ENGLISH PAPER - I

(DENG1)

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Lesson – 1
Brief Survey of the English Language

Structure

1.1.1. Objectives:

The aim of the present lesson is to

(i) bring out the importance of language and the English language in particular.
(ii) briefly describe the nature of language.
(iii) to elucidate the history of the English language – a cultural subject.
(iv) give a brief survey of the English language.

1.1.2. Introduction:

"Language is a purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires – by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols." Language is the most characteristic human activity, which distinguishes human beings from animals. Language is the medium by which man communicates his thoughts and feelings to fellowmen. It is a tool or instrument with which he conducts his business and the government of millions of people. It is the vehicle by which the science, the philosophy and the poetry of the race have been communicated to him. So it is important to study the nature and development of language, as students of English language. In this connection first let us see the importance of language.

1.1.3. The Importance of English Language:

The relation between language and the people who speak it is very important. One cannot think of them separately. A language lives only when there are people who speak it and use it as their native tongue. It is made great only by the people who make use of it. Thus the importance of the English language is naturally very great. English is the language not only of England but of the extensive dominions and colonies associated with the British Empire, and it is the language of the United States. In the number of speakers English is the largest of the occidental languages. English-speaking people constitutes about one-tenth of the world's population. As A.C. Baugh says:

> The importance of a language is inevitably associated in the mind of the world with the political role played by the nations using it and their influence in international affairs; with the confidence people feel in their financial position and the certainty with which they will meet their obligations – i.e. pay their debts to other nations, meet the interest on their bonds, maintain the gold or other basis of their currency, control expenditures; with the extent of their commerce, with the conditions of life under which the great mass of their people live; and with the part played by them in art and literature and music, in science and invention, in exploration and discovery – in short, with their contribution to the material and spiritual progress of the world (1968:5).

A.C. Baugh concludes by saying that English is the mother tongue of nations whose combined political influence, economic soundness, commercial activity, social well- being, and scientific and cultural contributions to civilization give impressive support to its numerical precedence.

1.1.4. The Indo-European Family of Languages:

English is a member of the Indo-European family. It is believed that the parent language Proto-Indo-European, a hypothetical language, now non-existent, was spoken about 3000/3500 BC by nomadic tribes in the neighborhood of the Black Sea. These tribes moved in different directions. The tribes moved from place to place as they might have been prompted by the spirit of adventure and in search of food and better climatic conditions. Gradually the tribes got separated. Each tribe carried the parent language and developed it in its own way with the result that the original language assumed different forms in different places at the hands of different tribes. As this language spread, it also mixed with many 'non-Indo-European' tongues. As a result it was modified by them variously at different stages. Consequently, differences between the languages of the tribes arose and those differences became more and more pronounced on account of a variety of factors like geographical barriers, lack of contact, deviance in customs, way of life and beliefs. In due course apparent differences became more pronounced than basic similarities.

1.1.5. An Overview of the Origin and Growth of the English Language:

Historians of the English language distinguish three main stages in its development.

I. The First is the Old English (or the Anglo-Saxon) period, extending from about the year A.D. 600 to 1100.
II. This is followed by the Middle English period, from 1100 to 1500.
III. And finally there is the period of Modern English from 1500 onwards.

1.1.5. a) The Old English Period (449-1066):

The Anglo-Saxon Period spans six centuries, most of which falls within a time. The historians called it the "Dark Ages". During this period, English emerged as a language, and writers began to express ideas in many ways no less profound than those expressed in the 20th century.

The great Roman Emperor Julius Caesar made a brief visit to Britain as early as 55 B.C. But it was nearly a century later before the Romans established a miliary outpost on this remote island. It was occupied by Celtic tribes at that time. When the Angles and Saxons moved to Britain from Europe, they encountered the Celts, a dark-haired race of people, speaking the Celtic language. These original inhabitants of the island had earlier been ruled by the Roman emperors for some centuries. They were accustomed to a peaceful life. But they were driven from their farms in the fertile lands by the European invaders about 600 B.C. They settled down in the southern half of the island. Their occupation of the island was not entirely uncontested since some of the Celts defended their possessions and engaged the invaders in large and fierce battles. At the end of the period, these Celts, who did not accept the invaders, fled west, where signs of this population survived until recent times. The highly organised Romans dominated the Britons, driving some groups off to remote regions in the west and the north and making others slaves. But in A.D. 410 the sack of Rome by German barbarians signalled the end of Roman rule in Britain.

The Jutes, a Germanic tribe from the Danish peninsula, were the first to arrive. They conquered the province of Kent in A.D. 449. They were followed by the Saxons and the Angles, tribes from the Northern Germanic plain. The flow of tribes into Britain continued for over a hundred years. By the middle of the sixth century, the invaders now known collectively as Anglo-Saxons were established in various parts of Britain. Their culture became the basis for "Angle-land", or English culture. Their powerful and striking language became the spoken language of the people, the language now

known as Old English. Meanwhile the pagan Anglo-Saxons adapted to the Christian religion. Christian religion had been introduced in Britain before the Germanic invasions of the Celtic Roman Island.

Anglo-Saxon literature reflects the gloomy temperament of these Germanic people and the bleak environment in which they lived. Anglo Saxons are very serious- minded. We rarely find any humour in their literature; most of the stories and poems of this period present heroic struggles because they led a very difficult life.

The language spoken in England from the beginning of the Germanic invasions in 449 until the Norman Conquest in 1066 is distinguished from Middle English, which was used from about 1066 until about 1485, and Modern English which has developed since. Old English is completely different from Modern English. The following example will illustrate this clearly:

"Se mūoa is on eāstweardre Cent 2et oaes miclan wuda ēastende oe wē Andred tratau".
Translation: The mouth is in the eastern part of Kent, and at the east end of the great forest which we call Andred.

Old English was a pure language. It resisted foreign words. But in the 8th and the 9th centuries the purity of Old English was disturbed because of the invasions of the Danes. Many new words from Old Norse language of the Danes, for example, egg, dirt, low, take and get were assimilated along with the pronouns "they", their and "them". It we look into Scandinavian influence it contributed key nouns, verbs and pronouns apart from phrases, word orders and irregular verb forms.

A more significant contribution to English was made by Latin. It is because of the missionaries, who began to arrive in Britain in 597. After the spread of Christianity, the Latin language of the Church played a large part in the legal and intellectual life of the time; eg: alter, martyr, mass, priest etc.

1.1.5.b). The Middle English Period (1066-1485):

Towards the close of the Old English period, an event occurred which had a greater effect on the English language than any other in the course of its history. This event was the Norman Conquest in 1066. The Norman conquest changed the whole course of the English language. The conquest of England in 1066 by William of Normandy, was destined to have a profound influence not only upon the history and political systems of the country, but also upon language. In 1066, William, Duke of Normandy, defeated Harold, king of England, at the battle of Hastings. This and the subsequent occupation of England by the Normans, marked the end of the Anglo-Saxon or the Old English period.

In the years following the Norman Conquest the sting of defeat and the hardships incident to so great a political and social disturbance were gradually forgotten. People accepted the new order as something accomplished. They accepted it as a fact and adjusted themselves to it. The fusion of Normans and English was rapid, brought about by national interest and the intercourse of every day life. When a distinction is made it soon comes to be between the English, meaning all the people of England, and the French, meaning the inhabitants of France. This early fusion of the French and the English in England in quite clear from a variety of evidences. It is evident in the marriage of Normans to English women and various other incidents. French was the language of the court and the upper classes, English the speech of the mass of the people. With the name of William the Conqueror are usually associated the feudal and manorial systems, and from both, a number of words which have become a permanent part of the English language were ultimately derived; eg: domain, castle, baron, livery, etc.

However, the relation between the English and the French did not last long. If the English had permanently retained control over the two thirds of France that they once held, French might have remained permanently in use in England. But shortly after 1200 conditions changed. England lost an

important part of her possessions abroad. The nobility gradually gave up their continental estates. A feeling of rivalry developed between the two countries. It was accompanied by an anti-foreign movement in England culminating in the Hundred Years' War. During the century and a half following the Norman Conquest, French had been not only natural but more or less necessary to the English upper class. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries its maintenance became increasingly artificial. For a time certain new factors helped it to hold its ground, socially and officially. In the fourteenth century English won its way back into universal use, and in the fifteenth century French all but disappeared.

The loss of Normandy was a significant event. The first link in the chain binding England to the continent was broken in 1204 when King John lost Normandy. So far as it affected the English language, as in other respects as well, the loss of Normandy was wholly advantageous. King and nobles were now forced to look upon England as their first concern. Although England still retained large continental possessions, they were in the south of France and had never been so intimately connected by ties of language, blood and property interests as had Normandy. It gradually became very clear that the island kingdom had its own political and economic ends and that these were not the same as those of France. England was on the way to becoming not merely a geographical term but once more a nation.

In 1315, the signing of the Magna Carta, was a dramatic event in the gradual trend towards curtailment of royal power that is evident throughout the Medieval period. The remarkable event, the crowning of Henry VII (after defeating Richard III), is generally considered the end of the Medieval period.

Language of the Middle English Period: The English language changed more during the four centuries after 1066 than it did during any period before or since. The change took place towards simplification. Middle English was considered a language of levelled inflexions. As mentioned earlier, the crucial event in the transition from Old English to Middle English was the Norman Conquest in 1066. Many French words entered English, particularly words relating to law and government. For example: Attorney, Jury, Crime, Crown, Parliament, etc.

While studying the evolution of the language during the Middle English period, there are four different aspects which we have to consider. They are:

(i) Grammatical Changes
(ii) Changes in Pronunciation
(iii) Changes in Spelling
(iv) Changes in, and additions to, the vocabulary

In all these it must be realised, there was a double process at work. There was first of all the natural development which would inevitably have taken place independently of any external influences. In the second place, there was the influence of the French element. It sometimes combined with those natural changes to strengthen and hasten them. At the same time it also diverted them.

Literature of the Middle English Period: One of the most popular forms of literature in the Medieval period was the ballad, a narrative song. Mystery plays and Miracle plays were also popular. Mystery plays were based on the stories from the Bible and Miracle plays were based on the lives of the Saints. The "Father of English Literature" Geoffrey Chaucer, was the most famous writer of the Medieval period. He was the poet who demonstrated the potential of Middle English as a literary language.

William Caxton played a very important role in the preservation of English literature. (We will see more about Chaucer and Caxton in the next lesson on Standard English). He travelled widely in Europe and probably learned the printing trade in Germany. As soon as he returned to England he opened his own printing business. Eventually he printed the English literature available at that time.

For three centuries, the literature of England was triangular with Latin as the language of learning, French of the aristocracy and English of the masses. Inspite of the changes, its grammar, syntax and pronunciation survived. Literary works were passed on through the oral tradition and later were written in the various dialects of Middle English. It was during the Middle English period that surnames were first adopted by Englishmen. Surnames were derived from various sources. They might refer to some personal characteristic, as in the case of names like – Whitehead, Goodman and Longfellow.

1.1.5. c). The Modern Period – The Renaissance and After (1485-1660):

A force for standardizing English came at the end of the Medieval period with the invention of movable type in Germany and its subsequent introduction in English.

In 1453, Constantinople, the seat of European learning, fell to the Turks. As a result, the scholars who were assembled there, fled to western Europe. They brought with them their libraries they could manage to rescue and transport. They settled at first mainly in Germany and Italy and so started that intellectual awakening of Europe, which has come to be known as the Renaissance. This is to say that the full flood of the new learning reached England about the year 1500. As a result it had a marked influence upon the language and literature.

So far as language and literature are concerned, many of the developments would have taken place without the impact of the Renaissance. But the new scholarship and all that it implied did produce new forces and add new words to the vocabulary, while it also undoubtedly hastened those tendencies which were already discernible in the Middle English period, and therefore it is usually regarded as marking the beginning of the modern age in the history of English language.

It was a Classical Renaissance, and mainly a Latin one. Hence, the chief effect of it upon our vocabulary, as would be expected, was to introduce words of Latin origin or from Latin roots. Such words as confession, regime (Kingdom), honour, clamour, melody which are obviouly of Latin descent, were French before they were English. But now we find new words being made direct from Latin. Moreover, since the home of much of the new scholarship was Italy, Italian words (connected to music and arts) also begin to make their appearance in English.

In the wake of the Renaissance, followed the Reformation. And this again, though its importance was primarily religious and political, had its effect upon the language.

(i) A very important outcome of the Reformation was the various English translations of the Bible. In the first place, it played a definite part in shaping the literary language. In the second place, it has provided us with new words, which were early adopted into the spoken tongue and have remained in it ever since.

(ii) The contribution of Shakespeare and his contemporaries reflect not only the Renaissance culture and Protestant Reformation, but also a growing national consciousness.

(iii) And then there were the voyages of discovery which opened up new lands and brought men into touch with foreign ports.

(iv). Finally the invention of the printing press was bound to have a far-reaching effect upon the development of Literature.

All these tended to establish a 'standard' language and to discredit dialect. It served to popularise and give currency to new coinages and newly introduced words. It tended to fix spelling, about which there had been a great deal of uncertainty before.

All these factors – the influence of Renaissance scholarship, the religious controversies arising out of the Reformation, the various translations of the Bible, the efflorescence of literature towards the

end of the 16th century, the emergence of a new lands by navigators, with the consequent opening up of trade, and the invention of printing combined to make the language after 1500 'English' in a way that of Chaucer and his age had never been.

The nineteenth century witnessed great and rapid changes in the fields of science and technology which were reflected in a corresponding increase in vocabulary. The great developments in industry, the increased public interest in sports and amusements, and the many improvements in the mode of living – have all contributed to the growth of vocabulary during this period. Thus the changing conditions of the 19th century have not brought about any significant grammatical changes in the language, but have resulted in the expansion of the English vocabulary.

1.1.6. Summary:

The present lesson tries to give the reader an idea of the importance of language and its functions in a community. The growth and development of English is discussed as it is the most widely used language in the world. The various factors that contributed to make the language what it is today are also discussed. The growth of the English language is also traced briefly. The remaining lessons in this unit "Language" will describe and elaborate on the aspects mentioned earlier. These lessons will enlighten you on the different stages and different topics in the history and growth of the English language.

1.1.7. Technical Terms:

Philology	:	study of the origin and growth of a language
Philologist	:	one who makes a systematic study of language over a period of time
Linguistics	:	scientific study of language.
Vocabulary	:	words used in a language,

1.1.8. Sample Questions:

1. Make a brief survey of the English language.
2. Write about the three periods in the development of the English language.
3. Bring out the impact of Renaissance in the history of the English language.

1.1.9. Reference Books:

1. Frederick T. Wood: Outline History of the English Language.
2. Albert C. Baugh: A History of the English Language.

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Lesson – 2

Standardization or Standard English

Structure

1.2.1. Objectives.
1.2.2. Introduction.
1.2.3. The Evolution of a Standard Language.
1.2.4. Middle English Dialects.
1.2.5. Summary.
1.2.6. Technical terms.
1.2.7. Sample Questions.
1.2.8. Suggested Reading.

1.2.1. Objectives:

From this lesson, the reader will understand:

(i) the need for Standard English
(ii) the role played by Chaucer and Caxton
(iii) the establishment of Standard English through the ages.

1.2.2. Introduction:

Prominent among the assets of the English language must be considered the mixed character of its vocabulary. English is classified as a Teutonic language. That is to say it belongs to the group of languages to which German, Dutch, Flemish, Danish, Swedish and Norwegian also belong. It shares with these languages similar grammatical structure and many common words. On the other hand, more than half of its vocabulary is derived from Latin. Some of these borrowings have been direct, a great many through French, some through the other Romance languages. As a result, English also shares a great number of words with those languages of Europe which are derived from Latin, notably French, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese. And it has different dialects. With this background there was the necessity to bring out a "Standard English". Those who disapprove of the idea of a 'Standard' language point out that such a language is theoretical rather than real. They add that each person considers his own particular brand of English to be 'Standard' and all deviations from it to be either affectations or dialects. In the case of the normally educated people, grammar, and to a large extent vocabulary also, is uniform throughout the country, but pronunciation varies considerably from locality to locality. Even amongst 'good writers' and others to whom one might reasonably turn for guidance there is often disagreement. What one will regard as slang or barbarism, another will admit as part of the genuine vocabulary of English. All these objections were challenged and contested. The great misunderstanding in them all seems to be that 'Standard' speech is being confused with 'Standardised' speech. It is true that there is not, and never could be a Standardized English; but there is such a thing as Standard English. It is not easy to define, but educated English speakers know what it is, and realize that it exists. Most of them can recognize it when they hear it, as they can detect deviations from it whenever they occur. It is not rigid or inflexible. Within its framework there is room for a certain amount of variation and variety, and even of local and personal colouring. Like everything that is typically English, it is marked, within its limits, by a spirit of tolerance and compromise and strict rigidity is alien to its nature.

In short we all know that there is a generally accepted form of English that every educated person aims at speaking from whatever part of the country and from whatever social class he comes; and that distinctive regional characteristics are not altogether obliterated, it does not stand above the

various regional dialects and that people who use this are intelligible to each other as they would not be if they spoke in their local variants. This is what we mean by Standard English. It is commonly referred to as the Queen's English.

1.2.3. The Evolution of a Standard Language:

One feels that the debt we owe to the Commonwealth period in the matter of the evolution of a standard language has never been sufficiently recognized. It helped to mould the character of the language for the next two hundred years, by the fact that –

i. It set its face against courtly affectation and cultivated a dignified mode of speech.

ii. And by the emphasis that it placed upon the reading and study of the Bible, it did a great deal to combat the earlier tendency towards Latinism and to ensure a predominantly Saxon basis for the mother tongue.

