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

UNIT STRUCTURE

12.1 Learning Objectives

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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 asurviving 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: Thediary 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 lives 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 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 the first things that they would do once they would be free and step out of their secret existence.

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 realised 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 ofexperiencing 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 analysing 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.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 9. What the scope that Anne's diary had provided her?

Q 10. What are some of the descriptions found in Anne Frank's diary?



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.

Ans to Q9 : It gave her the scope of a personal space, letting her to be herself and pour down all her thoughts and feelings.

Ans to Q10 : In her diary entries one will find a wide range of descsiptions such as her happier school days, her close knit family, life in the secret Annexe and the political updates aired on the radio.

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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