know how she creates her musical verses that contain her reflections saying that in return he will tell her what goes into his melodies. Thus, in this context of appreciating her writing he asks her "so tell me how these lights are born, if you can!"

To him it is a new feeling to have someone like her who appreciates his verses which he would never be able to like himself. He admits that circumstances were such that he happened toapproach others for criticism andat times had to even write some ugly things to warn critics who were too harsh or too uncritical in their criticism of his works. He expresses his desire to quickly complete and send the works of the 'Lyrics', the last four 'Bells', 'Romances', the 'Tragedy' and 'Luna' the following Autumn and that he would go back to his own Poem only after that. In fact, he even decides not to start any new song until he makes a clearance of these works. Further, he proposes to have his Tragedy transcribed the following mid-week itself.

At the end of the letter, he expresses the happiness he feels from the depth of his soul at the simple thought of her and also thanks God for improving her health. He requests her to atleastgain a partial relief from the improving weather. Although everyone around her would certainly encourage the same, Browning on being her true friendand well-wisher despite the distance,encourages her to feel better as well saying: "But you are better-look so and speak so!" And thus, he closes the letter with a blessing and also jots down a footnote at the end of the letter to tell her that everyone knew quietly that she let him send her flowers along with the letters. And so he sends her their first yellow rose as a symbol of his loving care and their friendship.

13.6 LET US SUM UP

After going through this unit,you must be familiar with the life and works of both Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett Browning who were the leading poets of the Victorian age. Although the unit focuses on the selected letters written by Robert Browning to Elizabeth Barrett, both of them consistently wrote to each other through the years and shared a steady correspondence with each other. The texts of the selected and dated letters reveal their intellectual as well as, emotional side and have been annotated for the ease of your reference.

13.7 FURTHER READING

1) Berdoe, Edward. (1989).*The Browning Cyclopaedia.* New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers.

The Project Gutenberg EBook o*f The Letters of Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett Barrett,* Vol. 1 (of 2) 1845-1846, Release Date: July 2, 2005 [EBook #16182] eBook or online at www.gutenberg.net

13.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: Robert Browning had developed a rapport with Elizabeth Barrett by way of his 'letters' through which their friendship had transformed into love.

Ans to Q No 2: Elizabeth Barrett as a young lady had suffered from a major accident while riding a horse which had led to serious complications and left her bed-ridden for a long time.

Ans to Q No 3: Their letters reveal intellectual exchanges without leaving out on the emotional, spiritual or even the day-to-day aspects of their life.

Ans to Q No 4:Browning's father had amassed an extensive library of around six thousand books, in several languages and many of these were rare. These were the chief literary resources that gave him an easy access, to develop his literary interests. His father encouraged his children's interests in literature and the arts.

Ans to Q No 5: Both the universities were open to members of the Church of England but his mother's evangelical Protestant faith who did not follow the beliefs of the established Church of England.

Ans to Q No 6: Their regular correspondence slowly developed into a romance and finally they eloped on 12 September 1846.

Ans to Q No 7: The Brownings lived in Italy, residing first in Pisa for a year and then an apartment in Florence (now a museum to their memory). Their only son Robert Wiedermann Barrett Browning nicknamed "Penini" or "Pen" was born in 1849. During the years they lived there, his fascination led him to learn much about Italian art and

culture. In his later life he also described Italy as his University. Later, he brought a home in Asolo, outside Venice. While in their Italy home the couple was very comfortable and their relationship together was happy.

Ans to Q No 8:*Pippa Passes* (1841), A *Blot on the Scutcheon* (1843) and A *Soul's Tragedy* (1846).

Ans to Q No 9:"Sordello" is a complex psychological poem about a 13th century troubadour or a travelling poet.

Ans to Q No 10: In 1868, after five years of work, he completed and published the long poem *The Ring and the Book* in blank-verse, which was based on an extremely complex murder case from the Rome of the1960s.

Ans to Q No 11: The poem is composed of twelve books, with an introduction and conclusion by him and ten lengthy dramatic poems narrated by the various characters in the story, reflecting their responses to the events.

Ans to Q No 12: Browning's fame today, rests mainly on his dramatic monologues in which the dialogic voice conveys not only the setting and action but also reveals the speaker's character. This was the form that he was known to have significantly mastered and innovated in his works.

13.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q 1. What is the importance of letter writing as a literary genre? Discuss.
Q 2. Discuss the life and works of Robert Browning with particular reference to some of his letters.
Q 3. Summarise the content of any two letters written by Robert Browning to Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

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UNIT 14 : ROBERT BROWNING: SELECT LETTERS OF BROWNING

UNIT STRUCTURE

14.1 Learning Objectives
14.2 ntroduction
14.3 Major Themes
14.4 Style and Language
14.5 Critical Reception
14.6 Let us Sum up
14.7 Further Reading
14.8 Answers to Check Your Progress
14.9 Model Questions

14.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- explain the relevant themes pertaining to the letters
- analyse the style and language of Browning in his letters
- appreciate the art and beauty of letter writing

14.2 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, the learner was introduced to the letter writing as a reflective literary practice, while also unraveling the life and works of Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning along with the text and explanation of selected letters of correspondence between the two writers. The present unit shall take up the aspects of major themes reflected in the text of these prescribed letters, the style and language employed in the letters together with the critical reception of these letters which are considered as timeless literary treasures.