In many respects the Renaissance enriched the language; it also provided the possibility for the emergence of an artificial pseudo-classical style. The development of this was very largely checked by the Puritans. Those Puritans represented the predecessors of the very families whose speech Daniel Jones had in mind when he laid down the definition of Standard English quoted above. The upper middle class, for whole centuries, were the backbone of England and the most important class socially as well as politically. Their religious and moral outlook influenced English life and thought right upto the end of Queen Victoria's reign. In the same way the character of their speech will influence the future development of the language.

England has never had an Academy of Letters as France has. But, towards the end of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th century many writers felt that there was a need for an Academy of Letters, so that some standard of language and vocabulary could be fixed by an authoritative body. It was felt that a very valuable purpose would be served by defining once for all what was to be considered good English, and giving a ruling on what words were admissible into polite language and what were to be regarded as slang. When Dr. Johnson undertook the compilation of his Dictionary he had something of this object in view. But he quickly abandoned it, becoming convinced that such a project was not feasible. Soon he opposed the establishment of any kind of Academy as being strange to the spirit of English. However, the dictionaries of the eighteenth century did attempt to lay down an approximate standard as they tried to distinguish between what words might be used by those who wished to be considered ' correct' and what might not. But many of them marked accent and vowel quantities in order to give a guide to pronunciation, about which there was still a great deal of doubt and disagreement.

The contribution of the eighteenth century to the development of Standard English, then, is beyond question. What it achieved it achieved inspite of some unsound attitudes and methods. The attitude it adopted was one which was fundamentally unsound and unscientific, for, the eighteenth century, and especially the first half of it, was the great classical age of English letters. It laid down rules to which literature was expected to conform and it sought to do the same for language. It believed that the dictionary and the grammar book should be the authorities on 'correctness' and that usage should be made to conform to precept. Writers strove to establish for England a style and a diction worthy of their country and its traditions as the style and diction of Latin were worthy of the traditions of Rome. But the great mistake they made was in assuming that the classical tongues of antiquity, which were so important for them, had remained fixed and static. The eighteenth century was unfortunately deficient in philological knowledge, or such an assumption could never have been made. It believed that Latin and Greek owed their vitality and the immortality of their literature to the fact that they had been standardized. Or as Alexander Pope would have put it, methodized, and the desire to do the same for the language and literature of their own country was the main motive behind the attempts of a number of authors to establish a 'Standard' for English.

The next hundred years was the age of individualism and *Laissez faire*, of the doctrines of evolution and the survival of the fittest. The nineteenth century, too, was the great period of English expansion and Empire-building, as well as of commercial development. These characteristics had a two-fold effect upon the language, an effect which was at once broadening and restrictive. The vocabulary was considerably enlarged through foreign contacts while the development of science and social theory led to new recourse which is essential to the classical tongues for the formation of words of an academic and technical nature.

The abstract element in English became more marked. During this age many of our isms were born. At the same time, there arose a movement for the purification of the language by the exclusion of foreign terms and their replacement by words of native origin wherever possible. The national consciousness which usually accompanies a nascent imperialism and the renewed reverence for the Bible and 'Bible English' were the marked characteristics of the period. To the Victorians the Bible became not only a book of devotion but a text-book of scholars in the day and evening schools. Writers like Ruskin were steeped and saturated in its style and its phraseology. And people were taught that it was of value not only for its religious and moral precepts but also because it was written in the best, the simplest, the most euphonious English of all time.

The movement toward a 'purer' English is seen most markedly in Tennyson, the representative poet of the age. Eschewing words of foreign origin as far as he could, he attempted to give currency to some of the 'good old English words' that had long since become archaic. William Morris, too, with his cult of medievalism and his dislike of innovations in language as in social life, was another of the purists. He went even further than Tennyson and suggested that such well established words as Omnibus and dictionary should be replaced by folkwain and word-book. But his drastic reforms and coinages gained a limited currency for a while. They were regarded as poetic eccentricities and never really absorbed into the spoken tongue or even into the diction of written prose. A few words like handbook (in place of the older manual) and foreword (instead of preface), (both belong to this period) have survived. But even so they have not ousted the alternative terms.

Now to any language there are four distinct aspects. They are:

(i) Vocabulary
(ii) Spelling
(iii) Grammar and
(iv) Pronunciation.

For obvious reasons, the earliest move towards standardization took place in the first three of these. Recently pronunciation has become more or less uniform. Of recent years there has been a reaction against the idea of Standard English. There arose an interest in 'U' and 'non-U' English. ('U' stands for upper-class, or the aristocracy, and 'non-U' for 'non-upper-class'). Note-paper is non-U: the U term is – writing paper. Mirror is non-U; the U speeker uses looking glass (except for a driving mirror and a shaving mirror.) A few such examples show the reaction against the idea of Standard English. But the point is whether the Standard English of future will be the same as the Standard English of today.

1.2.4. Middle English Dialects:

The Middle English period is a significant stage in the history of language, for it is in this period that one dialect rose to supremacy over the rest. Some people think that the need for Standard English arose, as a mere arbitrary invention of a class or a group that wished to impose their own particular way of speaking upon others. There are very good utilitarian reasons why a standard speech should be cultivated. It has come about mainly as a natural product of certain historical, cultural and social factors.

The need for a language, which can serve as a medium for standard literature, was felt in the midst of the dialectal confusion of the 13th and 14th centuries. It took a long time but it was completed about 1500. Geoffrey Chaucer and William Caxton deserve the greatest credit, besides the circumstances and forces which brought about the completion of the process.

As far back as the Anglo-Saxon period, the dialect of Wessex (or the West-Saxon) gradually became pre-eminent and attained to something of the dignity of a literary dialect. It is chiefly through the fact that Wessex had a cultured and scholarly king in Alfred the Great, who encouraged letters and was himself both author and translator. On the other hand, Wessex was the most highly civilized of all the kingdoms and the first that attained to any kind of political unity with a fairly ordered system of Government. And secondly most of the literature of the period was written in the dialect of Wessex. The main works which still survive either in part or in whole are the early epic poem of Beowulf (late ninth and early tenth century) and the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle and other works.

But though the English of today is descended mainly from the language of Wessex, traces of other dialects still remain, not only in the varying pronunciations given to the same word in different parts of the country or in local survival in vocabulary.

In the Middle English period Chaucer and a number of contemporary writers gave the East Midland dialect a literary prestige. The East Midland dialect which became Standard English, owes a lot to Chaucer for its position and prestige. Caxton too put an end to localism, in language by his printing press. The invention of printing, in fact, was one of the most influential factors making for the emergence of Standard English. It could not, of course, influence pronunciation but it did stabilize, within limits, spelling, grammar, syntax and vocabulary. Dialects were still widely used in speech and even in correspondence, but they tended increasingly to be regarded as an inferior sort of English. The particular dialect that was the 'official' dialect of printing attained to respectability and a prestige that the others did not enjoy, and as printed works circulated far and wide throughout the country, and even abroad, it soon spread beyond its original bounds and became a national tongue, while others were only regional ones.

However, by 1500, it was certain that the East Midland dialect was going to be the Standard English dialect, though the other dialects continued even after the 15th century. The Northern, Midland, Southern and Kentish dialects of Chaucer's time correspond to the Northumbrian, Mercian, Wessex and Kentish dialects of King Alfred's time. During the intervening years, the gulf between the dialects had widened and the number of dialects also increased. The gap between languages of the two Midland areas was so wide that it formed two distinct types of languages. (i) The East Midland and (ii) The West Midland.

The grammar, spelling and vocabulary of the two languages differed conspicuously. Even the systems of vowels were different. In the countries of Dane Law, Norse words were in usage, and the south-western regions were essentially Anglo-Saxon. French words in different proportions were to be found in all the dialects, besides words of local formation. Such was the state of confusion, when Chaucer arrived on the scene. To him the Northern dialect was outlandish.

This chaos had to end, as by the end of the 14th century, the literary excellence of the East Midland dialect surely guaranteed it of its final supremacy. But it was only by the end of the 15th century, that the East Midland dialect (The London dialect) could be sure of its status as Standard English. The East Midland dialect or the London Dialect of Chaucer, further was the dialect of the two universities Oxford and Cambridge. Because of the political and geographical circumstances, it had the favour of the capital and the court, of literature and of learning. Then it proved more powerful and stronger than the other dialects.

The English of the court was the object of aspiration from the end of the 15th century. The changeover to the East Midland Dialect took a long time and after the accession of James I, the English of London became popular even in Scotland. The English which many try to write and speak is essentially descended from the language of the East Midland counties. It is certainly different from the English originally in vogue at Devonshire and Yorkshire. Though the other dialects survived even after the 15th Century, they became more rustic. The works of Burns, Scott and Wordsworth have brought a good number of dialectical words into Standard English. Further, the resources of the sister dialects enriched Standard English.

The influence of the Authorised Version of the Bible (1611) and also of Dr. Johnson's Dictionary should also be considered in the evolution of Standard English. Dr. Johnson's Dictionary performed a double service:

(i) It reduced a rather chaotic spelling system to something like order and virtually 'fixed' English spelling from that time onwards.

(ii) By distinguishing between reputable and 'low' words, it established the notion of a difference between 'good English' and what was not good English.

Amongst later influences must be counted the increased social contact which modern methods of travel have brought in and the spread of reading and of education amongst all classes, with a consequent elevation of Standard English at the expense of regional varieties, advent of wireless and television.

Prof. H.C. Wyld, writing some years ago in his Short History of English, defined Standard English as that which was "spoken within certain social boundaries, with an extraordinary degree of uniformity, all over the country." And it is true that, in all probability, the distinction between these who spoke Standard English and those who did not was a social one. In other words. Standard English carries with it and confers on its speaker a certain social prestige; any other brand of English does the opposite.

Another authority on the English language, Prof. Daniel Jones is more explicit. What we call Standard English, he says, "is that most usually heard in everyday speech in the families of Southern England whose menfolk have been educated at the great public schools." It will be noticed that he states more definitely than does Wyld what the social class is. Moreover, he hits upon the two most important facts about its origin. It is based on:

a) the English of Southern England, and
b) the language of cultured and educated classes of that region.

The dialect of the South rather than that of the North had gained this pre-eminence for courtly reasons, reasons of government, trade and commerce, foreign travel etc.

The Importance of London English:

By far the most influential factor in the rise of Standard English was the importance of London as the capital of England. It was the seat of the Court, of the highest judicial tribunals. Moreover, it was the focus of the social and intellectual activities of the country. To it were drawn in a constant stream, those whose affairs took them beyond the limits of their local speech, there to mingle with the London idiom and to survive or die as the silent force of amalgamation and standardization determined. They took back with them the forms and usages of the great city by which their own speech had been modified. The influence was reciprocal. Standard English began as a Southern dialect and ended as a Midland dialect. By the 15th century there had come to prevail in the East Midland a fairly uniform dialect and the language of London agrees in all important respects with it.

1.2.5. Summary

The Middle English period was a remarkable period because it is during this period that the need for a language, a standard language was felt, as there were many dialects. Out of this variety of local dialects there emerged towards the end of the fourteenth century, a written language that in the course of the fifteenth century won general recognition and has since become the recognized standard in both speech and writing. The part of England that contributed most to the formation of this standard was the East Midland district, and it was the East Midland type of English that became its basis, particularly the dialect of the metropolis, London. To the attainment of this result several causes contributed.

In the first place, as a Midland dialect, the English of this region occupied a middle position between the extreme divergences of the North and South. In the second place, the East Midland district was the largest and most populous of the major dialect areas. A third factor, was the presence of the universities, Oxford and Cambridge, in this region. In the fourteenth century, the monasteries were playing a less important role in the dissemination of learning than they had once played, while the two universities had developed into important intellectual centers. The influence of Chaucer and Caxton was remarkable in establishing Standard English or the adoption of a written standard. The Bible and Johnson's Dictionary contributed to the Standard English. But the most influential factor in the rise of Standard English was the importance of London as the capital of England. Indeed, it is likely that the language of the city would have become the prevailing dialect without the help of any of the factors previously discussed. The history of Standard English is almost a history of London English.

1.2.6. Technical Terms:

1.	dialect	:	a regional variety of language.
2.	obsolete	:	disused , discarded
3.	affectation	:	artificiality of manner; pretence.
4.	*savoir-dire*	:	to coin a phrase.
5.	syntax	:	sentence-construction, the grammatical rules
6.	Renaissance:		a revival of art and letters under the influence of classical medals in 14^{th} – 16^{th} century; period of its progress, style of art and architecture developed by it.

1.2.7. Sample Questions:

1. Write an essay on the standardization of the English language.
2. What is Standard English? Explain in detail.
3. Discuss the factors contributing to the rise of Standard English.

1.2.8. Suggested Reading:

1. F.T.Wood. Outline History of the English Language.
2. A.C. Baugh. A History of the English Language.

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Lesson – 3

The Growth of Vocabulary or Word-Formation

Structure

1.3.1. Objectives:

The aim of the present lesson is to

(i) let the student know the meaning of the growth of Vocabulary or Word-formation.
(ii) describe the various factors that contributed to the growth of vocabulary.

1.3.2. Introduction:

By the middle of the seventeenth century the English language had more or less assumed its present form so far as grammar, spelling and pronunciation are concerned. There have, of course, been slight modifications in the succeeding three hundred years, more especially in pronunciation and spelling than in grammar; but from the Restoration onwards the chief developments have been in the direction of an enlargement of the vocabulary on the one hand; and changes in the meaning of words on the other. The growth of vocabulary is an inevitable outcome of the need to express new ideas, new perceptions, new shades of meaning or to give names to new inventions and new discoveries. As knowledge grows, so language grows with it. The English language has the richest, and the most extensive vocabulary of any in the world. This is partly due to historical factors, partly to 'the genius of the land', its readiness to absorb words from foreign tongues, or to make new words where existing terms are not adequate. New words have come into the English language, and the vocabulary has been enlarged in a number of ways. The following are the chief of them.

1.3.3. Discussion:

In this chapter, we have distinguished fifteen chief ways in which words are formed or added to the language. But it may be asked, how these words come to be introduced and what is the motive behind the enlargement or extension of the vocabulary. In general it may be said that a new word is called forth by a need for it or a consciousness that no existing word is really adequate to fill that need. Hence a new idea or conception is to be expressed. New institutions or new social developments and tendencies have to be described and distinguished. New inventions or newly adopted products or fashions, etc., must be given a name. Whether or not the new words thus created added to the vocabulary are permanent, depends very largely upon the permanence of the objects or the ideas they are used to describe.

Political and social developments as well as religious controversies have been the occasion of the introduction of numerous words into the language. And it is not always possible to trace them to any one person. Though obviously, they must have been employed by one person first, even if only an anonymous pamphleteer or newspaper – writer, and then 'caught on'.

Though the parentage of most words is now lost in the mists of obscurity, it is possible to assign some to definite individuals. However, it is not always the best writers whose coinages become part of the permanent vocabulary of a language. On the other hand, it is not to be considered that the most popular, the best read or the most widely quoted are added in the vocabulary. Sometimes the creator of a popular word may be forgotten, and his writings fall into neglect, yet the word will continue to survive so long as there is use for it. For example, the Authorised Version of the Bible is responsible for the introduction of a considerable number of words. Though it is largely neglected today, for three hundred years it was the book of the people. Even the illiterate were familiar with it through hearing it read in Church Sunday by Sunday.

In the same way many words and expressions, too, we owe to Shakespeare. It is described in the 15th point of this lesson. Spenser has given us *elfin* and the adjective *blatant*. Milton coined *irresponsible, a dim religious light* and *Pandemon*ium. Swift, Thomas Morton, Edmund Burke, and among modern writers, Bernard Shaw contributed to the growth of vocabulary. Nearly every well-known writer has made some contribution, though in many cases only a temporary one.

No living language is ever static. New words are constantly being added. Now let us see 15 chief ways in which words are formed or added to the languages:

1. <u>By the addition of suffixes or prefixes</u>: This is a very ancient method of word-formation, to be found in almost every language. The Anglo-Saxons made fairly extensive use of it, taking a simple root-word (usually a noun or an adjective) and adding a suffix to express a related idea.

Eg: a) - dom = kingdom, freedom etc.
b) - ship = worship, fellowship etc.

c) - th = length, strength, width

The above Suffixes are widely distributed throughout the language, but are obsolete in so far as they are no longer in use to make new words. Those still in use are:

a) - less = Careless, hatless, moneyless
b) - y = healthy, sticky, stuffy
c) - ish = English, clownish, amateurish
d) - ling = duckling, darling
e) - ness = swiftness, bigness, richness
f) - ate = doctorate, episcopate
g) - ous = glorious, furious, porous, perilous
h) - ee = employee, nominee, referee.

In the English of the last hundred years prefixes have been employed much more extensively than suffixes, and most of them come from Latin, as ambi-, anti-, pre-, post-, ex-, con-, ab-, per-, un-, inter-, extra-, super-, sub-, circum-, etc. Antidate, anticlimax, postnatal, post-operated, unknown, un-kind, supersonic, superfast, subnormal are some of the prefixes used for an extending growth of vocabulary. The extent to which words can be multiplied by the addition of a prefix to a basic root is almost unlimited.

In course of time, some of them become popularised, but others remain somewhat pedantic so far as spoken English is concerned. They are part of our passive rather than our active vocabulary.

2. By Abbreviation: Abbreviations are another source of new vocabulary. When the full form ceases to be used in ordinary writing and speech, an abbreviation becomes recognized as a word. Thus we have the shortened forms: 'exam' for examination; 'Lab' for laboratory; 'maths' for math-ematics.

Zoo is by now accepted as good English (no one would speak of going to the Zoological gardens) and the term Nazi has become almost universally recognized as a substitute for the more cumbersome combination 'National Socialist'. 'Mob', for instance, is a shortening of the Latin phrase mobile vulgus (literally 'the fickle crowd') while 'cab' comes from the French Cabriolet. We have 'taxi' from taximeter – cabriolet, a term applied to the type of public vehicle which carried a meter to record the 'tax' or fare, as distinct from the Omnibus or tramcar, where the passengers purchased a ticket in advance. The colloquial Chap is an early 18th century abbreviation of Chapman (a dealer). Miss comes from mis-tress; hussy from housewife; hack is a shortened form of hackney; Wig was originally Periwig; Brandy is from brandywine; rum is from rumbullion.

A full list of words which are actually clipped or shortened would occupy many pages. The tendency to abbreviate is a natural, an old and a universal one.

3. By Syncopation: In this process of shortening, a vowel is slided and the consonants on either

side of it are run-together resulting in the loss of a syllable. For example, Perambulation (from the Latin verb peranbulare: to walk about) is syncopated to prambulator, which then becomes shortened to pram.

Other examples are once, else, hence, which originally were – ones, elles, heres, – all pronounced as disyllables. Past participles like born, shorn, worn, to-lorn are likewise the result of syncopation, since all at one time had the termination – en – boren, shoren, wren.

4. By Telescoping: This process is something similar to the previous one, but here two words are combined into one. It is a process of shortening in which two words run together. Eg. (i). To don (ii). to doft. The verbs to don and to doft, for instance, are the results of the telescoping of do on and do off (i.e. to put on and put off) respectively. (iii) to don't a fire is likewise a telescoped form of do out.

5. By Metanalysis: Closely akin, again, to telescoping is the process known to students of language as metanalysis, i.e. re-analysis or different analysis (from the Greek). It also consists in running of two words or more together, and dividing them in different places. Eg: (i). at home becomes a tome, (ii). a flashing eye becomes a flashing guy, (iii) Science and arts becomes Science an darts, etc,

The consonant at the end of one word has become attached to the vowel at the beginning of the next, and so by 're-analysis' a new combination is formed. Other examples: a newt from an ewt; Tawdry from St. Audrey; An umpire from a numpire etc.

6. Portmanteau Words: When part of one word is combined with part of another in order to form a new word, carrying with it the ideas behind both the original terms, we have what is know as a 'Portmanteau Word". A certain number of words which are now part of our normal vocabulary originated in this way.

For instance, a) Tragi – Comedy, is quite clearly the result of the combination of tragedy and comedy.

b) Melodrama comes from melody and drama, for the early nineteenth century "blood and thunder" play usually had song and music plentifully interspersed in it.

c) Lunch is said to have originated in a combination of lump and hunch.

d) Brunch is a portmanteau form of breakfast and lunch. The Oxford Dictionary records brunch in the year 1900.

7. Acronyms: They are "words manufactured from Initials". In certain cases initials have become more commonly used than the actual words for which they stand, so that they can almost be regarded as words in themselves. Thus we usually speak of a B.A., or an M.A., rather than a Bachelor of Arts or a Master of Arts.

In all these cases and many others the initials have remained distinct and are still recognisable as such. But in some cases, where it has been possible, they have actually been combined to form a

word. Thus in the war of 1939-45 the pipe-line laid beneath the English channel to supply oil to the armies in France was known as Pluto, from the initials P.L.U.T.O. (Pipe Line Under the Ocean.)

Other examples:

UNESCO : United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

NATO : North Atlantic Treaty Organization

WHO : World Health Organization.

And it is the same with B.B.C., UNICEF., etc.

8. Back-Formation: Another means by which new words have come into being is through the process known as 'back formation'. Most back formations are the result of a misunderstanding, though a few have been deliberate.

The principle, and the way in which it works, can best be explained by taking actual examples. In the 16th and early 17th centuries there was an adverb groveling, meaning 'in abject manner, on the ground'. Thus one could say, "He lay groveling in the dust", where the word would be an adverb of manner. But then the termination – ing was mistaken for the sign of the present participle, and this erroneous idea received encouragement from the fact that in most contexts where the word occurred, a present participle would certainly make sense. Having then, transformed the adverb to a participle, the next step was to work back from this to an infinitive to grovel, and so, through a totally mistaken idea, a new verb was added to the English language.

In the same way the verb to sidle is a back – formation from the adverb sidling and the nouns beggar, pedlar, hawker and editor have given us the conresponding verbs to beg, to peddle, to hawk and to edit.

Beggar was from Old French began which itself was from beghards.

i) beggar was mistaken for beg+er/as and hence 'beg' came into use. So beg is the result of back formation

ii) butch < butcher < boucher er and ar mistaken for agent noun suffix.

iii) Peddle < peddlar

iv) edit < editor

v) televise < television.

9. Combination of two other words: New words are formed with a combination of two other words, sometimes a noun and an adjective, sometimes a noun preceded by another noun which is used with something of an adjectival force. Eg.: Weekday, goldfish, blackbird, railway, bookcase, water proof etc.

10. Coinages: A considerable number of new words must be attributed to deliberate invention

or coinage. When a new invention on a discovery is made, there not only arises the necessity of finding a name for it, but it brings in its train a whole host of fresh ideas and fresh conceptions, so that a need is soon felt for words to express them. Thus the vocabulary is enlarged by the addition of coinages. The chief characteristic of a coinage is that an entirely new word is created, as it were from nowhere.

Eg:	velocipede	-	bicycle
	flying machine	-	aeroplane
	avis (a bird)	-	aviator-airman.

Thus the earliest name for a "bicycle" was velocipede , and what we now call an aeroplane was at one time known as a flying machine. Then there was the need of a name for the person who flew it for some years; aviator was employed, obviously from the Latin avis (a bird). Then this was replaced by airman, which has apparently come to stay, though aviation is still used as an abstract noun.

Scientists and inventors particularly are responsible for coining new words. From the Greek we have- Oxygen, hydrogen, ether, logic, biology, geology, geography, telegraph photograph etc. From Latin we have: radiator, propeller, manicure, sinecure, extempore etc.

10. The Influence of Journalism:

In the introduction and popularizing of new words journalism has been a factor of steadily increasing importance. The newspaper and the more popular type of magazine not only play a large part in spreading new locutions among the people but are themselves fertile producers of new words. In his effort to be interesting and racy he adopts an informal and colloquial style and many of the colloquialisms current in popular speech find their way into writing first in the magazine and the news-paper.

Eg: to back a horse or a candidate; to boost a community; comb the woods for a criminal; hop the Atlantic.

The sports writer is often hard-pressed to avoid monotony in his description of similar contests day after day. He wants to be picturesque and introduces latest slang. Eg: crestfallen, fight shy, neck and neck, straight from the shoulder etc.

Popular news magazines make the use of verbal novelties a feature of style. In the pages of the weeklies, we find the word tycoon for a Captain of industry; Newshawk for reporter, jeer worthy, Nobelity – winners of a Nobel Prize and many other examples of the search for novelty.

We must recognize that in the nineteenth century a new force affecting language arose. There are many ways in which it affects the language. Its tendency is to constantly renew the vocabulary and its ability is to bring about the adoption of new words.

11. Common words from proper names: Another source from which many English words have

been derived in the past is the names of persons and places.

For example:

(i) Everyone is aware that *morocco* is derived from the corresponding proper name.

(ii) *Sandwich* owes its use to the fact that the Earl of Sandwich on one occasion put slices of meat between pieces of bread.

(iii) *Tabasco*: we get the word for Tabasco Sauce from the name of the Tabasco River in Mexico.

(iv) *Camembert* comes from the village in France from which cheese of this type was originally exported.

(v) *brougham*: The type of one-horse, closed carriage known as a *brougham* owes its name to Lord Brougham of about the same date.

(vi) *to boycott:* In 1880 Captain Boycott, the agent of an Irish landowner, refused to accept rents at the figure set by the tenants. His life was threatened, his servants were forced to leave and his figure was burnt in effigy. Hence from Ireland came the use of the verb *to boycott*, meaning to coerce a person by refusing to have, and preventing others from having, dealings with him.

12. Old words with new meanings: The resources of the vocabulary are sometimes extended from within by employing an old word in a new sense. We have already seen many examples of this in some of the paragraphs preceding, especially many of the words now applied to the automobile. But the process can be illustrated for it is one of the commonest phenomena in language.

Eg: (i). Skyline*:* *Skyline* formerly meant the horizon. But it is now common in such an expression as the New York *skyline*.

(ii) Broadcast: Broadcast originally had reference to seed, but its application to radio seems entirely appropriate.

(iii) Cabaret: Cabaret is an old word meaning a booth or shed, and later a small drinking place. Today it signifies only a certain type of restaurant.

We Sign off or Stand by in radio, Take off in an airplane, Kick off in football, Carry on in war, Call up on the telephone. In each of these cases we convey a specific, often technical meaning, quite different from the sense which these expressions previously had.

13. Self- Explaining Compounds:

Another source of new words is represented in the practice of making "self-explaining compounds". It is one of the oldest methods of word formation in the language. Of recent origin are: airworthy (on the analogy of seaworthy), Caterpillar, tractor, fingerprint (in its technical senses). Fire extinguisher, hitchhike, Jet propulsion, the colloquial know-how, lipstick, newsprint, player piano, radio hog, searchlight, skyline (as applied to the outline of the tops of buildings against the sky). Other examples are: Spot light, Stream-line and teen-age.

Many of these reveal their newness by being written with a hyphen or as separate words or by preserving a rather strong accent on the second element. They are good examples which justify the truth that the power to combine existing words into new ones expressing a single concept, a power that was so prominent a feature of Old English, still remains with us.

14. False etymology: There are certain number of words in the English language which have attained their present forms or their present day usage, through mistaken notions regarding their etymology.

Ex: (i) Posthumous : The word, Posthumous was originally spelt without the h. The meaning was – 'Coming after in order of time'. But by a mistake of etymology the second half of the word, -humous, was assumed to be connected with death and burial. Hence, the meaning 'after death' developed.

(ii) helpmate : In the Book of Genesis, Chapter-II, verse 18, we read – "And the Lord said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him."

It is very clear from the context, that meet is an adjective, signifying fitting or suitable. But since the 'help' was also a companion to man, and since she became his mate or wife, the idea arose that a 'help meet' was a mate who helped. Thus there came into being the word helpmate, now perfectly good English.

15. Other Sources of New Words: Political and social developments and religious controversies brought in a number of new words into English. The Civil war gave the words Cabinet (Council of Ministers) in its modern sense. Methodist, Methodism, Unitarian, Anglo-Catholic are words born out of religious controversies. Liberal, Conservative, Whig and Tory, the middle-class, Socialism, Communism, and Capitalism are words resulting form political, economic and social developments. Other new words which have entered English are: automation, bottleneck, cold war, nylon and radar etc.

Shakespeare contributed many words and expressions. To take only a few from an extensive list, we have incarnadine, multitudinous, dauntless, dwindle, to foot (= to kick), sick of (= tired of), lack-lustre (dull). And from Twelfth Night, the verb to accost is coined in the sense of 'going boldly and rather rudely up to a person'.

1.3.4. Summary:

English language is the richest language and has the most extensive vocabulary of any in the world. As already said in the first lesson ("Brief survey of the English Language"), English is a living language and the change that is constantly going on in a living language can be most easily seen in the vocabulary. Old words die out, new words are added and existing words change their meaning.

Accordingly, in this lesson, "Word Formation", the most important methods of the growth of vocabulary are discussed. The first method, the addition of Suffixes or Prefixes is a very ancient method of word formation. The tendency to abbreviate is a natural, an old and universal method. The three methods of enlarging the vocabulary – Syncopation, Telescopy and Metanalysis – are closely related with slight changes. It is interesting to note that a certain number of words which are now part of our normal vocabulary, originated through Portmanteau words. In this process two words are, as it were telescoped into one. How initials became popular than actual words is presented with examples in Acronymy. "Back formation" gives an elaborate description of the birth of new words. However, creation of new words, with the Combination of two words was popular in the past. In deliberate coinage there is often an analogy with some other word or words in the language. This is felt consciously or unconsciously, to be desirable. It permits the meaning more easily to be guessed at, reveals a mild degree of ingenuity on the part of the inventor, and focuses the attention on the distinctive syllable or syllables. In the influence of Journalism, the reporter necessarily writes under pressure and has not long to search for the right words. He adopts an informal and colloquial style and introduces new words to the readers. The last method "other sources of new words" tells us how political, social and religious controversies introduced new words in English language. No living language is ever static, new words are constantly being added.

1.3.5. Technical Terms:

1.	Obsolete	:	disused, discarded.
2.	locutions	:	style of speech
3.	Syllable	:	any of the units into which a word may be divided usually consisting of a Vowel sound with a Consonant before and after.
4.	aviation	:	art or practice of operating planes, helicopters etc.
5.	etymology	:	study of the origin of words.

1.3.6. Sample Questions:

1. Discuss in detail any five methods of word-formation.
2. Describe a few important methods of word-formation.
3. "No living language is ever static." Explain.
4. Write an essay on Growth of Vocabulary?

1.3.7. Suggested Reading:

1. F.T. Wood: An Outline History of the English Language.
2. A.C. Baugh. A History of the English Language.

3. The best source of information about the growth of vocabulary in the nineteenth century and since is the New English Dictionary, with the subsequently published supplement.

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Lesson – 4
Foreign Influences
Latin, Scandinavian and French

Structure

1.4.1. Objectives:

The aim of the present lesson is to

(i) give an overview of the foreign influences on Old English

(ii) describe briefly the Latin influence, the French influence and the Scandinavian influence on the English language.

1.4.2. Introduction

As has been pointed out in Lesson 2 “Standardization”, English is far from being a pure tongue. Its basis is Anglo-Saxon, but there are also in it substantial elements of Latin, French and Scandinavian. During various periods of its history it has absorbed words from most of the languages of Europe and also from some of those spoken in the other continents. A number of these terms are still recognisably foreign, but many have become so essential a part of our vocabulary that we never think of them as anything but English. The technical term for these words which have been adopted from foreign tongues is ‘Loan Words’. Loan words have come into language by three means:

(a) They might have been brought by foreign invaders who settled here. The greater part of our Scandinavian words came in this way. Apart from that, a few early Latin terms and a large portion of the French element which is to be found in the two centuries immediately following the Norman Conquest, were also introduced in this way. Words introduced in this fashion, usually pass into the spoken language first and then are adopted by the literary language, though many become obsolete even before they can be perpetuated in writing.

(b) They may come through foreign contact originating in war, exploration, trade, travel etc. This was the case with most of the Spanish words which form part of our vocabulary, and also with the majority of terms from the East. Here also the spoken language benefits first.

(c) They may come through scholarship, learning and culture. In this case it is usual for them to appear first of all in the written tongue and thence to pass into the spoken language. This was the method by which the greater percentage of the Latin words which were added during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance were introduced.

First of all we must realise that many foreign words have been borrowed at second or even at third hand. In other words, first they have passed through another language and the English people have then adopted them from this intermediary tongue. Thus a number of Latin words, particularly those connected with the church and the legal profession, came via the French language.

1.4.3. Discussion

However, the most important foreign contributions have come from Latin, French and the Scandinavian tongues. Let us see the influence of these three foreign elements on Old English in detail.

1.4.4. Latin Influence

Introduction: English language came into contact with Latin three times. This extended contact lasted over several centuries and was of varied character. The Teutonic tribes came into contact with the Roman civilization while still on the continent. Here the influence of Latin was first exerted on their tongues. Later when these tribes invaded Britain, then inhabited by the Celts, they came into contact with Latin as the Celts had been governed by the Romans for centuries and had absorbed several hundreds of words of their rulers' language. Later, when Britain was Christianized in 597 A.D., Latin as the language of the Church once again exerted a strong influence on the language of the Teutonic invaders.

In his Etymological Dictionary Walter Skeat records one hundred and eight words in use in our language today which have come from Latin by way of Anglo-Saxon. Henry Bradley, writing rather later in The Making of English, states that in the Anglo-Saxon period itself about four hundred words of Latin origin are to be found in the language, or about two percent of the total vocabulary; but many of these were little used, while some belong exclusively to an earlier and some to a later period of the five hundred years represented by the term 'Anglo-Saxon' or 'Old English'.

They may be classified under two heads: (a) those which were a legacy of the Roman occupation and having once been absorbed and accepted into the language had become anglicized, and (b) those which were the result of the introduction of Latin Christianity into England in the sixth century.

Latin Influence at Various Stages: Latin words in English fall under six main heads, according to the time and the manner in which they were introduced. They are as follows:

(i) Some Latin words came in as a result of the Roman invasion of Britain in 55 B.C. and the occupation of the island upto A.D. 410, a period of almost five hundred years. They were probably chiefly of a military or popular character. Eg: The word *wīn* (wine) from the Latin *vinum*, *weall* (wall) from *vallum* and *Ceaster* (camp) from *Castra*. The river name Medway came from *Media Via.*

Place names ending in–*caster* and–*Chester* and (an almost pure Latin combination) the name of the town of Pontefract in Yorkshire, which signifies 'broken bridge', fall under this class.

(ii) Latin terms which came in with the invading Angles and Saxons, having already become part of the Common Germanic stock of words through the Roman Conquest of Europe before those tribes left the continent. Examples are the Anglo-Saxon *deofol* (devil) from diabous and *niht* (night) of Latin *nox* (noct)

(iii) Words introduced direct from Latin during the Anglo – Saxon period, through the early Christian missionaries. They are connected with religion. For example, *cruc* (cross) from the Latin *crux.* Also *Candel* (candle) *cieda* (cireed) *Cometa* (comet) *Sanct* (Saint) and *cleric* (clergyman) are of this origin.