14.3 MAJOR THEMES

The following are the important themes available in the letters selected for your study.

Correspondence between Two Great Literary Minds: Letter writing is an intimate form of correspondence. An informal letter in particular, through its detailed mode, allows a letter writer to be more personal and elaboratethat goes a long way to bridge any form of communication gap.Both, Robert Browning and ElizabethBarrett grew familiar with each other and developed a friendship through their regular correspondence through letter writing. As a whole through his letters to Elizabeth, Browning describes his literary interests and other preoccupations such as the creation of dramatic characters in his work, his

critical insights into the literary works of significant writers, his inspiration from classical Greek mythology, his knowledge of a wide-ranging vocabulary, his passionate poetry along with his discussions of the arts in general.

Confessions of Elizabeth: The letters to and of Elizabeth Barrett reveal her love for reading, her sensitivity to criticism, her responses to Browning's literary and critical ideas and her opinion of the arts as a laborious process which required patience. In one of her letters dated June 17, 1845, she wrote: "Yes, I quite believe as you do that what is called the 'creative process' in works of Art, is just inspiration and no less."To provide the learner another glimpse of Elizabeth Barrett's writingstyle, let us take another example of one of her letters to Browning which reads thus: "Headlong I was at first, and headlong I continue-precipitously rushing forward through all manner of nettles and briars instead of keeping the path; guessing at the meaning of unknown words instead of looking into the dictionary-tearing open letters, and never untying a string,-and expecting everything to be done in a minute, and the thunder to be as quick as the lightning." If there was anything that she loved to do, it was as she confesses in her letters to 'write' and to her writing letters were almost like a salvation to her soul.

LET US KNOW

It was Browning who had mostly initiated their intellectual discussions and opinions. But apart from that, these letters also contained the news of their regular concerns and their daily lives, the camaraderie that they shared and their feelings towards each other. Thus, the volume of their lettersreveal a part of their mind and soul by capturing a promising young man's loving presence and the feminine essence of a tender young soul with a fresh optimism towards life.

The Significance of the Letters: The letters exchanged secretly between the two poets Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett Browning reveals the world that they had built for themselves which was enriching and filled with optimism, inspiring and encouraging, cheerful and celebratory. They shared a kind of minds-space through their letters, a place where their minds met despite the distance to engage in intellectual exchanges and inspire in each other spurts of creativity. The letters poured inlike a healing touch to the bed ridden and often unwell Elizabeth who was mostly confined to her room. Her gratitude to Browning also found a reflection in her collection of love sonnets *Sonnets From the Portuguese.* The letters served as the medium through which they grew familiar with each other, developed a strong friendship that lead to their secret marriage and a happy married life of fifteen years.

In the note to the Letters (1845-1846) the only son of the Brownings, Robert Wiedermann Barrett Browning (also known as Penini) wrote thus:

"In considering the question of publishing these letters, which are all that ever passed between my father and mother, for after their marriage they were never separated, it

seemed to me that my only alternatives were to allow them to be published or to destroy them. I might, indeed, have left the matter to the decision of others after my death, but that would be evading a responsibility which I feel that I ought to accept. Ever since my mother's death these letters were kept by my father in a certain inlaid box, into which they exactly fitted, and where they have always rested, letter beside letter, each in its consecutive order and numbered on the envelope by his own hand. My father destroyed all the rest of his correspondence, and not long before his death he said, referring to these letters: 'There they are, do with them as you please when I am dead and gone!'
A few of the letters are of little or no interest, but their omission would have saved only a few pages, and I think it well that the correspondence should be given in its entirety. I wish to express my gratitude to my father's friend and mine, Mrs. Miller Morison, for her unfailing sympathy and assistance in deciphering some words which had become scarcely legible owing to faded ink.
R.B.B.
1898.

The above letter reveals how Browning after the demise of his wife Elizabeth had meticulously arranged and kept these letters in an inlaid box like memorable keep-sakes without any objective of publishing them. But they eventually found their way to publication in the hands of their young son Robert Barrett Browning. These letters would have been lost if they were not given the importance that they more than deserved. The volume of their letters is a timeless treasure because they contain the significant correspondences of two prominent and talented poets and provide us with a detailed glimpse of not only their daily lives and struggles but also their gifted intellect and unconditional love for each other. Therefore, the volume of their letters issignificant for study as they reveal the minds of two gifted individuals together with their inspiring lives.

LET US KNOW

To provide the learner with a glimpse of Elizabeth Barrett's life, here is what she had written to Robert Browning in one of her lettersdated March 20, 1845:

"And what you say of society draws me on to many comparative thoughts of your life and mine. You seem to have drunken of the cup of life full, with the sun shining on it. I have lived only inwardly; or with sorrow, for a strong emotion. Before this seclusion of my illness, I was secluded still, and there are few of the youngest women in the world who have not seen more, heard more, known more, of society, than I, who am scarcely to be called young now. I grew up in the country-had no social opportunities, had my heart in books and poetry, and my experience in reveries. My sympathies drooped towards the ground like an untrained honeysuckle-and but for one, in my own house-but of this I cannot speak. It was a lonely life, growing green like the grass around it. Books and dreams were what I lived in-and domestic life only seemed to buzz gently around, like the bees about the grass. And so time passed, and passed-and afterwards, when my illness

came and I seemed to stand at the edge of the world with all done, and no prospect (as appeared at one time) of ever passing the threshold of one room again"

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1.Discuss the significance of the letters the Brownings had written for each other.