(iv) There were other introductions from Latin in the Middle English period (i.e. 1100-1500) mainly in the spheres of religion, law, medicine and alchemy and also a number of abstract terms. But many of them have come through French and so they do not count as Latin in the same sense as the three previous types mentioned above.

(v) The great period of the Latin influx was at the time of the Renaissance, especially during the period 1550 –1600. The rebirth of classical scholarship led almost inevitably to the enrichment of the language by a multitude of words derived from the language spoken by Cicero, Caesar, Virgil and Ovid. These English scholars read, spoke and wrote Latin as easily and as naturally as their own tongue. Here are a few examples: *Renius, miser, medium, senior, junior, area, exit, animal, circus* etc.

In all these cases and many others, Latin words were adopted unaltered, but there are an even

larger number which underwent anglicisation (as *secure* and *complete*), and still others which were made up from Latin element though no actual Latin equivalent existed.

(vi) Finally we have those Latin terms or expressions which have never really become part of current English proper. They are either reserved for academic or technical purposes or fall into the category of slang and witticism. This class may be subdivided as follows.

(a) Latin words taken over unaltered for academic or learned use; eg: *radius, dictum, quantum, vacuum, apex* and f*alsi* etc.

(b) Initial words of Latin formulae; eg: *credo, paternoster* and *habeas corpus*. One of the few words of this type which has become popular is r*ecipe*. The word is actually a Latin verb in the imperative mood, meaning *take*, and in the Middle-Ages always began instructions in the compounding of medicines.

Recipe (take) …, then followed a list of ingredients.

(c) Latin words which have been taken to make patent names, especially for *medicines* and foods; Eg: *Sanitas* and *Sanatogan* (Latin Senetas = health), Glaxo - *Galaklos* –milk.

(d) Latin compounds, or words derived from Latin sources and elements, for scientific purposes or to name new inventions, etc; eg. *Locomotives, tractor, motor* etc.

(e) 'Joke' words, originating in a pun on some Latin term. Perhaps the oldest 'joke' word of this kind is *nostrum*, (Oxford Dictionary dates as 1602). It is a Latin possessive adjective meaning *Our*, i.e. 'our' remedy, as distinct from the one generally prescribed by the medical profession; hence a quick remedy.

To conclude, Latin words were assimilated into Anglo-Saxon by direct adoption. The Latin element encouraged the formation of translation words to express new ideas. New words were formed as a result of adding native or Anglo-Saxon suffixes to Latin words:

Eg: Cristen + dom – Cristendom; preost + had - preosthad (priesthood);
martyr + dom - martyrdom.

Latin introduced a large number of words expressive of abstract thought. Christianity changed the way of life of the Anglo Saxons. The change in the religious and moral system and the outlook on life is reflected in the vocabulary. Latin influence on Anglo-Saxons in the second period was considerable. However, it paved the way for the further incorporation of foreign words into English in the subsequent periods.

1.4.5. Scandinavian Influence or Norse Influence:

Introduction: Near the end of the Old English period English underwent a third foreign influence, the result of contact with another important language, the Scandinavian. For some reasons too obscure at this time, there was unrest among the Teutonic inhabitants of the Scandinavian peninsula and Denmark, during the 8th century A.D. The result of this was that one group crossed the channel to Britain and carried out a series of plundering raids on the coast of England, while other marauding gangs invaded areas in Southern Europe. Those who invaded England were daring sea-rovers, known as the Vikings.

The Viking Age: The period from the middle of the 8th century to the beginning of the 10th century is known as the Viking Age. The Vikings or the Scandinavians included the Swedes, the Norwegians and the Danes. The term 'Viking' means "creek dwellers". It refers particularly to the Scandinavians who in the 8th, 9th and 10th centuries went by ships and attacked places in Western and Northern Europe. Their activities, which extended from the middle of the 8th century to the beginning of the 11th century, can be divided into three phases:

(i) from 787 A.D., (according to the Anglo Saxon Chronicle) to about 850 A.D.,

(ii) from 850 A.D. to 878 A.D., the year of the Treaty of the Wedmore, and

(iii) from 878 A.D. to 1042 A.D.

As a consequence of the Scandinavian invasion of England large numbers of the invaders settled in various parts of England. Majority of them were peaceful settlers and adapted themselves to the local customs and ways of living. By and large the Danes and the Norwegians lived in harmony with the Anglo-Saxons. Norse was spoken in Scotland till as late as the 17th century. Undoubtedly, there was considerable interaction of the two languages; though our concern here is with the influence of the Scandinavian languages on English. A large number of Scandinavian words, incorporated into the fabric of the English language bear abundant testimony to this Scandinavian influence was confined mainly to the Anglo-Saxon and the Middle English periods. It started with the Norse settlements in England towards the end of the 8th century. An agreement established "Dane Law" as the permanent settlement of the Danes. Canute, a Danish king, ruled England in the 11th century. All these led to a considerable influence of the Scandinavian language on the English language.

a) Scandinavian Place Names: A.C. Baugh remarks that more than 1400 place names have been counted in England, which have Danish influence. For example:

- by (town) : Derby, Rugby, Whitby, Grimsby
– thorpe (village): Althorpe, Bishopsthorpe, Linthorpe

– thwaite (isolated piece of land): Slaithwaite, Linthwaite, Gunthwaite.

b) Personal Names: Names ending in' – son'; Eg. Robinson, Stenvenson and Johnson – conform to Scandinavian customs.

c) The Earliest Borrowing: The early contact of the Scandinavians with the English was hostile. So, the influence was not much. The number of Scandinavian words that appear in the first period is consequently small, amounting to only about two score. The largest single group of these is such as would be associated with a sea-roving and predatory people. Words like – barda (beaked ship), Cnearr (Small warship), Scegp (Vessel), lip (fleet), Scegpmann (pirate), dreng (warrior), rān (robbery) show in what respects the invaders chiefly impressed the English people.

d) Law, social & administrative system: A little later, we find a number of words relating to the law or characteristic of the social and administrative system of the Dane Law. The word *law* itself is of Scandinavian origin, as is the word *outlaw*. Other examples are: māl (action at law); held (free holder); hūsting (assembly).

e) Grammar: After the Danes settled peacefully in England, their language started to influence English very much. Some more examples are given below:

Nouns: axle-tree, band, birth, boon, bull, calf, dirt, dregs, egg, fellow, freckle, gap, hap, keel, kid, link mire, race root, scap, scrap, sister, thrift, trust, etc.

Adjectives: Flat, loose, fight, weak.
Verbs: Call, clip, die, get, give, lift, take, the plural are for 'be'.
Pronouns: The most important is the suppression of the Old English pronoun 'hie', 'hiera', and 'him' with 'they' 'their' and 'them' replacing them.

Other aspects Scandinavian influence are:
(i) the use of 'till' in the sense of 'to' (spatial use)
(ii) adoption of 'both' and 'same', especially as pronouns.
(iii) 'fro' in the sense of from, still preserved in 'to and fro'
(iv) 'though', the Old Norse equivalent of Old English 'theah'.

All these go to show how Scandinavian had entered the very texture of the English language –its vocabulary and grammar.

1.4.6. French Influence:

Introduction: If the Middle English period was the most prolific in adding to the vocabulary words from the French, the process went on steadily throughout the 16th and 17th centuries. The period of French influence was during the years after the Restoration of 1660, when the Stuart court returned from the continent with more French vocabulary than English.

The Norman Conquest:

Towards the close of the Old English period an event occurred which had a greater effect on the English language than any other in the course of its history. This event was the Norman Conquest in 1066. The Norman Conquest changed the whole course of English language. The conquest of England in 1066 by William of Normandy was destined to have a profound influence not only upon the history and political systems of the country, but also upon language. In 1066, William, Duke of Normandy, defeated Harold, King of England, at the Battle of Hastings. The Normans as the ruling class were much spoken about in historical records and contemporary literature.

Normans were bands of Northmen who settled in the North of France to found the dukedom of Normandy in 912 A.D. Normandy rose to a position of great influence, sometimes overshadowing the power of even the king of France. The people of Normandy not only absorbed all essential elements of French civilization but also gave up their own mother tongue adopting French. Close relations existed between England and Normandy. The coming of William also marked the arrival of the French language in England. In 1042 Edward the Confessor, came to the throne of England. He was brought up in France. He was more of a French man than English. He brought along with him a number of French friends, relatives, manners and fashions. They brought much of the French language into England.

With the coming of the Normans, French as the language of the conqueror, became the official language of England. More than 10,000 words were introduced. For some years there were in use two languages – Norman French and English. Norman French usually enjoyed a superior status as the court language, the language of the nobility, law courts and learned professions. Norman French was used by the upper classes and the middle classes who were in direct contact with the rulers. However, a majority of the people continued to speak English. Norman French and English mingled gradually to give us what is known as Middle English. It is the 'Anglo French tongue' predecessor of Modern English. As mentioned in Lesson 1 there was a fusion of the two races. The fusion was rapid. This early fusion of French and English in England in quite clear from a variety of evidence. It is evident in the marriage of Normans to Englishmen. Norman nobles identified themselves with their new country by founding monasteries on their estates, and chose burial places for themselves and their families in their adopted land rather than in Normandy. Under these circumstances, French continued to be the official and socially accepted language carrying a lot of prestige with its use.

But shortly after 1200 conditions changed. The first link in the chain binding England to the continent was broken in 1204 when King John lost Normandy. England lost an important part of her possessions abroad. The nobility gradually gave up their continental estates. A feeling of rivalry developed between the two countries. It is accompanied by an anti-foreign movement in English and culminated in the Hundred Years war. During the century and a half following the Norman Conquest, French had been not only natural but more or less necessary to the English upper class. In the 13th and 14th centuries its maintenance became increasingly artificial. Social and economic changes affecting the English-speaking part of the population were taking place, and in the end numbers were decisive. In the 14th century, English won its way back into universal use and in the 15th century, French disappeared.

French influence in detail:

The most extensive borrowing of words has come from French in the Middle English period, besides the classical language, Latin.

(i) During the Restoration period from 1660 to the 18th century, words mainly relating to fashionable life and gaming or other 'polite' pastimes entered English. Eg: *ballet, connoisseur, malapropos, bean suite, belles-lettres* etc.

(ii) At the end of the 18th century, the French Revolution supplied several words that persisted for a while but then they disappeared. The words that continued as part of the vocabulary of English are *regime, tricolor* and *guillotine*.

(iii) In the words of Miss Serjeantson the 19th century introduced more French words into England than any period since Middle English. The most numerous are those under the heads of art, literature, dress and textiles, food and cooking etc. The latter group, with furniture, are perhaps the most typical of the century. Examples are:

(a) We have café, Restaurant, meals, bon-bon, charlotte – all connected with food and cooking.

(b) blouse, troussears, rosette, reticule connected with dress and furnishings.

(c) barrage, chaosis, attaché related to military and political terms.

(d) cabriolet (later shortened to cab) of vehicles

(e) parvenu, soiree, fiance and debutant from social life.

(iv) The new interest was rather like that which manifested itself in things Russian during the late twenties and the early thirties of the twentieth century. Then there were also increased travel facilities, which led to more and more people going to France both for business and pleasure, and to the emergence of Paris as a centre of fashion and fine life. Gallicisms became a fashionable affectation.

(v) Finally we must not overlook those phrases like coup d'ètat, lettre de cachet etc., which though they still retain their French form and are usually printed in italics to distinguish their foreign origin and character, have nevertheless been accepted into the English language and given an honorable place because they express ideas for which there is no equivalent or concise native term.

(vi) Fashion and Social life: As the ruling class and representatives of a superior civilization, the French imported many words relating to fashion and dress. Interestingly these two words themselves belong to French. There are other words of this category apparel, habit, gown, robe, attire, cape, cloak, frock etc.

Names of Colours like blue, brown, vermilion, scarlet, saffron, russet and tawny are French.

Items of Jewellery like jewel, ornament, brooch, chaplet are also French.

Names of precious stones - turquoise, amethyst, topaz, garnet, ruby, emerald, sapphire, pearl, diamond, crystal, coral – belong to French.

Food, Meals and Cuisine: The French influence greatly enriched the English table, for the very words dinner and supper are French, in the same way as feast, repast, appetite, taste, sustenance etc. Other examples are:

Names of fish: Salmon, Mackerel, Sole, Perch, Sardine, Oyester and porpoise.
Meat: Pork, beef, bacon, sausage, gravy.

Spices: Spice, clove, thyme, herb, mustard, marjoram, cinnamon, nutmeg.

Style of Cooking: Roast, boil, parboil, stear, fry, broach, grate, mince.

Vessels: Goblet, Saucer, Covet, Plate, Platter.

A number of French words indicative of the French innovations in domestic economy and social life also found their way into English during this period.

Words pertaining to Literature: The word literature itself, poet, rime, prose, romance, story, chronicle, tragedy, prologue, preface, title, volume, paper and pen are French.

There was no area of life in which French did not enrich the English vocabulary. The result was a very considerable addition of 10,000 words to the English vocabulary according to competent scholars in the field. Another aspect of the French influence over English is the role it played in word-formation. As discussed in the lesson "Growth of Vocabulary", Old English enlarged its stock of words by adding prefixes and suffixes to the existing words.

Originally Teutonic, the Normans in the dukedom of Normandy by the time of the Conquest, were essentially French in language and civilization. The English nobility was wiped out and replaced by French nobles in government and religion. As a result French was the language of the upper classes. However very soon, through intermarriage and settlement, the distinction between those who spoke English and those who spoke French was not racial but social. It may be called Anglo-French nobility. Conditions changed after 1200. The English king and nobles lost their vast possessions in French. They were forced to look upon England as their nation and English as their sole language. The 100 Years' War with France gave rise to a sense of national consciousness and pride. Gradually English became the mother tongue of all sections. It started replacing French as the language of the Parliament proceedings, official and personal correspondence, of law, and finally of churches and schools.

The Norman Conguest resulted in large-scale entry of French vocabulary into English, thus making it a Romance language as much as a Teutonic language.

1.4.7. Summary:

From the lesson we can have an idea of some of the formative influences on Old English. Old English was the amalgam of the language of the Angles, Saxons, Jutes and Frisians who migrated from the European mainland to the island then called Britain. This composite language was conservative and did not easily accept words from other languages into its fabric. Yet, as we find about the year 1000 A.D., it shows considerable evidence of foreign elements. Most of the word stock, especially the words signifying elementary and obvious things, were native, inherited from the parent Indo-European language. But words from other languages are also found in the language of this period, probably as the result of prolonged contact with speakers of the other languages and various other reasons mentioned above. However, English had to undergo the Latin influence, the Scandinavian influence and the French influence, due to certain important political events.

Latin was the language that exerted a great influence on Old English. Contact with Latin was spread over three stages: (i) Continental borrowing, (ii) Latin through Celtic Transmission and (iii) The Reintroduction of Christianity.

Of the three stages, the second was minimal in its influence, while the third resulted in extensive adoption of Latin words. The greatest influence of Latin upon Old English took place because of the introduction of Christianity into Britain in 597. The new religion of course was not really new in the island, but the date marks the beginning of a systematic attempt on the part of Rome to convert the inhabitants and make England a Christian country. However, the enrichment of the vocabulary did not

take place overnight. Some Latin words entered Anglo Saxon almost immediately, while some others gained currency in the tenth and eleventh centuries.

The most important influence is that of the Scandinavian language on account of the Danish invasion and settlement of England. The amalgamation of the two races resulted in a large number of Scandinavian words entering the English language. English borrowed even some grammatical words and syntactic rules revealing the extensive nature of the influence.

Finally the Norman Conquest had far-reaching consequences for the English language. This is usually referred to as the French influence on English. The French influence on English had enriched its vocabulary. It also reduced the vitality of the Old English methods of word-formation and made the language receptive to words from other language.

In general we can say that Latin supplied words of a religious and learned character having specialised meanings. Scandinavian supplied words expressing simple, every day concepts because of the give and take nature of the influence. While the French influence on English after the Norman Conquest had greatly enriched its vocabulary, it also led to the loss of many Old English words.

1.4.8. Sample Questions:

1. Discuss the Latin element in Old English.
2. Trace the Scandinavian influence on the English Language.
3. Comment on the French influence on the English Language.

1.4.9. Suggested Reading:

1. F.T. Wood: Outline History of the English Language.
2. A.C. Baugh: A History of the English Language.
3. Simeon Potter: Our Language.

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LESSON – 5

SEMANTIC CHANGES

Structure

1.5.1. Objectives:

The purpose of this lesson is to let the student know:

(i) that English language is subject to change in meanings
(ii) that there are different methods through which the change takes place.

1.5.2.Introduction:

The student of literature will be surprised to realise that many words have not always had the same meaning that they bear today. If the student goes through the plays of Shakespeare, he learns that a fool, to Shakespeare, meant something different from what it means to us. In the same way, a battle could be used to signify not only a fight but also a company of soldiers (equivalent to our modern word battalion).

Countless words in the English language have changed or modified their meaning in this way, and it is quite natural that they should have done. For words are not static, despite a very widespread belief to the contrary even amongst intelligent and educated people. It is foolish to suppose that a word can properly be used only in its 'root' or etymological sense. Quite clearly, a particular word may evoke different ideas, or have different associations, for different persons or different ages. For instance the word pipe means one thing to the smoker, another to the plumber and something else to the organ-builder. Moreover there is a development of change of meaning from time to time and from age to age. This is a point of psychological and social interest. That is why the "Science of Semantics", as it has come to be called, the study of the historical evolution of the meaning of words, has important bearings upon other fields of investigation besides linguistics. In addition, it is one of the most human and most fascinating sides of language study.

1.5.3. Discussion:

No less a person than Dr. Johnson, when he first began to collect the material for his Dictionary, supposed that they were and that he could fix them forever. But before he had completed his task he had altered his mind. Actually, of course, words have no independent and intrinsic meaning. In fact they have no meaning apart from the meaning given to them by human mind and by their context. They are essentially vehicles for the expression of thoughts and ideas on the one hand and for their evocation on the other. That is why it is a mistaken idea, to which the academic mentality too falls a victim, to suppose that a word can properly be used only in its 'root' and etymological sense.

When an Englishman in the early days of manorial system heard the word *villein* he merely thought of a very lowly labourer. But two hundred years later it brought to mind primarily not the social position or the occupation of such a person but his uncouth manners and behaviour. Later still, it suggested an evil-doer, possibly because of a censorious human tendency to identify social respect-

ability and 'gentlemanly' behaviour with moral integrity, and to look upon their opposites with suspicion. In the development of the change of meaning of the word *Villein,* we can see a point of psychological and social interest.

Words have changed their meanings and the reasons behind these changes are manifold. The following methods would appear to be the chief. It is interesting to note that, in some cases, quite obviously, more than one tendency has been at work. There may be instances, where a word cited in one class could just as fittingly be included in another, especially when the two types of change are similar or closely related. This cannot be avoided. It we exclude such words, it would give a false impression that everything could be tied down and labelled neatly and kept at that with a fixed meaning. But generally an attempt has been made to give such examples which are at once typical and interesting from the point of view of present-day English. Given below are the examples.

I. Generalisation: A very frequent means by which a change of meaning occurs in a word is by the process which may be called generalization. That is to say, a term which at one time had a specialized and restricted meaning, comes in course of time, to have a wider application.

Eg: (1) Box: 'Box ' was the name of a tree and in word form it was casket, (where jewellery is kept) made by wood. Today it is one of the most generalized terms in English: 'Box' of any wood, of many dimensions; 'Box' at the theatre; 'to box' (verb) which means to put in a box.

Thus in discussing the development of the word box we noticed how the name of the material was extended to the object made from it. This is a very common form of generalization. In the same way we speak of a copper, a paper and a glass:

a copper : both a coin and a receptacle for boiling clothes.
a paper : a sheet of paper, a news-paper or a dissertation
a glass : either a mirror or a drinking glass.
Tragedy : the term tragedy is no, longer employed in its strictly dramatic sense, but has come to mean any occurrence which is felt to be a great calamity.

II. Specialization: Even more frequent than generalization of meaning is specialization or restriction. Many words which today have a specialized application, at one time bore a much wider and more general significance. Specialization or Narrowing is another process in semantics. It is the reverse of generalization. This consists in a word from being applied to a whole class of things, comes to be applied to only a part of the class.

Eg: (i). Fowl : Bird: During the Middle English period, the two words – 'fowl' and 'bird' were used indiscriminately as alternatives. But gradually 'bird' came to be used in a generalized sense and 'fowl' in specialized meaning (fowl = domestic cock/hen).

(ii). deer: Similarly with deer. Originally it meant a wild animal, and as late as 1481 Caxton employed it in this sense; now it refers to one particular species of animal.

(iii). meat: 'Meat' in the beginning meant any kind of food. Now it is restricted only to the flesh of animals.

(iv). hound: 'Hound' originally meant the dog, in general, but now refers to a particular species of 'dog used for hunting'.

III. Radiation: 'Radiation' is a special process in the development of meaning. If the various meanings of word derive their meaning from the original meaning of the word (but not from one another) the word is said to have undergone a radiation. This process is otherwise called Polysememe. Another name given to the process is Multiplication of meaning.

Eg: power: (a) originally has the meaning 'to be able'. Other meanings are: (b) physical power (power of the muscles); (c) Mechanical energy (water, steam, electric power); (d) also 'power' in the sense of 'lever'; (e) moral or intellectual force; (f) 'Power' also means a great nation

of the world; (g) a mathematical conception – 'power in style'.

IV. Extension of transference, followed by differentiation of meaning: Some words undergo a change of meaning by a process which, upto a point, is a combination of the two mentioned previously, viz., generalization and specialization; but which differs from them both. We may call it differentiation.

Through some kind of association or resemblance, a word is applied to an object or an idea other than that for which it originally stood (that is to say, it is generalized in so far as it now covers a wider field) but it does not, as result, lose its earlier, basic meaning. Our mind differentiates between the original meaning and the newly acquired one, so that although it is still only one word it has two or more specialized meanings.

Eg: (i). Wire : It is not necessarily a metallic filament. It could also be a telegram.
(ii). to give one a ring: also to telephone.
(iii).to drop a line: also to write a letter.

The two words – board and book have at least six or seven various meanings each.

In certain cases, where widening is followed by differentiation, the difference of meaning is indicated by distinctive spelling (and a new word is created).

Eg: Flour – Flower : Flour for instance, is merely an alternative form of Flower. Today we should probably regard the two as distinct and separate words, but actually they are not; they do but indicate different but related meaning of the same word. And the same is true of: Curtsey – courtesy; human – humane; gentle – genteel; urban – urbane; mask – masque.

V. Polarisation or Colouring: It sometimes happens that in the course of time a word acquires a definite 'colouring' or emotional significance, for which, etymologically, there is a justification. In some cases this colouring affects it for a limited period only; in others it persists, so that to all intents and purposes a modification in meaning occurs. For instance, the term (i). Gothic: Gothic was used in a derogatory sense like uncouth, barbarous or wanting in taste; but since then it has resumed its pristine and more obvious signification, implying neither praise nor condemnation.
(ii). To Harbour (Verb): Now a days, one harbours criminals, spies, suspects, etc.; and Old clothes or furs harbour moths. As a matter of fact anything that is harboured is something undesirable. But on its first appearance in the language (in 1460) the word was not restricted in this way; it merely meant 'to give shelter'.
(iii). amateur: It is clear from the term amateur, that an amateur is a person who does a thing for the sake of it. But in these days of experts and specialists, the efforts of such a person are apt to appear unskilful. So if we call a person an amateur at a job it is to deprecate him and discredit him.

VI. Euphemism: Euphemism is the description given to that figure of speech by which one seeks to hide the real nature of something unpleasant by giving it a less offensive name. There are certain words which have changed their meaning through being frequently used in this way. The more permanent ones are chiefly associated with death, illness or disease – subjects which cause a certain amount of pain or distress if discussed in plain terms. The following are examples:

(i)	passing		(ii)	to pass away	
	decease	death		to fall asleep	to die

Passing and decease have both become synonyms for death, and to pass away or to fall asleep are very commonly used instead of the verb to die.

(iii). cemetery = a sleeping place.
(iv). undertaker = funeral undertakes

Other euphemistic devices are hidden behind the words – 1) accident (to happen or to occur); 2) Casualty (a casualty ' On whom something has befallen); 3) fatal (nowadays implying deadly or death-giving – attributed to deadly or death – giving.)

VII. Reversal of Meaning: A word may change its meaning to the point of actually reversing it.

Eg. (i). 'grocer' : 'Grocer' today means a retail trader. But at one time, as its derivation suggests, it meant only a wholesaler, i.e. a person who dealt 'en gros' (in bulk).

The smaller tradesman, who sold to customers over the counter, was called a grocer. Perhaps the change came about by what we may call a shifting emphasis; if the wholesaler sold in bulk, the retailer bought in the same way.

(ii). to scan: The verb to scan also falls into this class. It is derived from the French Scander and the Latin Scandere; its root meaning is 'to read through carefully', But at the present time it is more frequently used in the sense of 'to read through rapidly and perfunctorily'.

(iii). Wiseacre: Occasionally, too, a term reverses its meaning through an ironic application. This is the case with Wiseacre, which now has a derogatory significance. But there was a time when it meant literally what it says: i.e. a wise – sager.

VIII. Proper names become ordinary parts of speech: Through the force of association, the precise significance of the proper name is not always retained. Examples are:

(i). dunce : Duns Scotus

For instance, the word dunce is derived form the name of the medieval philosopher Duns Scotus. His opponents represented him as a dry-as-dust theorist, devoid of true scholarship. Thus the word meant not blockhead, as it does today, but rather 'a pretender to learning; one who is uninspired and uninspiring.'

(ii). Bedlam: Bethlehem Hospital

Bedlam is an abbreviation of Bethelehem Hospital, the famous lunatic asylum of London. Shakespeare uses the word as an alternative for madman (i.e. one fit to be confined in Bedlam), but this meaning is now obsolete and has given place to that of noise and confusion.

(iii). Maudlin: Mary Magdalene (Weeping Mary)

Maudlin is derived from the name of Mary Magdalene of St. Matthew's Gospel.

IX Loss of distinctive colouring: This type does not often occur. But there are a limited number of words in the English language which have undergone a change in this direction. Usually it happens in the case of words with a religious or political significance, especially those which in the beginning were applied to minorities or to unpopular views. As controversy dies down, and due to lapse of time, the words in question become depolarized and their distinctive colouring is lost.

Eg: (i). Christian, Methodist and Methodism: The word Christian itself, as is well known, was originally a term of derision, so were Methodist and Methodism.

(ii). Mohammedanism is no longer associated in our minds with the Evil one and his works, nor does a free thinker appear to us the same reprobate that he did to our grandparents.

(iii). Policy, Politics and Politician: Another group of words which have been similarly depolarized are the trio – Policy, Politics and Politician; all these terms are suggestive of dishonesty and trickery to Shakespeare and his generation and indeed, to a much later age.

Eg:- Confound their politics = 'bring to nought their intrigues.

X. Metaphorical Application: Almost any word expression is capable of being used metaphorically, but in the majority of cases it is consciously and deliberately so employed and is recognizably figurative in force. However, at present we are concerned with much smaller but equally important

group consisting of words so familiar to us that until we pause to consider them, we fail to realize that they are used in anything but a literal sense.
Examples are given below:
(i). Sad: The original meaning of sad was full. (cf. gothic Saōs, Germ. Satt, Latin Satis). By Elizabethan times it had come to mean Sober or serious and is so used frequently by Shakespeare as well as by the translators of the Authorised Version of the Bible. The change has come about through a metaphorical application of the term, denoting – 'full of thought or seriousness'; and finally, by an extension of the metaphor, it becomes 'full of sorrow.'

(ii). Silly: Silly, from the Anglo-Saxon Saelig, originally meant 'happy'. Then it came to denote an idea somewhat akin to that expressed in our present day adjectives simple or innocent. Moreover, simplicity and innocence were felt to be most conducive to happiness. Thus Archimago, the enchanter of Spenser's Faerie Queene, describes himself as a – "Silly old man, that lives in hidden cell." The transition from simple or innocent to stupid is an obvious one.

XI Association of Ideas: Ássociation of Ideas" plays a significant role in the evolution of words and makes us realise to what extent our language has been shaped. The change took place by the better –off and more cultured part of the population, who tended to look down upon the simple folk, especially those who lived on the land, for their lack of refinement, their ignorance and their vulgarity. Examples are given below:

Vulgarity: The very word Vulgarity itself is testimony to this. It came from the Latin Vulgus (a crowd). Its basic meaning is, 'such behaviour as would be expected from the crowd'.

Villein: An excellent example of the way in which words can undergo this kind of alteration through the force of associated ideas is provided by the word 'Villein' as cited in 1.5.3 of this lesson.

Dilapidated : (Adjective once spelt delopidated) Etymologically it is connected with the Latin word lapider (stones) and should only be applied to a stone building, the fabric of which is in a state of decay. Literally it means ' unstoned', obviously falling into ruins. The idea of ruin and general negligence superseded the earlier one. Today we speak of a dilapidated book, dilapidated clothes, and even a dilapidated gentleman.

XII. Prudery: A number of euphemistic expressions are traceable to a false sense of delicacy and refinement rather than a genuine desire to avoid giving pain or embarrassment, in other words, to prudery. Sometimes there is also an element of social snobbery and affectation. For instance, using Paying guest for boarder; Financ for money lender; turf-accountant for book maker.
Manure: As a final example, we may take the noun manure. Manure is a doublet of manoeuvre and first recorded by Oxford Dictionary in 1540. It was first used as a verb, signifying to put into the ground by hand. The meaning is 'fertility that the crops were taking out'. For many centuries the word dung had been employed (still in many places). Nobody felt any vulgarity about it. But when the age of propriety and refinement arrived a more polite expression was needed. The result was that manure began to be considered vulgar. Horticulturists have begun to abandon the term chemical / artificial manure in favour of fertiliser.

1.5.4. Summary:

From the lesson, we have an idea of what semantics is: study of change of meaning. A description is given about the ways in which words gradually change their meaning. The branch of linguistic study which concerns itself with the meaning of words and the way meanings develop is known as Semasiology or Semantics. This was described in various methods of changes of meaning. In some cases, quite obviously, more than one tendency has been at work, and there are instances

where a word cited in one class could just as fittingly be included in another, especially when the two types of change are similar or closely related. This is inevitable, and to have excluded such words would give a false impression that everything could be tied down and labelled neatly and finally, but generally an attempt has been made to give such examples as are at once typical and interesting from the point of view of modern English. The changes of meaning which words undergo are but another evidence of the constant state of flux which characterizes language as it lives on the lips of men.

It is clear that a major area of the study of language has to do with how the meanings of words undergo changes. These changes became clear or noticeable over a period of time and in all languages. Often quite familiar words are known to have had altogether different meaning in earlier times.

In this lesson, twelve chief methods in which words change their meaning are discussed with illustrations. Words change their meanings with the denotation of a word and sometimes with its connotation. Sometimes the meanings are generalised. At the same time the word comes to be applied in the contexts only as in the case of Narrowing of meaning. Sometimes words come to lose their class and dignity. Degeneration of meaning is sometimes brought about by later generations; eg. 'lovely' and 'great' Additions to this category include 'awful', 'terrible', 'terrific' and 'awfully nice'. They do not carry any longer suggestions of fear and respect and much less terror. Like that, there are other interesting ways, which describe the changes of meaning.

The point to be noticed in a study of the changes of meaning is that earlier meanings are not always lost, further, while on one hand meanings vary from place to place and over a period of time it is also true that even at given point of time the same word may call up different associations for different classes or groups of people. Change of meaning is an unmistakable evidence of a growing living language.

1.5.5. Technical terms:

1. Semantics: Branch of linguistics, concerned with meanings.
2. dialect: a regional variety of language.
3. obsolete: disused, discarded.
4. etymology: the history of a linguistic form (as a word) shown by tracing its development and relationships.
5. linguistics: scientific study of language
6. derogatory: tending to detract from, involving impairment.
7. Villeins: The labourers who worked on the manorial estates were known as the *Villeins* and the small collection of hovels in which they lived was the *Village.*

1.5.6. Sample Questions:

1. What are the various methods by which meanings can change?
2. How did change of meaning take place in the English language?

1.5.7. Suggested Reading:

1. F.T. Wood: An Outline History of the English Language.
2. A.C. Baugh. A History of the English Language.
3. C.L. Wrenn. The English Language.

Mrs. K.E. Jeevan Jyothi

LESSON-6

UNDERSTANDING POETRY

Structure

1.6.1. Objectives of the Lesson:

This lesson tries

- to enable the students to understand poetry.
- to improve their capacity for appreciation of poetry.
- to enhance the pleasure that readers gain from poetry.
- to explain how the form and 'style' of a poem contribute to its meaning

1.6.2. Introduction – Poetry:

Language plays a central role in the life of human beings. The use of language is associated with many branches of Science and Arts. The language of science is like the language of Knowledge. It is an attempt to find out what goes on inside the individual's mind, it is an intellectual property. The 'language of Art' is like the language of experience. It is an attempt to find out what goes on inside the individual's heart. The language of poetry reflects man's aesthetic feelings, emotions, and sensitivities. Poetry is the supreme form of language. It is like a game with two players, viz 'the writer' and 'the reader'. If the reader is reluctant, the game will not be impressive. To understand the importance of poetry, let us go through some characteristics of poetry as observed by some prominent critics and poets.

Characteristics of Poetry:-

Aristotle:- Poetry should represent men, on a grand or heroic scale through action. All kinds of poetry involve imitation, through a medium of representation. The poet does not simply imitate particular events. He handles them in such a way as to bring out their universality and probability.

Sir Philip Sidney: Poetry should teach (content) through delight (form). Delight comes from passionate vitality of expression.

Wordsworth: Poetry is the breath and the finer spirit of knowledge. Poetry is the first and last of all knowledge. It is immortal as the heart of man. The function of poetry is to give pleasure. The pleasure of poetry comes from our psychological structure and interpretation. The poet is "a man speaking to men". Every great poet is a teacher.

Coleridge: A poem is that species of composition which is opposed to works of science by proposing for its immediate objective pleasure, not truth: "A poem is a product of esemplastic imagination

which is the unifying power". "The poet brings the whole soul of man into activity, he diffuses a spirit of unity that blends and fuses by the power of imagination".
P.B. Shelley:- A poem is the very image of life expressed in eternal truth. Poetry is the record of the best and the happiest moments of the happiest and the best minds. Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world.
John Keats:- Poetry should surprise us by a fine excess and not by singularity. It should strike the reader as a wording of his own highest thoughts. It should come out as natural as the leaves to a tree.
Mathew Arnold:- "Poetry is the impassioned expression which is the countenance of all science".