14.4 STYLE AND LANGUAGE

As a gifted poet, Browning is remembered for his wide use of the dramatic monologue in his verses. *The Browning Cyclopaedia* (1989) contains an entry on his use of the dramatic monologue which states that "Mr. Browning has so excelled in this particular kind of poetry that it may be fitly called a novelty of his invention" (141). In his writings, he often provided a psychological insight into his characters. It took a long time in his career, for him to be recognised as a great poet because the subjects that he explored hardly found an interest in the readers of his time. Often, they could not relate to his treatment of themes that were complex and obscure. The psychological play that shaped his verses often required him to break the continuity or flow of sentences in order to bring an intensity of emotion. His verses were mostly written on subjects of love, power, intrigue, psychology, class and society.

His musical abilities found a lyrical expression through his poetry, music poems and song compositions. A lyrical element is often present in the monologues and they mostly tend to be narrative or analytical in form. Browning had employed the dramatic monologue in a variety of forms, be it in the form of letters or written records like *The Ring and the Book* which consisted of twelve books(published in four volumes between 1868-1869).

Browning poured his mind and soul through his letters to Elizabeth Barrett and she too found solace and optimism through his letters. The letters that were exchanged between them were at times, the length of a paragraph and sometimes even ran into several pages containing a flow of their thoughts. These letters reflect the continuity in their conversations through regular letter-writing.Browning often opened his letters with a reference to the previous letter and always ended with a good word, a note of encouragement, appreciation or a simple blessing such as: "I am proud and happy in your friendship-now and ever. May God bless you!","Know me for yours" or "Vivi felice-my dear friend, God bless you!" He always assured her of his consistent love and support for her and to quote you a simple example, in one of his letters he writes thus: "For me, going out does me good-reading, writing, and, what is odd,-infinitely most of all, sleeping do me the harm,-never any very great harm. And all the while I am yours." There is always an easy familiarity in his style of writing to her and with a treasure of his creative expressions such as: "Pomegranates you may cut deep down the middle and see into, but not hearts,-so why should I try and speak?" Although, it must be noted that, it is not as easy to decipher the meaning of each and every letter in the volume without first grasping the context or the subject of discussion as both of them were well read poets. Infact, in one of

her letters to Browning, Elizabeth had herself noted: "People say of you and of me, dear Mr. Browning that we love the darkness and use a sphinxine idiom in our talk."

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 2.Why did Browning's works take time to get recognized?
Q 3.For which type of poetry is Browning so famous today?

14.5 CRITICAL RECEPTION

Robert Browning is held as the most influential poet of the 19th century although he was more admired than read in his own time. Hugh Walker's influential survey of Victorian literature called *The Age of Tennyson* (1897) hadconsiderably influenced the opinion of literary historians. During his time true appreciation lay with poets such as Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Algernon Charles Swinburne who hadalso argued against the common charge of Browning's poetry being too obscure. According to Swinburne, Browning's characteristic work was the purest and highest form of the lyric or dramatic art. And indeed with the passing of time when everything that was 'Victorian' suffered attacks of criticism or rather came under the scanner, the poetical versesof Browning continued to live on among all other poets. A prominent historian and critic, John Forster evaluated Browning's early literary development by emphasising that he had only partially realised his potential.

In 1880s, Samuel Clemensknown better as Mark Twain was intensely passionate with the subtle style in Browning's verses. Browning was greatly admired by the modern writers. William Butler Yeats in the final part of his last volume traced his own descent from William Blake, followed by P.B. Shelley and Robert Browning. Ezra Pound had famously acknowledged Browning as his 'poetic father'. And Robert Lowell found Browning's verses as fluid as prose, while he was also one of the favourite poets of Robert Frost. Moreover, Oscar Wildeanalysed the narrative and the psychological aspects of Browning's poetry, which had distinguished his verses from other contemporary poets. The letters were very much personal and only published posthumously and although, these are much less a subject of critical discussion in comparison to his poetry, they contain serious critical insights into the intelligent mind of a self-styled poet, Robert Browning.

14.6 LET US SUM UP

After a detailed reading of the unit, the learner will be able to explain the themes pertaining to the letters and together with the critical reception be able to analyse the style and language employed by Browning. Also a study of the letters will enable you to gain an insight on how a wonderful friendship and nurturing relationship had developed between the two poets through the very mode of personal letters and thereby, encourage your appreciation of the beauty in the lost art of letter writing.

14.7 FURTHER READING

1) Berdoe, Edward. (1989).*The Browning Cyclopaedia.* New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers.

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14.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: Browning's fame today, rests mainly on his dramatic monologues in which the dialogic voice conveys not only the setting and action but also reveals the speaker's character. This was the form that he was known to have significantly mastered and innovated in his works.

Ans to Q No 2 : In his writings, he often provided a psychological insight into his characters. It took a long time in his career, for him to be recognised as a great poet because the subjects that he explored hardly found an interest in the readers of his time.

Ans to Q No 3 : Dramatic Monologue.

14.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q 1. Explain some of the major themes in the selected letters of Browning.

Q 2. Analyse the style and language employed by Robert Browning both in his poems and letters.