According to Wordsworth, Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings. It is also emotion recollected in tranquillity. So while pleading for spontaneity, Wordsworth does not forget the need of workmanship. The aim of poetry is self-expression. Poetry concerns the relation of man to man and Nature. The poet touches human nature and makes men wiser, better and happier. Each poem should have organic unity. Poetry helps us to interpret life. How does a poem differ from other ways of handling language? A poem also contains the same elements as we find in prose writings. Both use the same medium i.e., words, but the difference lies in the combination of words. Poetry has some special peculiar features which can not be found in prose writings.

The most obvious external peculiarity of poetry, in the broad sense of the term, is its *metre*—the marked, regular rhythm of its words. The musical element in poetry is represented by the rhythm. Poetry is an art, and is concerned with human experience. The experience should arise out of emotions, and should rouse emotions, and these must be enriched by imagination.

Almost the whole range of human emotions – sorrow, joy, love, anger, regret, worship and what not – every emotion can be expressed in poetry. Emotion is the very source of poetry. Without emotion, no poetry can be born. But emotion is not poetry, but the cause of poetry. Emotional expression is poetry when it takes a beautiful form: Closely connected with this emotional element is the imaginative element, Imagination treats facts, the data of experience, in a way totally different from reason. On the wings of imagination, the poet can lead us to places hitherto unknown, and reveal to us forms we have not seen.

The word 'image' originally meant a 'visual picture'. But, in the language of literary criticism, its meaning has been extended. It is extended so that it is not only confined to the visual effect, but also includes the sensations made on any of the five senses – hearing ,taste, touch, smell, as well as sight.

After studying the definitions and characteristic features of poetry, we can understand poetry and its importance. But, many students at different levels feel that the understanding of poetry is more difficult than understanding a short story or a drama. The reasons are many but the fact is that we enjoy poetry more than any other literary genre if we have the ability to appreciate poetry.

1.6.3. Discussion:

How can we get the ability to appreciate poetry? Here we can examine some methods. One can learn it through an able teacher, if he/she uses simple methods in teaching poetry. Here the formula of A, B, C, D, E will be useful in teaching poetry. Let us see the details:

A – indicates Author	-	Who is the author / speaker of the text? To whom is it addressed? – Audience / Reader.
B – indicates Background of the poem	}	What is the time of the poem? What is the setting of the poem? (a) outdoor, (b) indoor
C – indicates	-	Central theme of the poem and its context.
D – indicates Diction	-	Poetic diction is special. Students should learn to understand the subtleties involved in the diction and composition of poem.
E – indicates Experience	-	Experience the extraordinary beauties of a poem i.e., Music, the use of figures of speech, rhyme, rhythm and other features which make poetry different from other genres.

Let us see how this framework can be used in the appreciation of specific poems.

"Stopping by the Woods on a Snowy Evening" - Robert Fro

Whose woods these are I think I know,
His house is in the village though,
He will not see me stopping here,
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer,
To stop without a farmhouse near,
Between the woods and frozen lake,
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake,
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep,
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

This profound poem is about our lost connection with the natural world. We have time to do many things, but we do not have time to stand and stare and have a close look at Nature. No time to appreciate the natural world. We have many promises to keep. Now let us examine the formula of A.B.C.D.E. of teaching poetry with reference to this poem.

A – Author - Who is the author/speaker of the poem?
(a) The Poet?
(b) The man in the house?

B- Background - Winter season
- Time - Evening time/Dusk
- Setting - Outdoor- The dark deep woods, Falling snow and Frozen pond

C - Central theme - The conflict between the sense of duty and the sense of joy

D - Diction - Change the poetic lines into prose order
Paraphrase the poem

This poem, however, is simple in form so there is no need to change poetic lines into prose lines.

E – Experience and enjoy the - (a) Music note
(b) Rhyme scheme
(c) The use of Figures of speech and the underlying meaning of the last lines.

(a) Music Note: Music is one of the essential features of a poem. Rhetorical stress operates in poetry. Poetical stress is a regular system of accents which establishes the basic rhythm of a poem. There are only two fundamental systems of poetic stress in English verse. Most frequently, English verse simply alternates light and heavy accents, giving every other syllable the same stress. The symbol for light accent is "∪" and that for heavy accent is " —".
Let us see the accent pattern in one stanza:

— Whose	∪ woods	— these	∪ are	— I	∪ think	— I	∪ know,
— His	∪ house	— is	∪ in	— the	— village	∪ though,	
— He	∪ will	— not	∪ see	— me	stopping	∪ here,	
— To	— watch	— his	∪ woods	— fill	— up	∪ with	— snow.

(b) Rhyme scheme: Observe the end rhyming words like:

I Stanza	know though snow	II Stanza	Queer near tear
III Stanza	shake mistake flake	IV Stanza	deep keep sleep

(c) The use of figures of speech : We can observe the employment of the figure of speech "personification" in the third stanza, wherein "the horse" is described as a "human being":

"He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake."

Further we can observe the figure of speech "alliteration" in the last two lines, of the poem with the repetition of the same lines.

And miles (miles) to go before I sleep (sleep).
And miles (goals) to go before I sleep (death).

Let us interpret the symbolic use of these lines; in the first line the poet says that he has to travel many miles through the words to reach his home and to get sleep. In the second line, it is employed in a broader sense. The poet feels that he has to achieve many milestones before he loses his last breath (death).

[Note: Our former Prime Minister and prolific writer, Jawaharlal Nehru, has kept these two lines on his office table, to remind him of the targets and goals in his life].

1.6.3. Elements of Poetry :

The rules of poetry are never static like the rules of language. The rules of poetry have never really been written down. Although critics have frequently tried to produce a "poetics", a code of rules of poetry, they have failed because poetry is always changing. The rules which are applied to Elizabethans cannot be applied to the modern poets. In fact poetry rules are not really rules but conventions which change perpetually as per the needs of the time. So, there is no formula in writing poetry. Every poet learns from his predecessors, but never imitates any poet. Every poet has his unique 'style', 'idiom', a special voice for his own poetry. So a tactful reader should pay attention to the 'idiom' or style of a particular poet and appreciate or understand his poetry. Though every poet has his own style, each poet has to follow some common poetic conventions and some basic elements of poetry. Let us learn them with examples.

Basically, poetry may be divided into two kinds:

(a) Subjective /Personal Poetry: It deals with the seif expression of the poet. In this poetry, the poet goes down into himself and explains his own experiences, thoughts and feelings. In this subjective poetry, some important poetic forms are (i) the Lyric (ii) the Elegy (iii) the Sonnet (iv) the Ode etc.

(b) Objective/Impersonal Poetry: In this type of poetry the poet deals with the outside world with little reference to his own personal thoughts and emotions. Some important objective type of poetic forms are (i) the Ballad (ii) the Epic (iii) the Idyll (iv) the Dramatic Monologue etc.

The use of figures of speech, the use of metaphorical language, imagery, metre, rhyme and the use of stanza form are some important elements / convention of poetry. Let us briefly examine them for a better appreciation of poetry.

Figures of Speech: Many critics think that the use of figures of speech is for decorative purpose only. But in reality they are essential to the emotional and imaginative appeal of poetry. In moments of intense emotional excitement, man intends to use figurative language. A figure of speech is a poetic device which consists in the use of words and phrases in such a manner as to make the meaning more pointed and clear and the language more graphic or vivid. Some important and frequently used figures of speeches are – Simile, Metaphor, Personification, Hyperbole, Metonymy, Synecdoche, Oxymoron, Antithesis and Alliteration etc.

(1) Simile: 'Simile' comes from the Latin word "similis" which means "likeness". A simile is an expression of likeness between two different objects of events. Both the images or objects are linked by the word as or like or a similar word. (i) He is as good as gold; (ii) He is as ferocious as a lion etc. Similes are often quite simple to perceive and understand in poetry.
Example:

(i) O my love's like a red, red rose.
In this poetic line Robert Burns, the poet, compares his beloved to a rose and not a white or yellow rose, but a "red, red" rose.

(ii) O my love's like the melodie
That's sweetly played in tune.

In these two lines, the poet compares his beloved to a sweet melodie. Through these two similies, the poet is making a simple statement that his beloved is a pleasing one to behold. The poet's choice of images tells us something about the qualities of his beloved; the first image the red rose, which indicates natural spontaneous freshness and the second image a deliberate tuneful order. So the poet finds these two qualities in her.

(2) Metaphor: Metaphor is used to indicate all kinds of poetic linking of images and ideas and particularly when the comparison between two objects / images is implied, though not clearly stated. In metaphor, we do not find linking words like "as" "like" "So – as"... etc. It is also called an implied simile.
Example: (i) He is a lion. (ii) It is the death bed to him. (iii) The camel is the ship of the desert.

Let us examine the use of metaphor in a poem:

"That time of year thou may'st in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold-
Bare ruined choirs where late the sweet birds song."

In this sonnet 73, Shakespeare, the poet, compares himself to the season of autumn and the bare trees. These four lines suggest an analogy between an aging person and the trees whose leaves have fallen. The bare trees suggest, by a further reach of metaphor a ruined and desolate church. This metaphor generates sympathy for the speaker. We can infer from this employment of metaphor that the speaker is older than the listener.

(3). Personification: It is a figure of speech in which inanimate objects and abstract ideas or qualities are spoken of as if they were persons or human beings. Some examples are:

a) "Death lays his Icy hands on kings."

b) "Peace hath her victories
No less renowned than war"

c) "Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
Close bosom-friend of the maturing son;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run."

(4) Hyperbole: This figure of speech is used for exaggeration. Through the employment of this figure of speech, the poet exaggerates /highlights an ordinary object/image to an extraordinary level to give a striking effect.

Example: (a) "Here is the smell of blood still;
All perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand."

(b) "Is this the face that hath launched ten thousand ships
and burnt the topless towers of Illium."

(c) "Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss.
... Heaven is in thy lips
And all is dross that is not Helen."

(5). Metonymy: It means literally 'substitution of name' 'Meta' – after, "onoma" a name; for example, "Grey Hair" may be used for old age, "throne" for monarchy etc. Another example is – "The pen (writer) is mightier than the sword (the soldier)."

(6). Synecdoche: It is also called a special form of metonymy. In it "the part" is substituted for "the whole" or an "abstract noun" for a "concrete noun".

Example: (a) Twenty hands are working in the field (Ten farmers are working in field).
(b) Dr. Krishna Sastri is the Shelley of Andhra.
(c) A few coppers cannot make you a rich man.

(7). Oxymoron: An oxymoron is a figure of speech, in which two opposite words/phrases are brought together and employed.

Examples: (a) He is the wisest fool in the class.
(b) And we in use finde "the Eagle and the Dove".

(8). Antithesis: In this figure of speech, we can find two ideas or words set against each other with the object of heightening the effect.

Examples: (a) Heard melodies are sweet but unheard melodies are sweeter.
(b) Man proposes, God disposes.
(c) United we stand, divided we fall.

(9). Alliteration: It gives musical quality to a poem. It means the repetition of the letters or syllables or words in two or more lines.

Examples: (a) "How high his Honour holds his haughty head."
(b) "And miles to go before I sleep. And miles to go before I sleep."

(10). Metre: It is one of the fundamental elements of poetry like imagery and emotion. It may be defined as an ordered rhythm, which results from a regular alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables in a line of poem. Its musical quality is important for poetry. The Iambic, the Trochaic, The Anapaestic, the Dactylic, The Amphibrachic are some important metres used by English poets.

(11). Rhyme: Rhyme is the similarity in sound between words or syllables. Words or syllables at the end of two lines may have similar sounds and then we can say that two lines rhyme together.

Example: "Whose woods these are I think I know,
His house is in the village though."

In the above lines know and though are rhyming words. Many poets and critics have an opinion that Rhyme is not essential to poetry. Some poets have composed poetry without Rhyme and it can also be called Blank Verse. It is blank because it is devoid of rhyme. It was popularized by John Milton, Shakespeare and Marlowe.

(12). The Use of Stanza forms: A stanza may be defined as a group of lines of poetry forming a unit in themselves. Thus the Stanza is the unit of organization in poetry like a paragraph in prose. The stanza forms of English poetry are so numerous and varied. Among them the prominent are:

(a)	The Chaucerian stanza	–	Seven Iambic pentametre lines.
(b)	The Spensarian Stanza	–	Eight Iambic pentametre lines.
(c)	The Terza Rima	-	Three Iambic pentametre lines.
(d)	The Quatrain	-	Four Iambic pentametre lines.
(e)	The Heroic Couplet	-	Two Iambic pentametre lines.

(13). Poetic Diction: The language and vocabulary of poetry is different from the language of prose. Poetic diction means the choice and arrangement of words in a line of poem. Some concessions were taken by the poets in the use of words and in the matter of following syntax. For example, words like thy (your) thou, thee, (you) art (are) can only be used in poetry.

1.6.5. Activities:

a) Let us attempt an appreciation of the poem "The Echoing Green" in the light of the above discussion.

The Echoing Green: William Blake (1757-1827)

The sun does arise
And make happy the skies;
The merry bells ring
To welcome the Spring
The skylark and thrush,
The birds of the bush,
Sing louder around
To the bells' cheerful sound,
While our sport shall be seen
On the echoing Green.

Old John, with white hair,
Does laugh away care,
Sitting under the oak,
Among the old folk,
They laugh at our play,
And soon they shall say:
"Such, such were the joys
When we all, girls and boys,
In our youth time were seen
On the echoing Green."

Till the little ones, weary,
No more can be merry;
The sun does descend,
And our sports have an end.
Round the laps of their mothers
Many sisters and brothers,
Like birds in their nest,
Are ready for rest,
And sport no more seen
On the darkening Green.

1. Who is the author of the poem?
2. What is the background of the poem?
3. What is the central theme of the poem?
4. What are the peculiar features of the diction?
5. What are the added features of the poem for enjoyment?

The first stanza presents a bright spring morning as a setting for the sports of the young on the Echoing Green. The second presents the healthy and contented old people benevolently watching the girls and boys and remembering how, when young, they too played on the same spot. In the third, evening comes, "sports have an end," and sleepy and contented, the children gather around their mothers "Like birds in their nest." The little narrative, so unpretending and simple, is written in language equally simple and unpretentious making no attempt at sophisticated poetic

effects. Thus the poem suggests how man can be happy in the acceptance of his lot in nature and time, of life and a self-fulfilling natural process with a sense of community and warmth in it.

Questions

(1) What do you make of the phrase "Echoing Green," which appears in the title and provides a refrain for the first two stanzas a refrain which is altered in the last line?
(2) What is "echoing" (what, that is, repeats what) in the poem? Why is this idea central to the poem?
(3) Why is the word *echoing* changed in the last line?
(4) Is the basic notion of the poem altered by this, or merely reiterated in another way?

(b) Here is another poem for appreciation.

Because I Could Not Stop for Death *– Emily Dickinson (1839-1886)*

Because I could not stop for Death–
He kindly stopped for me–
The Carriage held but just Ourselves–
And Immortality.

We slowly drove – He knew no haste
And I had put away
My labor and my leisure too,
For His Civility––

We passed the School, where Children strove
At Recess – in the Ring–
We passed the Fields of Grazing Grain–
We passed the Setting Sun–
Or rather-He passed Us–
The Dews drew quivering and chill–
For only Gossamer, my Gown–
My tippet-only Tulle–

We paused before a House that seemed
A swelling of the Ground–
The Roof was scarcely visible–
The Cornice – in the Ground–

Since then – 'tis Centuries – and yet
Feels shorter than the Day
I first surmised the Horses' Heads
Were toward Eternity–

Questions:

1. Look at the word *stop* in line 1. Does it mean the same thing here as in line 2? How does the word in line 1 relate to the meaning of line7?

2. What is the tone of stanza 1? Why didn't the lady refuse Death's invitation? Particularly in view of the fact that she was not really expecting Death to call for her and did not look forward to taking a ride with him? Is it because a well-bred lady must not be rude when she is given the very special attention that she has been given in not being summoned but marked out for special favor? Or any other reason?

3. Though the lady sits in the carriage of Death (stanza 3), the activity of the world goes on. Does the lady seem surprised at that fact? What is implied about her attitude?

4. Consider carefully the last stanza. Does the lady speak from Heaven? Or from the grave? Is she alive but thoroughly conscious of the fact that she, being human, is going to die? What can she mean by saying that the centuries that have passed seem shorter than "the Day" on which she first surmised that she was leaving the world of time?

5. What would you say is the poet's concept of "Immortality" (line 4)? Christian? Non-Christian? Or what? What do the concrete images that she uses imply with reference to her attitude?

(c) Let us read another poem for comprehension.

The Eagle: *Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809-1892)*

He clasps the crag with crooked hands;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ringed with the azure world he stands.
The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

Questions

1. What does the poet accomplish by describing the eagle with 'crooked hands" (line 1)? What does he imply by referring to the eagle's "mountain walls" (line 5) rather than, perhaps, "mountain peaks"?
2. What are the implications of "Close to the sun" (line 2) and "Ringed with the azure world" (line 3)? Why "azure"? If the poet had simply written "quite high up on the crags", what would be lost?
3. Can it be said that the poet gives us an eagle's eye view of the world in lines 3 and 4? Why does he call the sea "wrinkled"? What is suggested by saying that the sea "crawls"?
4. Does the last line provide a kind of climax to the poem? How does it do so?
5. What are the figures of speech employed by the poet in this poem?

1.6.6. To Sum up / Conclusion:

In this unit, an attempt has been made to define poetry, the different elements of poetry, and the devices to appreciate poetry. Poetry is a kind of multidimensional language with various dimensions like, intellectual, sensuous, emotional and imaginative dimensions.

Some suggestions for a better understanding of a poem are:

(i) Read a poem more than once – Read again and again.
(ii) A poem is supposed to be read aloud unlike silent reading of a newspaper. When you read aloud, you can understand the rhyme, metre and musical quality of the poem. A poem expresses itself if it is read naturally and sensibly.
(iii) Always pay careful attention to what the poem is saying by putting heart and mind in it.
(iv) Finally observe the literary features / conventions of the poem.

1.6.7. Sample Questions:

1. Write on essay on the different elements of poetry.
2. Write a note on the use of figurative language in poetry.

1.6.8. Suggested Reading:

1. Cleanth Brooks, Understanding Poetry.
2. Robert Scholes, Elements of Poetry. New York: OUP.

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Mr. M. Suresh Kumar

LESSON - 7

UNDERSTANDING PROSE

Structure

1.7.1. Objectives:

After you have done this unit you should be able

- to discriminate the basic difference between Prose writings and Poetry.
- to understand different forms of prose writings
- to comprehend the prose passages.
- to locate the central idea of a passage.
- to infer conclusions from the given passage
- to improve your sense of language.

1.7.2. Introduction:

We have examined in the previous lesson the definition of poetry and the practices to b followed to understand Poetry. In this unit, we learn about the nature of Prose style and its principal characteristics. There are different forms of prose writings like short story, novel, novelette, biography, autobiography, essay, memoirs, anecdotes etc. Let us examine them in brief.

Short story is a kind of prose fiction. It has grown up along with the form of the novel. It may be defined as a prose narrative, which requires from half an hour to one hour for its perusal. In other words 'brevity' is the key note of a short story. It is a popular form of prose in the modern period. The modern short story writer is an artist, who is a close observer of life and a master of prose style. Regarding the subject matter of the short story, anything between the heaven and the earth is fit for the short story. The primary aim of a short story is to entertain and enlighten the reader.

Novel:- It is primarily a tale or a long story in prose, meant primarily for entertainment and presenting a realistic picture of life. Its treatment of life and its problems are realistic. It exhibits the author's views of life. In simple, we can describe it as a "criticism of life." There are different types of novels like the picaresque novel, the panoramic novel, the historical novel, the social novel, the regional novel, the psychological novel, the stream of consciousness novel etc. The short-story cannot exhibit life in all its variety and complexity like the novel, because it has a limited space. But the novel is regarded as the supreme form of prose writing because of its large space and scope to interpret life of human beings.

Novelette: It is a short form of novel. It has all the features of a novel. It is a development of the modern times.

Biography: It is a modern art form of prose. It is defined as 'the history of the lives of individual men as a branch of literature' (The Oxford Dictionary).History deals with the life of nations while biography deals with the life of an individual. It deals with the internal as well as external life of an individual.

Autobiography: It is a biography written by the concerned individual. Here the author explores his own thoughts and life and presents it in a prose form of art.

Essay: Various efforts have been made to define the essay from Francis Bacon to A.G. Gardiner. But none of them give a complete and comprehensive picture of an Essay because of its large scope. The Oxford Dictionary defines it as "a prose composition of moderate length on any particular subject, originally implying want of finish, but now said of a composition more or less elaborate in style, though limited in range".

The essay is intensely subjective, an expression of different moods, likes and dislikes of its author. That is why it is called a prose-lyric. Based on its features, we can divide the essay into the following categories:

(a) The Aphoristic Essay (Bacon's Essays)
(b) The Personal Essay (Lamb's Essays)
(c) The Periodical Essay (Addison's and Steele's Essays)
(d) The Critical Essay (Dryden's and T.S. Eliot's Essays)

1.7.3. Discussion:

After examining some important forms of prose, let us examine the important features of good prose. Prose is an instrument of discussion, argumentation, reasoning and instruction. It is the proper vehicle for conveying facts and ideas and feelings. Walter Pater, the well known critic, points out some important features of prose in his critical essay "On Style". Let us examine them:

(a) Choice of words: According to Pater, the writer should select words carefully. Words are like bricks in a construction. Variety in the use of words adds sweetness to the language.

(b) Construction of Sentences: Pater refers to it as the 'mind' in the style. Sentences should follow each other logically and naturally. The structure should have logical coherence.

(c) Personality of the Writer: Pater interprets that each piece of prose writing has a tone, a colour, an atmosphere and certain subtle graces. It can be referred to as the Soul in Style. The soul is the element of personality in style. It is the peculiar spirit of which the artist is made of. It is from this quality that we can know a writer from his works. It is because of this soul in style that religious writers and preachers are able to persuade and convert.

A good prose-style is both a matter of choice of words and their arrangement to form a complete meaningful sentence. A good prose writer should not only convey his ideas but should also move his readers. For this purpose, he should follow some principles of prose writings. Those are: (a) Clarity of thought and expression; (b) Simplicity; (c) Euphony.

a) Clarity of thought and expression: Clarity is the first quality of good prose. The author should be able to make his ideas very clear to his readers. If he is obscure or confused, he will also confuse the reader. So, he should call a spade, a spade, and express his ideas in the most direct and straight -forward manner. Circumlocution is to be avoided in good prose. The writer should exercise economy of expression and use familiar and simple vocabulary.

b) Simplicity: It is another hall- mark of good prose. There is a misconception that the use of pompous and rhetorical words is necessary to make one's writings great. And so many writers try to adorn and decorate their writings with pompous words. Voltaire, the great French prose writer says, "good prose, like the clothes of a well-dressed man, should be simple, but not showy."

Let us take a sentence for our analysis:

→ The abode in which you spent the delightful days of your boyhood is on Conflagration – Pompous style

– The house in which you lived in your boyhood is burning – Simple style.

Which one do you think is intelligible and simple? Definitely one can agree it is the second one. It does not mean that the use of figurative language is completely banned in prose. We can use it judiciously. The use of figures of speech should be functional and not merely decorative. They should help the writer to convey his meaning more forcefully, clearly and lucidly.

Euphony: It refers to the musical quality and "sound" of the word. It is not an essential but a desirable characteristic of good prose. It is essential in poetry but not in prose. The primary purpose of a prose writer is to convey his 'ideas' rather than providing 'delight'. So he should give importance to "sense" than to "sound". But one has to remember that the sweet sound of prose writing definitely enhances its quality. The real end of prose writing is the harmonious blend of "Sound and Sense".

A really beautiful prose style requires labour on the part of the writer and close attention and observation on the part of the reader. Till now we have discussed various forms of prose writings and principal characteristics of prose. Now we shall examine how we can comprehend / understand good prose writings.

1.7.4. Activities – Passages for Comprehension:

The word 'comprehend' means "to understand". You are required to go through a prose passage, grasp its gist, and then answer the question based on it. It involves the use of your vocabulary, the sense of language, the ability to locate meanings and understand the real spirit of the passage. Through regular practice, one can attain the skill of comprehension of passage. Let us practice with some prose passages of different types.

PROSE PASSAGE [1]

Joti, a gardener's son, was once invited to attend the marriage ceremony of a Brahmin friend. As he loved his friend dearly, he attended the function. The bridegroom was being led in a procession to the bride's house. This procession consisted of men, women, and children mostly Brahmin. Joti was also walking along with the procession.

One orthodox Brahmin recognized him and was annoyed at the sight of a low caste boy walking with the Brahmins in the marriage procession. Unable to contain himself, he shouted, "How dare you walk along with us? You are not our equal. Get behind! Otherwise go away." Joti felt insulted. He left the procession and returned home.

He narrated the whole incident to his father with anger in his eyes. However, his father advised him to observe old customs. That night Joti could not sleep. What could he do for the equality of human beings? Caste system was deep-rooted. As the lower caste people were not educated, they had accepted this mental slavery for ages. Joti therefore resolved to revolt against this mental slavery and educate the lower caste people. He became the first Indian to start a school for the untouchables as well as a girls' school in Maharashtra. We recognise him today as Mahatma Phule.

1. According to the passage, what has made low caste people accept mental slavery?
2. What kind of a man was Joti's father?
3. What did Joti do after his insult?
4. Why did Joti attend the marriage?
5. Why could Joti not sleep that night?
6. According to the passage, why did Joti quit the marriage procession?
7. What does the author highlight in this passage?

PASSAGE 2

The greatest enemy of mankind, as people have discovered, is not science, but war Science merely reflects the prevailing social forces. It is found that, when there is peace, science is constructive; when there is war, science is perverted to destructive ends. The weapons which science gives us do not necessarily cause war; they make war increasingly terrible. Till now, it has brought us to the doorstep of doom. Our main problem, therefore, is not to curb science, but to stop war – to substitute law for force, and international government for anarchy in the relations of one nation with another. That is a job in which everybody must participate, including the scientists. But the bombing of Hiroshima suddenly woke us up to the fact that we have very little time. The hour is late and our work has scarcely begun. Now we are face to face with an urgent question – "Can education and tolerance, understanding and creative intelligence run fast enough to keep us abreast with our own mounting capacity to destroy?" That is the question which we shall have to answer one way or the other in this generation. Science must help us in arriving at the answer, but the main decision lies within ourselves.

1. According to the writer, the real enemy of mankind is not science but war, because
   (A) Science merely invents the weapons with which war is fought
   (B) Science during wars becomes destructive
   (C) The weapons that science invents necessarily lead to war
   (D) The weapons invented by science do not cause war, though these make it more destructive

2. War can be stopped if
   (A) Science is not allowed to lead us to utter destruction
   (B) We replace force and lawlessness by law and international government
   (C) Science is restricted to be utilized only during war time

(D) Weapons invented by science are not used to launch a war

3. According to the writer, the main problem we are faced with is to
   (A) Stop science from reflecting social forces
   (B) Stop scientific activities everywhere
   (C) Abolish war
   (D) Prevent scientists from participating in destructive activities

4. Our mounting sagacity to destroy can be kept under control by
   (A) Encouraging social forces
   (B) Education and broad-mindedness
   (C) Insight and constructive thinking
   (D) Both B and C (as above) together

5. The expression 'bring to the doorstep of doom' means
   (A) Carry close to death and destruction
   (B) Lead to the threshold of a new destiny
   (C) Indulge in a ruinous activity
   (D) Introduced to an unpredictable destiny

6. Which one of the following statement is 'not implied' in the passage?
   (A) People needlessly blame science for war
   (B) Science is misused for destructive purposes
   (C) Neither science not the weapons it invents add to the horrors of war
   (D) The role of science in ensuring world peace is subsidiary to that of man

7. Which of the following is 'OPPOSITE' in meaning to the word 'anarchy' in the middle of the passage?
   (A) Law and order
   (B) Political dominance
   (C) Economic prosperity
   (D) Communal harmony

8. The phrase 'our work has scarcely begun' implies that our work
   (A) Has not yet begun
   (B) Has only just begun
   (C) Has been half-way through
   (D) Has begun, but not yet completed

9. The expression 'keep us abreast' in the passage means
   (A) Keep at a distance
   (B) keep side by side
   (C) Hold out a challenge
   (D) Prevent from escaping

10. Which of the following would be the most suitable title for the passage?
    (A) Science and social forces
    (B) Science and the horrors of war
    (C) Science and world peace
    (D) Science and the new generation

PASSAGE [3]

It would be wrong historically to consider that the great part that the women of India played in the non-cooperation movement and the position they have achieved for themselves in modern Indian life was the result of a sudden transformation.

Undoubtedly women in ancient India enjoyed a much higher status than their descendants in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. From the earliest days there had been many notable women in India – poets, scholars, capable administrators and leaders of religious movements. Even the eighteenth century produced women of the type of Ahalyabai Holkar whose administration of Indore State was considered a model for all India. But there is no doubt that, speaking generally, the condition of Indian womanhood had sunk low. Kept vigorously secluded behind the purdah in many parts of India, denied facilities of education and compelled under a system of child marriage, at least among some of the higher classes, to maternity when their sisters in other countries were in schools, and kept under subjection during marriage and forced, among the Brahmins and upper castes, to live a life of misery during widowhood, Indian women in the beginning of the nineteenth century were probably among the most backward of their sex all over the world. The Brahmo Samaj led the movement for emancipation. The ancient rules of purdah were broken and Brahmo women moved freely in the society. But as even the educated classes generally showed a disinclination towards the emancipation of their womenfolk, the movement for their uplift was slow in taking shape. By the beginning of the twentieth century the position had begun to show some change. The education of women had gradually become popular, and some of those who had tasted the fruits of modern education had taken seriously to the work of women's uplift. It was however only with Gandhiji's Non-Co-operation movement that women were encouraged to come forward and participate in the life of the nation.

From the first days of his movement Gandhiji realized that there was a source of immense untapped power in the womanhood of India which could most advantageously be turned to the work he had nearest to his heart – rehabilitation of the village. His appeal was addressed directly to women, Originally he seems to have been uncertain of the response, or at least of the kind of work that women could do in the national movement, for though he was a passionate believer in the equality of women, he seems to have been doubtful whether the women of India who had for so long a time been shut up in the seclusion could shoulder the active leadership of a movement which called for so much physical suffering.

But when the movement was actually started, women were everywhere at the forefront. In picketing liquor shops, in enforcing the boycott of foreign cloth, and in undertaking civil disobedience they shamed men in such a way that Gandhiji continually spoke of them as the main support of his movement.

The legislative reform establishing the equality of women has been one of the most significant political achievements. Their right to independent property, to freedom of marriage, to education and employment has been recognized by law. Many important pieces of legislation, especially the raising of the age of consent of marriage and the prevention of the dedication of women to temple services, have helped to the awakening among the women themselves.

I Answer the following questions:

1. Quote details from the passage to justify the statement, "Women's position to-day is not the result of a sudden transformation."

2. Give examples from the passage which show that women in ancient India enjoyed a much higher status than those in the 18th and 19th centuries.

3. Mention the factors which were responsible for the deterioration in the condition of Indian womanhood in the 18th and 19 centuries.

4. What impact did the Brahmo Samaj movement have on the condition of Indian womanhood?

5. Why was the movement for the uplift of women slow in taking shape?

6. What was the motivating factor which encouraged women to come forward and participate in the life of the nation?

7. Why did Gandhiji give a direct call to the woman "to come forward".

8. Quote facts from the passage which indicate a remarkable improvement in the condition of womanhood in the twentieth century.

9. Mention some of the legislative reforms which helped to change the status of women in India.

10. Write 2-3 sentences under each one of the following sub-titles.
    (a) Women in Ancient India
    (b) Women in the 18th and 19th centuries
    (c) The Brahmo Samaj women
    (d) Women in the 20th century

Here is another passage, this time an advertisement from the Director of Tourism, Government of Pondicherry. The questions following the passage will help you to understand and analyse the text.

PASSAGE - 4

PONDICHERRY – The Tourists Paradise

Pondicherry, an amazing pot-pourri of Indian and French cultures. The home of poets, patriots and philosophers. The harbour where Indian history was often shaped – that is Pondicherry – an exotic blend of traditional Tamil hospitality and tender French Courtesy.

Welcome to Pondicherry – where pleasure is free.

The Directorate of Tourism is eager to introduce the exotic charms of this eternal young city to you from Chola temples to French churches, from Dupleix's ville and Raj Nivas to Sri

Aurobindo Ashram and Auroville, from the Romain Rolland Library to the Franco-Indian Museum. There are lots of lovely places to visit.

From the sun-kissed sands of Pondicherry beach to the dew-kissed flora of its Botanical Garden, from the boat house at Chunnambar and the nearby serene beach to the artisans' hamlet of Villanur. There are numerous locales to go romping around it.

Pondicherry cannot really be described or explained.

It can only be experienced – So pack up your bags and have a holiday this year ...in sweet Pondicherry.

You may arrive as a casual visitor. But you will leave as a bosom friend of this bounteous city.

After reading the above advertisement answer the following:

1) What factual information regarding the place do you get from the paragraph?
2) Now let us have look at the tone and style of the whole passage. Here are a few pairs of words to describe the passage, which word out of each pair would you use to describe its tone and style? (tick mark)\

i) factual	(X)	-	impressionistic	(√)
ii) gives all important information	(X)	-	gives selected information	(√)
iii) projects only positive aspect	(√)	-	gives both positive and negative facts	(X)
vi) Verbose / Euphemistic style	(√)	-	Objective style	(X)

3) There are quite a few exaggerated expressions used in the passage. Find out such expressions.

4) After going through the advertisement, what was your reaction?
   a) I wanted to visit the place immediately.
   b) I knew it was an exaggerated description, but I would like to visit it.
   c) I suspect the advertisement, because "too rosy a picture" was given?

1.7.5. Conclusion / Sum up

In this unit, we have examined the different forms of prose writings like novel, novelette, biography, autobiography, short-story, personal essay etc. We have also examined the salient features of prose writings and important principles governing the prose style with different types of prose-passage examples. A student of literature should develop a sense of appreciation of good prose style. He should be able to comprehend the subtleties of the language. For this purpose, four different types of passages are given for exercise and practice. The first passage is

an example for a personal passage / literary passage, in which the experiences of the author are described.

The second passage is an example of an informative passage; "Information of facts" is important in this type of passage. In this passage, objective type questions are included. The third passage, which is a lengthy one, is helpful for the student to enhance his comprehension skills of understanding prose passages. The fourth passage is an example for Rhetorical style, which is popular in advertisements. In a nutshell, this unit helps the student in understanding different types of prose passages and analysing them.