Q 3. Discuss the critical reception of the works of Robert Browning.

Q 4. Briefly describe the developing familiarity and friendship through the correspondence between the two poets Elizabeth Barrett and Robert Browning.

Q5. How, according to you, the letters of the Brownings throw light on the literary geniuses of each other?

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UNIT 15 : A.G. GARDINER: ON LETTER WRITING

UNIT STRUCTURE

15.1 Learning Objectives
15.2 Introduction
15.3 Essay as a Literary Form
15.4 A. G. Gardiner: The Essayist
15.4.1 His Life and Works
15.5 Explanation of the Text
15.6 Detailed Synopsis of the Text
15.7 Style and Language
15.8 Let us Sum up
15.9 Further Reading
15.10 Model Questions

15.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- define the hallmarks of a good essay
- discuss the life and works of A. G. Gardiner
- discuss the finer points of the essay, “On Letter Writing”
- grasp the techniques, style and language used by Gardiner
- appreciate the essay in its totality

15.2 INTRODUCTION

This unit aims, first of all, to identify the key areas that will help to make you acquainted with A. G. Gardiner, the essayist. Gardiner has always been a very popular choice in many anthologies meant for students. This unit will try to introduce to you the features of A. G. Gardiner's writing that gain him such popularity. It also establishes the learning objectives so that you can identify the areas you need to focus on when you are studying this particular essay, On Letter Writing by A. G. Gardiner.

Since this unit aims to acquaint you with an essay, it is desirable that you have some idea as to what an essay is. After all, the essay is a widely practiced form of literature. Moreover, since there are almost as many varieties of the essay as there are essayists, you may find the sheer variety a little bewildering. The essay, as a form of literature, has been in existence since ancient times. The introduction gives you a brief history of the essay as a form of literature and introduces you to some great names associated with essay writing. It also tells you what the characteristics of a good essay are.

Most importantly, this unit gives you an introduction to A. G. Gardiner and it also provides you with a detailed study of the man, his life and his work. This unit further gives you an explanation of the essay you have just read. Over and above this, it seeks to acquaint you with certain issues that are linked with our total understanding of a work of literature. These are 'technique' and 'style'. Two separate sections deal with Gardiner's technique and his style. The unit then sums up all that we have done in the course of our study of this lesson. This is followed with a list of reference books that will help you know more about Gardiner and his work. Finally, a number of questions are provided to help you prepare for your examinations.

15.3 ESSAY AS A LITERARY FORM

The essay, as a form of literature, has been around since ancient times. Just see how Bacon, one of the greatest of English essayists puts it, "the word is late, but the thing is ancient". Do you know who Bacon was? Well, he was one of the most famous of the English essayists who wrote during the late sixteenth and the early seventeenth centuries. You have been provided with more information about this person, immediately after this unit. It was another writer called Montaigne who coined the name for this particular form of writing when he gave the title *Essais* to his first publication in 1580. That was in France. In England, in the year 1597, Bacon described his Essays as 'grains of salt which will rather give an appetite than offend with satiety'. In a manner of speaking, the French essayist, Montaigne, may be considered to be the father of the essay as we know it today.

The essay is a rather loose form of writing that can range from highly learned writings in philosophy or the sciences to very personal ruminations on trivial, everyday issues. They may be only a few pages in length, as are the essays of Bacon, or they may be the length of a book, as is Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding.* In style, too, they may show marked differences. Montaigne, for instance, wrote in a style that was discursive, informal and intimate. Bacon on the other hand chose a style that was terse, didactic and aloof. Montaigne wrote on topics such as "Liars", "The Custom of Wearing Clothes" and "The Art of Conversation". "Bacon, on the other hand, wrote on such topics as "Of Envy", Of Riches", "Of Negotiating", among others. If, on the other hand, one were to pick up a volume of essays by someone like Charles Lamb, one would get to read essays that are very different. Lamb's essays talk mostly about his personal life, feelings, or desires. They are usually written in a rambling style in very informal language.

After Bacon, the next great English essayist was Sir William Cornwallis whose Essays were published in 1600-01. He was followed by Abraham Cowley who followed Montaigne's tradition of personal and reflective informality. He wrote on such subjects as liberty, solitude, avarice, the brevity of life, and the uncertainty of riches.

Towards the end of the seventeenth century it was clear that the essay was becoming an increasingly popular form of diversion. Although he was better known as a novelist, (you

must certainly have heard of Robinson Crusoe) Daniel Defoe's journalistic essays and pamphlets certainly influenced the growth and development of the English essay. However, it was with Addison and Steele that the essay in England truly came to its own. They wrote a type of essay *which* has come to be known as the periodical essay. Ranging from such subjects as the Tombs in Westminster Abbey to Ladies' Head-dress, and from the Cries of London to Recollections of Childhood, these appeared in the *Tatler* (1709-11) and in the Spectator.

In the nineteenth century numerous great essayists such as Lamb, Hazlitt, Thomas de Quincy, Coleridge, Macaulay, Carlyle, Ruskin, Matthew Arnold, Walter Pater and R. L. Stevenson carried forward the tradition of the English essay. In the nineteenth century the medium became indispensable for literary critics, reviewers, journalists and columnists. Of course, the subject matter no longer remained confined to light, informal diversions only.

Later essayists have included such great names as Max Beerbohm, Chesterton, T. S. Eliot, George Orwell, Graham Greene, Aldous Huxley, and W. H. Auden.

The essay we shall be reading here is, of course, the informal essay. Such essays are not very easy to write, although they seem to be so very simple and they deal with the most general of subjects. You must remember that the essayist has deliberately made certain choices (the choice of using the simplest of language, for example). He must consciously achieve the result he desires on the basis of these choices. Consequently, it is in the effects of the essay that we are able to determine its worth. A few pertinent questions can help us determine whether any personal essay we happen to be reading is worthwhile or no. These questions could be somewhat like:

- Has the author been able to grip my attention from the very beginning?
- Do I find what he is saying interesting?
- Does he make me feel that I am actually listening to him rather than reading him?
- Is he saying things in such a manner that I feel my emotions being moved? Do I feel like laughing, grinning, crying or any such emotion?

LET US KNOW

Francis Bacon was an English philosopher and essayist. He is famous for his *Essays, The Advancement of Learning, Novum Organum*, *The History of the Reign of King Henry the Seventh*, *The New Atlantis* and others. His works are written in a concise and succinct style. Michel de Montaigne is the most influential writer of the French Renaissance, and is known for popularising the essay as a literary genre. Modern literary non- fiction has been inspired by Montaigne.

15.4 A.G. GARDINER: THE ESSAYIST

15.4.1 His Life and Works

In the preceding section we had formulated a few questions that can help us determine the quality of an essay. A.G. Gardiner's essays have always drawn very positive answers to these questions. This is the reason why he has been rated so highly among English essayists. In fact, such essays as "All About a Dog" or "On Saying Please" have been so popular, that anthologies of English prose for students invariably contain one of these essays. Gardiner always uses an easy conversational style that makes one feel that one is actually 'chatting' with him over a cup of tea.

A. G. Gardiner was better known in his own day as one of the most powerful of editors in Edwardian England-an England ruled by King Edward VII, after the death of Queen Victoria. His entire name was Alfred George Gardiner, but, because he thought Alfred George too commonplace, as names go, he preferred A. G. Gardiner. In fact, in one of his essays, he actually praises the English habit of calling people by their surnames. He certainly did not like the American habit of calling people by their first names. Gardiner was born in 1865. He left school at the minimum age and decided to become a journalist. He was quite successful and rose to become the editor of *The Daily News*, a powerful newspaper owned by the Cadbury family. He held this position for the first fifteen years of the twentieth century and then, unfortunately, lost his job owing to a feud with Lloyd George. The Cadbury family, you see, decided to support Lloyd George rather than their own editor.

His differences with the owner of his paper led to Gardiner's career as an editor being over. Gardiner now started a new, and perhaps a gentler phase, in his life. He started writing essays under the name of 'Alpha of the Plough'. He had a long and a successful career as an essayist. Gardiner died in the year 1946.

We have already seen that Gardiner had been a very successful newspaper editor. However, once that phase of his life was over, he took to writing essays. He chose the pen-name 'Alpha of the Plough' for the purpose. He also wrote the biography of Sir William Harcourt. Of all the books of compiled essays *perhaps Mary Furrows and Prophets*, *Priests and Kings* are the best known (although *Pebbles on the Shore* and *Leaves in the Wind* have also proved extremely popular over the years). The first contains essays of a more general nature, whereas the second is certainly more political in nature. The essay *On Smiles* in the latter book is a good example of Gardiner's political writing and shows a more acerbic or critical side of his tongue than is seen in the more genial essays.

By the time he died in 1946, A. G. Gardiner had created for himself a name, and had left behind a body of work, that has found a place from such commonplace books as school or college level English readers to such scholarly work as Edward Pearce's contribution in *History Today.* A. G. Gardiner's charm, unfading and enduring, continues to lure readers long after his form of the essay has been removed to make way for other forms of the English essay.

15.5. EXPLANATION OF THE TEXT

The essay, as the title clearly shows, is on the art of letter-writing. There was a time when letters were the only mode of communication over great distances. Perhaps this was the reason why, in the past, letter-writing was considered an art. However, in course of time, science came up with other modes of communication such as the telephone or telegraph. Thanks to these developments in other modes of communication, letter writing has become a 'forgotten art'.

Gardiner begins, as he always does, by picking up a stray bit of conversation between two soldiers that he overhears in a railway station. They, Bill and Sam, seem to be brothers. The two young men are discussing how difficult it is to write letters to one's parents and relatives from the battlefront. Bill says to Sam that the latter will have a lot of difficult letter writing to do to all their relations. He says that no one can be left out because if Sam writes to one relative and not to the others, then the others will feel offended. Rather helpfully, he offers the advice that one can always mention the other relations in the letter to a particular relation, and express the hope that they are fine. Both brothers are sorry that writing such letters are not as easy as writing love letters-which can be filled up with crosses (denoting kisses) when one has nothing left to say. As the train moves, Gardiner comes to learn that this soldier has participated in a number of exciting battles of the First World War. (This is the period in which the episode is set). This causes the author to feel the irony of the situation. Here are two soldiers participating in a momentous activity that is so terribly interesting to all, yet they claim they have nothing to write beyond "I hope this finds you as well as it leaves me at present".

Analysing the situation, Gardiner says that many letters are still being written today, and much of it is letters that have been well written. He comes to the conclusion that the two young men are simply unable to articulate their thoughts and feelings unless someone gives them a sort of opening. That seems to be the main problem here-and not the fact that there is simply nothing to write about. Moreover, it is not just these two young men who suffer from this problem. Many more young people all over suffer from it too.

Trying to get to the root of the problem, Gardiner says that letter writing has become a 'lost art'. In the past, people used to write beautiful letters. He mentions the names of writers of great letters such as Cowper, Horace Walpole, Byron and others. He feels that there are two main reasons why these people wrote such beautiful letters. In the first place, the world had more leisure in comparison to the hurry experienced by the modern world. In the second place, sending letters was such an expensive piece of business that letters could be written and sent only once in six months or so. This ensured that the letter writer wrote letters befitting the trouble and the expense. Humourously, Gardiner recounts De Quincy's account of some people who often looked at the address for a certain sign that told them who had sent the letter-and then simply refused to accept it. In this way they avoided paying the high postal charges. It is because of this that the writer

feels that the cheap 'penny post' is greatly responsible for having destroyed the habit of writing good letters. Carlyle, he says, foresaw this when he asked people to forget about writing good letters because letters had become so cheap. Gardiner feels that this degradation, begun by the 'penny post' was taken to worse levels by the telegraph, the telephone and the typewriter.

A well written letter is not an essay. It is a very personal form of communication and, as such, should follow the patterns of communication one normally uses in conversation. Small details of one's day to day life, seemingly trivial incidents that bring home vividly the homely picture of the activities of the one writing the letter, a conversational tone in the language-all these serve to recreate on paper a living picture of the writer and his everyday life. This is what, Gardiner feels, every letter writer should aim for.

Unfortunately, the 'penny post', the telegram, the lack of leisure and the sheer lack of interest in letter writing has made this fine form of communication a 'lost art'.

15.6 DETAILED SYNOPSIS OF THE TEXT

The essay begins, as it usually does in A. G. Gardiner, with the author describing a scene upon a railway platform. In a carriage of a waiting train is a soldier who is talking through the window to another soldier who is standing on the platform. They appear to be brothers.

The soldier on the platform begins the conversation by asking his brother, Bill, not to forget to write letters. Bill asserts that he will definitely write the next day, and ruefully recites the whole list of relations to whom he has to write. Apparently, Sam, his brother on the platform has had to write letters too. The tone of the comment suggests that both brothers find it a very tedious task to write letters. Bill adds that the task is made even more difficult by the fact that all relations expect to be written to, and that, if one is missed out on, they are offended. He, however, has devised a cunning way around this problem. He simply makes it a point to mention each of them-even when he does not write to each of them personally. His main problem seems to be that, once he has finished saying that he is well, and that he hopes that the person to whom he has written is well too, he cannot think of anything more to say. Sam agrees saying that all he can do is scratch his head, unable to think of anything more to write. Bill says that writing love letters is easier because one does not really have to write anything. All that is needed is a page full of crosses-that stand for kisses-and the letter is finished soon enough. The problem is that letters to one's wife or mother or brother cannot be filled up with crosses.

On this note the conversation ends as the train begins to move. Bill lights a cigarette and relaxes in his seat. The author now lets us know that he, too, is sitting in the same compartment and has discovered that Bill was out in the battlefront twice, and had come home as he was ill. Gardiner then mentions the names of famous battles in which Bill had fought, adding that the soldier had participated in some of the greatest events in world history. (The period in which the essay is set is the First World War-one of the most

significant periods in the history of modern man). Ironically, this very man was here, claiming that he knew not what to write of when writing his letters. He adds a funny story about a lady mentioned by Walpole whose letter to her husband contained only two sentences-both indicating that she had nothing to write about.

The author now states that letters are still being written and many of them are well written letters. This is seen in the newspapers. (The reference here is to letters written to the editor of a newspaper, which are printed regularly in the Letters to the Editor column of the daily newspaper). However, Gardiner says, many young men find out that they cannot express themselves when they sit down to write letters. This, of course, does not mean that they have no brains. The author feels that, in conversation, if these young people are given a friendly hint as to what they could talk about, they can talk very well indeed; but, without that help, they simply do not know what to speak of. They cannot find the right words to describe the situation in which they live.

Gardiner then goes on to state that "letter-writing is no doubt a lost art". In other words, people no longer know how to write good letters. He squarely blames the 'penny-post'-the 'new' system of sending letters cheaply through the post office-and the fact that modern men is in too much of a hurry all the time. Recalling the names of great letter-writers like Cowper, Horace, Walpole and others, he tells us that these men lived in a world where there was plenty of spare time in which one could write to one's friends. Moreover, sending these letters was such a costly affair that one could afford to send a letter only once in six months. Because of this, those who wrote letters, treated letter-writing as a serious business. The poor people could not afford to send letters at all. He recounts how De Quincy reveals the method by which poor people avoided postal charges. In those days letters were delivered by stage coach-a horse-drawn coach that travelled from one 'stage', or point, of a journey to another, carrying passengers. When the letter was handed over by the coachman, the receiver would merely look at the envelope-on which the sender would put a mark to show that he was well-and hand the envelope back. This way the receiver did not have to pay any charges as he or she had effectively refused to receive the letter. This is how important letters were in those days.

The modern post-office has made it very cheap to send letters anywhere in the world. In fact, postmen nowadays make two rounds to deliver letters. With letters becoming so cheap and easy, people no longer take up letter-writing seriously. Carlyle, says Gardiner, realised that people would give up writing good letters because it had become such an inexpensive affair. That is why he wrote to his mother saying that he would send her a 'penny letter' next time. The author asserts that the telegraph, the telephone and the typewriter have completed what the penny-post began-the destruction of letter-writing as an art. Letters were treasured in the past because they were rare. By becoming common, they lost their value-just as diamonds would be worthless if they were as plentiful as pebbles.

Moving back to the problem of young men like Bill and Sam, Gardiner tells us that their case is different. These young men do not want to write 'literary' letters. They merely

want to communicate something about their lives in the middle of great events to their loved ones. Since these great events are too great for these simple young men, they cannot find words for them. This seems to be the problem. What they should do instead, says the author, is write home about small, insignificant things that they go through. Things like being tired, or losing a friend in battle, or the dropping off of a shoe-sole during a march… Such small details would ultimately draw up a wonderful picture of what these young men were actually going through.

He then goes on to show how a good letter is written. According to Gardiner, one should always concentrate on seemingly insignificant details, rather than on great ones. One can always remind oneself of the sort of things one talks about at home. That will provide the letter-writer with the right material for his letters. He gives the example of Carlyle, writing from England to his brother in Canada. Carlyle's letter is full of details about what each member of the family is doing at the moment, about the cold winter weather and the blazing, warm fire-things familiar to his brother; things that his brother would miss, being so far away from home. In the process, Carlyle draws up a living picture of the entire situation, thereby making his brother's heart fill up with deep emotion for his loved ones far away.

Gardiner then moves on to cite the example of another great letter-writer-John Keats. Keats, in his letter to his brother and sister-in-law, who were in America, describes how his mother laughed at his bad jokes, how they went visiting neighbours and how beautiful was the scenery. He tells them that he has so much to say that everything will be said in a haphazard manner, without any order, simply as the thoughts flow into his mind.

To Gardiner, this is one of the best ways to write letters. He calls it a 'recipe' provided by one who was a master in the art of letter-writing. According to him, such letters remove the distance separating the writer and his reader. It acts as a continuation of a conversation between the two that was interrupted because one of them has had to go away. It acts as the presence of the person who is absent. Such letters are always very simple, talking about everyday things and are written in very colloquial language. This easiness of address is the greatest virtue of such great letters-not their weakness. For, if a letter is too well ordered and painstakingly elaborate, that would make it a good essay, but a very bad letter.

ACTIVITY 15.1

1. Make a list of all the difficult words you have encountered in the essay "On Letter Writing" and find out synonyms for each.
2. Imagine yourself to be Bill and that you have just read the essay and found to your surprise that your conversation with your brother, Sam, has been recorded. Write a letter to Sam expressing the amazement you feel.

15.7 STYLE AND LANGUAGE

Before we move on to a discussion of A. G. Gardiner's technique, let us understand what 'technique' is all about. The word technique is a rather broad term. It covers certain specific steps undertaken in the writing by the author for specific results. It may mean certain traits of style too that are deliberately adopted by the author. Thus, for instance, Gardiner's beginning most of his essays with the reporting of an event or situation, is a technique commonly used by this writer. Read on to find out more.

Gardiner usually begins his essays from a seemingly trivial incident that opens up a line of thought in him. Here, too, he begins by narrating a snatch of conversation that he overhears in a railway station. The conversation is about the difficulties in writing letters that the two young men, who are conversing, encounter. Using this bit of conversation as a 'case study', Gardiner probes the issue and tries to come up with specific problems and specific remedies pertaining to the situation of the two young men.

This is usually Gardiner's technique. Thus, for instance, in the essay “On Saying Please”, he opens the essay with an instance of a young lift-man in the city who threw a passenger out of his lift for not saying the word 'please'. The latter wanted to go to the top floor of the building, and he would not say "Top, please". This annoyed the lift-man, who threw the passenger out of his lift. The act cost the lift-man his job. Gardiner then discusses the merits and demerits of the particular case and then, in his usual manner, moves on to a discussion on politeness and its importance in the social life of man. In another essay, 'All About a Dog”, the particular instance happens to involve a lady who boards a bus with a little dog. Unfortunately, a surly conductor will not allow her to sit in the comfort of the lower compartment of the double-decker bus, even though it is very cold. He insists that the bus will not move until the lady carries her dog to the upper level. Justifying his decision, the conductor quotes his 'rules'. From this, Gardiner meditates on the general principles behind rules-the 'letter of the law' and the 'spirit of the law', as it were. On the basis of this he gives us his opinion about why rules exist and how they should be implemented or ignored.

In a similar manner, in this essay, from describing the difficulties of Bill and Sam, he moves on to more general thoughts relating to the art of writing letters-as though pondering on the problems of the two young men has opened up a new train of thought in him.

Gardiner always writes as though he were in casual conversation with the reader and, seemingly, allows his thoughts to wander from one aspect of the matter to another. However, it only seems so. A master of his craft, this technique is used to lull his readers into a sense of cosy intimacy of a one-to-one informal conversation. In actual terms, Gardiner is always in control, manipulating the direction of the flow of thought, so that the train never strays far from the main issue and yet touches upon those secondary issues that are relevant to a clear exposition of the primary issue.

This becomes evident when we note that he moves on, with apparent abruptness, to the reasons why he considers letter-writing to be a lost art. From the present, he seems to move away to the world of history, the penny-post and to Carlyle. The reader is left with the feeling that Bill and Sam have suddenly been consigned to a space that may be forgotten without any loss. But that is hardly Gardiner's intention. As soon as he finishes digressing onto factual details of history that were to prove detrimental to letter-writing-facts corroborated by statements of Carlyle-he returns to the present issue.

It is true that Bill and Sam have fulfilled their function. But they have not turned irrelevant. As such, even when his thoughts move away from Bill and Sam, in the next phase, we notice that they move on to the problems facing letter-writers like Bill and Sam. This provides an organic development in the essay with specific instances leading on to general ones. It also helps Gardiner to move on to the next issue, that is, how does one write a good letter?

Here, he allows his pen to run freely, from his own observations to examples provided by excellent letter-writers such as the poet Keats. Juxtaposing his own observations on what to put into a letter to make it intimate with examples of actual letters written by the greats, Gardiner draws up a complete picture on the art of letter writing.

A. G. Gardiner's style is always deceptively simple, as is his language. He opens his essay in a very conversational manner, as though he were 'sharing' a particular experience with us (not just 'telling' us about it). He grips our attention by repeating the conversation of the two soldiers in dialogue form and adds a sufficient amount of 'local colour' (the railway platform, the background, the train…) to make the picture a 'living' one. When he moves on from the conversation to give us his personal views on the sort of letters the young man might have written, he shows his ability to evoke a complete picture with a careful selection of seemingly ordinary incidents from one's everyday life.

His language is always simple, approximating the language used in ordinary conversation. He consciously avoids using difficult words and keeps his sentences reasonably simple and short. This is a conscious choice, as he wants to keep a 'conversational' air throughout the essay. Yet, at the same time, he evokes such a living picture of whatever it is that he is describing, that the reader feels as though he is actually participating in the scene. Moreover, it is the sort of language that speaks directly to the heart-and this is what the essayist cleverly uses to manipulate his readers' emotions. (Look, for instance, at how he makes us 'feel' the life of the soldier at the front when he imagines how that young man may have written his letter home).

Besides this, Gardiner also has the ability to move effortlessly from one detail to another (notice, for instance, how he manages to move from Bill and Sam to the penny-post and back to the difficulties faced by the likes of the two brothers)

Style, technique and language all combine to make A.G. Gardiner among the most readable of English essayists.

15.8 LET US SUM UP

You have learnt what an essay is and have also been given a brief history of this form of literature. Along with this, you have also learnt the names of some great essay writers. From this, you have moved on to the writer of the prescribed essay, A. G. Gardiner. You have learnt about A. G. Gardiner's life and career and, in this particular essay, you have become acquainted with his views on letter writing. You have seen how a good letter can conquer distances and make the reader of the letter feel as though the one who has written it is actually there in person. A good style can make the reader feel as though he is actually sharing the experiences of the writer-such is the immediacy that can be evoked. Moreover, Gardiner has also shown us how it is the seemingly smaller details that are often more important. This is so because these lesser details are what can conjure up the atmosphere of the writer's situation rather than the more significant details (details, for example, that a newspaper might consider more worthy of recording). Over and above this, an easy, conversational style makes a letter more interesting to read and lends a familiarity that a more formal style could never be able to achieve.

Thus, in the course of your study, you have learnt not only what a good essay is, but also how a good letter can be written. Questions have been provided at every step to help you evaluate your understanding. It is hoped that these will help you understand the lesson better. Besides this, additional information provided to you under the heading 'Let Us Know' should help you know more about people relevant to your study. The 'Further Readings' section that follows provides you with a list of books that you may read for further information on A. G. Gardiner and his work. Finally, you have been given a list of possible questions of both 'long' and 'objective' types. Reading these questions and trying to write out answers to them should focus your study on the key areas of the lesson.

15.9 FURTHER READING

1) Gardiner, A.G. *Mary Furrows*
2) Gardiner, A.G. *Prophets, Priests and Kings*
3) Koss, Stephen *Fleet Street Radical: A. G. Gardiner and the Daily News*
4) Pearce, Edward *History Today*

You can also surf the internet for articles on A. G. Gardiner. Google is possibly the best search engine for the purpose. You could also try Amazon.com for books on or by A, G, Gardiner. Do not forget to search for 'Alpha of the Plough' too. Remember, this is the name Gardiner wrote under.

15.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

1. What, do you think, are the hallmarks of a good essay?
2. Why does the author say that letter writing is a lost art?
3. Attempt an account of the conversation between Bill and Sam, using this to show the difficulty most people face while writing letters.

4. What, according to Gardiner are the hallmarks of a good letter?
5. Do you agree with the writer that it is often the less significant details that go on to making a good letter? Give a reasoned answer.
6. Make a list of good letter writers, after Gardiner, along with the specific factors in their writing that Gardiner mentions, which go on to make these men great writers of letters.
7. Why does Gardiner consider letter-writing to be a dying art?
8. Write a letter to a friend telling him of your experience in reading the given essay and explain why you have/ have not liked it.

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