1.7.6. Key to Exercises:

Passage – (1)

1. Since they were not educated, they had accepted this mental slavery.
2. One who follows the old customs without questioning them.
3. He started a school for the untouchables and girls.
4. The bridegroom is his friend, and he loves him dearly.
5. Joti could not sleep, because of insult at the marriage procession.
6. An orthodox Brahmin questioned him and ordered him not to walk along with them in the marriage procession.
7. Need of equality, and the necessity of education and awareness to all.

Passage – (2)

1-D, 2-B, 3- C, 4-D, 5-A, 6-C, 7-B, 8-B, 9-B, 10-C.

Passage – (3)

1. It would be wrong historically to consider that the great part that the women of India played in the non-cooperation movement and the position they have achieved for themselves in modern Indian life was the result of a sudden transformation.

2. From the earliest days there had been many notable women in India – poets, scholars, capable administrators and leaders of religious movements. Even the eighteenth century produced women of the type of Ahalyabai Holkar whose administration of Indore State was considered a model for all India.

3. Women were kept vigorously secluded behind the purdah in many parts of India, denied facilities of education and compelled to the system of child marriage. These are the causes for the deterioration India womanhood in the 18^{th} and 19^{th} centuries.

4. The Brahmo Samaj led the movement for emancipation. The ancient rules of purdah were broken and Brahmo women moved freely in the society.

5. The educated classes generally showed a disinclination towards the emancipation of their womenfolk, the movement for their uplift was slow in taking shape.

6. The education of women had gradually become popular, and some of those who had tasted the fruits of modern education had taken seriously to the work of women's uplift. It was

however only with Gandhiji's Non-Co-operation movement that women were encouraged to come forward and participate in the life of the nation.

7. Gandhiji realized that there was a source of immense untapped power in the womanhood of India which could most advantageously be turned to the work he had nearest to his heart – rehabilitation of the village.

8. They realised the importance of education, and educated women took active role in the upliftment of women's position in the society. Later they participated in the Non-Co-operation movement actively and played an active role in the life of the nation.

9. Their right to independent property, to freedom of marriage, to education and employment has been recognized by law.

10. (a) Women in ancient India enjoyed a much higher status than 18th and 19th century women. There were many women poets, scholars and administrators.

b) In the 18th and 19th centuries, women's position in India deteriorated. They were denied of education and were kept in the purdah system.

c) Brahmo Samaj women violated the rules of purdah, and enjoyed freedom and moved freely in the society and helped for the upliftment of the other women folk through education.

d) Women in the 20th century have tasted so many changes. Legislative reforms gave a chance for assurance of equality. They have the right to property, employment and education.

Passage –(4)

1. Pondicherry is a place of interest for tourists. It has a unique feature of the synthesis of Tamil culture and French culture. It is located in a picturesque atmosphere of beaches and gardens.

2. The style and tone of the passage reveals the following features:

(i) It does not simply project the factual information about Pondicherry. Impressionistic style is used to attract the tourists.
(ii) It has projected only selective information about Pondicherry.
(iii) It has projected only positive aspects of Pondicherry.
(iv) Objective style is not used. Euphemistic / Verbose style is used.

3. The sun-kissed sands of Pondicherry beach. The dew-kissed flora of its Botanical garden. Pondicherry cannot really be described. It can only be experienced.. etc.

7.7. Suggested Reading:

1. B. Prasad, A Background to the History of English Literature, Sterling: Mumbai.
2. Hari Mohan Prasad: Objective English, Tata McGraw-Hill Pub: New Delhi, 1995.

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Mr. M. Suresh Kumar

LESSON – 8

AN OVER VIEW OF POETRY

Structure

8.1. Objectives:

After reading this chapter you will be able to

(i) know what poetry is

(ii) know that poetry is a particular kind of art; that it arises only when the poetic qualities of imagination and feeling are embodied in a certain form of expression.

(iii) see the sensuous beauties and spiritual meanings in the worlds of human experience and of nature to which otherwise we should remain blind.

8.2. Introduction:

One essential characteristic of any piece of literature is, whatever its theme, it yields aesthetic pleasure by the manner in which such theme is handled. This means that literature is a fine art and like all fine arts, it has its own laws and conditions of workmanship. And these laws and conditions, like the laws and conditions of all arts, may be analysed and formulated.

What is poetry? A few of the innumerable definitions which are offered by critics of poetry and by poets themselves are quoted below.

Dr. Johnson says that poetry is "metrical composition"; it is, "the art of uniting pleasure with truth by calling imagination to the help of reason"; and its "essence" is "invention". "By poetry", says Macaulay, "we mean the art of employing words in such a manner as to produce the illusion on the imagination, the art of doing by means of words what the painter does by means of colours". "Poetry", says Shelley, "in a general sense may be defined as the expression of the imagination".

In Coleridge's view, poetry is the anti-thesis of science, having for its immediate object pleasure; not truth". In William Wordsworth's phrase, it "is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge," and "the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all science." According to Mathew Arnold, it "is simply the most delightful and perfect form of utterance that human words can reach"; it is "nothing less than the most perfect speech of man, that in which he comes nearest to being able to utter the truth"; it is "a criticism of life under the conditions fixed for such a criticism by the laws of poetic truth and poetic beauty." According to Edgar Allan Poe, poetry is "the rhythmic creation of beauty."

8.3. Discussion: Poetic Forms

(a) Sonnet

The sonnet is of Italian origin. The word "Sonnet" comes from the Latin word "Sonetto" meaning little sound or strain. A sonnet is a lyric, written in a simple stanza, lines linked by an intricate rhyme scheme. There are two types of sonnets based on structural differences. They are Italian and English.

The Italian sonnet is also called the classical sonnet and the Petrarchan sonnet. Petrarch, a thirteenth century Italian poet, made it popular. He used an octave (eight lines) and a sestet (six lines) in his sonnet. The octave has two quatrains (four lines) and ends with a caesura (full stop). Then there is a volte (complete turn in thought). The sestet has two tercets (three lines). Milton imitated this model.

With regard to the English sonnet, the English have used two different structures.

(a) Shakespearean Sonnet: Sir Thomas Wyatt and the Earl of Surrey brought the sonnet form into England in the 16th Century. They used three quatrains and one couplet without any rhyme connection. Shakespeare made this structure very popular. So this is known as the Shakespearean sonnet.

(b) Spenserian sonnet: Spenser made this structure popular. He linked the three quatrains with a definite rhyme scheme. The quatrains of Spenserian sonnet

rhyme within each other. The rhyme scheme here is "abab, bcbc, cdcd, ee". It also uses the Petrarchan concept of courtly love and Nature.

William Shakespeare used love and friendship in his sonnets. He addressed them to the 'young man' and to the 'dark lady'. John Donne used religious themes. John Milton used personal feelings and experiences. He made the sonnet a meditative form even. The modern poets like W.H. Auden and Dylan Thomas also used the sonnet form.

(b) Ode

The word 'ode' is simply the Greek word for 'song'. It was used by the Greeks for any kind of lyric verse, for any song sung with the lyre. However, as far as English literature is concerned the idea of some musical accompaniment has been given up, and the term is now applied to only one particular kind of lyric verse. An English Ode may be defined as, a "lyric poem of elaborate metrical structure, solemn in tone and usually lacking the form of an address". Edmund Gosse defines the ode as "a strain of enthusiastic and exalted lyric verse, directed to a fixed purpose and dealing progressively with one dignified theme."

The ode is a serious and dignified composition and longer than the lyric. It is exalted in subject matter and elevated in tone and style. The poet is serious both in the choice of the subject and in the manner of his presentation. An Ode is longer than the lyric because it admits a development in emotion which may be deep and sincere as in a lyric. But its expression is expected to be much more elaborate and impressive. It has lyric enthusiasm and emotional intensity. It is a spontaneous over-flow of the poet's emotions. It is in the form of an address, often to some abstraction. It is not written about but written to somebody or something. The development of thought is logical and clear. Its metrical pattern may be regular or irregular, but it is always elaborate and often complex and intricate. Sometimes the ode has for its theme an important public event like a National Jubilee, the death of a distinguished person or the commemoration of the founding of a great university.

The Greek ode has two forms – Dorian and Lesbian ode. The Dorian ode is so called from the district in which it arose. The Dorian ode was choric and was sung to the accompaniment of a dance. Its structure was borrowed from the movements of the dancers. It consists of three parts – Strophe, during the recitation of which the dancers made a turn from the right to left, Anti-strophe, from the left to the right, Epode when the dancers stood still. This cycle should be repeated any number of times. From its brilliant use by the Greek poet Pindar this is known more as the Pindaric ode.

The Lesbian ode was named after the island of Lesbos. It was simpler than the Pindaric ode. It consists of a number of short stanzas of similar length and arrangement. The treatment is direct and dignified. It was popularized in Latin by two great Roman writers Horace and Catullus. The works of Horace served as a model to English imitators of the form. Except for a few attempts in the Pindaric or the Horatian form, the English ode has pursued a course of its own as regards subject matter, style, treatment and outlook not strictly bound by classical traditions.

(c) Elegy

In ancient Greece where it originated, the term elegy covered songs, love poems, political verses and lamentations for the dead. The Greeks and the Romans used a special elegiac measure to write an elegy. For them, the subject matter was not important, the structure and form were important. The subject matter could be grave or gay. It was composed in the elegiac measure. A couplet is composed of one long syllable and two short, six times in the first line and five times in the second. Any poem written in this metre ranked as an elegy whatever its theme might be. In the 17th century England, it was a solemn meditation. But now, the elegy is a lament for the death of a person. So now, subject matter has become more important than form.

There are no limits to form. Simple language is used. Its main aim is dignity and solemnity. There is no artificiality. It is not spontaneous, but deliberate and thoughtful. Grief is dominant, but resignation and reconciliation can be seen at the end. And so, the poem ends on a joyful note. It is also an expression of faith in immortality and reunion.

The elegy lends itself more readily than other forms of poetry to different reflections on the part of the poet. Death is one such subject that leads the poet to regions of thought he might not normally explore. Milton laments the degradation of poetry and religion in "Lycidas", an elegy on the death of a learned friend Edward King. Tennyson philosophises on the puzzles of life and destiny in "In Memoriam", an elegy on the death of his friend Arthur Hallam.

An elegy has some conventions. The elegist invokes the muse in the beginning of the poem. There are references to some figures in the classical mythology. Nature joins the poet in mourning. The elegist charges the guardians of life with negligence. There is a procession of appropriate mourners. The poet questions providence's justice and the corruption of times.

There is a description of floral decoration. There is a closing consolation in the end because there is resurrection after death.

During the Renaissance a new kind of elegy was introduced into English poetry. It followed a convention by which the poet represented himself as a shepherd. In Greek, the word 'pastor' implied 'shepherd'. In a pastoral elegy both the mourner and the mourned are represented as shepherds. The images, speech, sentiments and settings are also pastoral. In Greek, Theocritus, in Latin Virgil, and in English, Milton, Shelley and Arnold wrote pastoral elegies.

(d) Ballad

The ballad has come out of folk literature. It is a song story transmitted orally. It is the oldest form in literature. Etymologically, ballad means a 'dancing song', because, in the olden times, it was accompanied by a crude tribal dance. There were some ballads even before Chaucer. It is one of the oldest forms in English and is of native growth. Originally it was sung from village to village to the accompaniment of a harp or a fiddle by a strolling singer or bands of singers who earned a living this way. The minstrel usually sang on the village green where a group of eager listeners would assemble to be entertained.

It its earliest stages the song must have been accompanied by a crude tribal dance. Later it was handed down by oral tradition making its own alterations to suit contemporary or local conditions. Since it developed at an early stage in man's cultural evolution, its subjects are deeds rather than thoughts – such as a memorable feud, a thrilling adventure, a family disaster, love and war and life. A ballad is full of fierce, tragic and supernatural elements. It is straight forward because there is very little description. It is written in crude language. It is very energetic. It is elemental in nature. It has great dramatic quality. Every ballad has great metrical beauty. It is written in ballad measure. It has a quatrain: the first and the third lines have four-foot iambic, and the second and the fourth three-foot iambic and rhyme. It opens in the middle of the action but is very clear. There is no clear introduction but very good conclusion. It is very impersonal. Stock phrases like 'merry men, milk white hand, yellow hair, blood red wine and pretty babe' and conventional epithets are used. The details of place and time are not given in any ballad.

Ballads are primarily of two kinds the ballad of growth or the authentic ballad of unknown authorship which has been in existence for ages. Many variations of the same

ballad exist with changes in text and tune. It starts with the climactic episode. There is more action and dialogue than description in this. The best example for this is Chevy Chase' "Wife of Usher's Well". The second type of ballad is the ballad of Art or literary ballad, which can be described as a literary development of the traditional form. For example Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner" and Keats' "La Belle Dame Sans Merci" and "Hyperion."

Broadside is also another form in ballad. It is written on one side of a single sheet. It is about a current event or issue. It uses a well-known tune. It became very popular in the 16th century. People used to sing broadsides in streets and also country fairs. The minor form of the ballad art is the mock ballad in which a comic theme is treated with the seriousness appropriate to a ballad. In everything except in humorous subject, it follows its model closely. Cowper's "John Gilpin" and Maginni's "The Rime of the Ancient Waggoner" are famous examples for mock ballad.

(e) Lyric

The Lyric is of Greek origin. For the Greeks it was a song sung by single voice to the accompaniment of a lyre. Now, the definition has changed. Lyric is a short non-narrative poem, presenting a single speaker who exposes a state of mind and process of thought and feeling. The Greek song was divided into two classes, Lyric and Choric. The lyric song was sung by a single voice to the accompaniment of a lyre. Choric is the second one which was intended for collective singing to the accompaniment of instrumental music and dance. The first of these divisions is responsible for the lyric as we know it in English verse. True to its Greek origin still it has two characteristics – it is an expression of a single emotion and it is a musical composition.

In ancient times though the language of the lyric was not so polished it was made musical by the voice of the singer by keeping in tune with the music of the instrument. The subject matter also was of little importance so long as the singer's voice could give it the right emotional effect. In later ages music was replaced by rhythm. The lyric produced during the Elizabethan period was invested with the highest musical quality. The vowels and consonants are so artistically arranged as to compose a music of their own, independent of the aid of the musical instrument. This art was closely studied and developed in later times by such poets as Keats, Shelley, Tennyson and Swinburne.

The lyric is a well-knit poem possessing a definite structure. It gives expression to a single emotion or feeling. It appeals more to the heart than to the intellect or it appeals to the intellect through the heart. A Lyrical poem is as a rule quite brief. The poet through the lyric wishes to convey his impressions swiftly, memorably and musically. The Lyric is a subjective poem for it expresses the poet's emotion. Hence it cannot help being intensely personal.

(f) Dramatic Monologue

The last division of objective poetry is dramatic poetry, which is intended not for the stage, but to be read and is essentially dramatic in principle. In all varieties of narrative poetry the dramatic element commonly appears more or less prominently in the shape of dialogue. Dramatic poetry may be subdivided into several groups. The first is the dramatic lyric, second the dramatic story, including the ballad or short story in verse. The third species of dramatic poetry comprises the dramatic monologue or soliloquy. It is often difficult to distinguish this from the dramatic narrative. Dramatic monologue is vicariously subjective and story frequently enters into its composition.

The dramatic monologue is a poetic form with dramatic affinities. It is not strictly a dramatic art form because it is not intended for presentation to an audience. It is a speech addressed to a silent listener. It aims at character study and psychoanalysis. The speaker cries for self-justification and self-explanation. Thus the author shows the inner man. It found particular favour with Robert Browning who may be called its chief exponent. Tennyson also used it with masterly skill.

The dramatic monologue is part drama, part poetry. It is a speech in the poetic medium with a dominant dramatic note. The very fact of its being a speech with someone to hear it lends it a dramatic colour. But it is dramatic in other ways too. It could be recited on the stage before an audience with or without costume and scenic background. Moreover it is a study in character which is one of the main functions of drama. But it differs from the drama in its complete lack of action and interchange of speech. It is cast in the form of a speech addressed to a silent listener. The person who speaks is made to reveal himself and the motives that impelled him at some crisis in his life or throughout its course. He may speak in self-justification or in a mood and detached self explanation, contented, resigned or remorseful. What the author is intent on showing us is the inner man.

The poetic form that Browning loved best was the dramatic monologue, and he perfected it. The setting of a dramatic monologue is always an intense situation. On the contemporary stage in England the term dramatic monologue is sometimes used to describe the performance of a scene from a famous novel by an actor dressed as one of the characters in the novel. There are also a few gifted actors and actresses who can appear alone and delight a whole audience with a series of impersonation of various characters – an old soldier recalling bygone days, a peasant woman in church and so on. These are too often called dramatic monologues.

8.4. Conclusion:

Literature is an interpretation of life as life shapes itself in the mind of the interpreter. It is one chief characteristic of poetry that whatever it touches in life, it relates to our feelings and passions, while at the same time by the exercise of imaginative power it both transfigures existing realities and "gives to airy nothing a local habitation and a name".

In Bacon's conception, poetry is the idealistic handling of life which lends "some shadow of satisfaction to the mind of man in those points wherein the nature of things doth deny it." For Bacon poetry becomes a mere 'theatre' of the mind, to which we may repair for relaxation and pleasure, but in which it is "not good to stay too long", because it only "feigneth", while science is concerned with reality and truth.

8.5. Sample Questions:

1. Write an essay on the different poetic forms.
2. Write an essay on the significance of the sonnet.

8.6. Suggested Reading:

1. Marjorie Boulton. The Anatomy of Poetry.
2. C.Day Lewis. Poetry for You.
3. John F. Danby. Approach of Poetry.
4. P. Gurrey. The Appreciation of Poetry.

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Mrs. T. Nirmala Kumari

LESSON – 9

William Wordsworth : SCORN NOT THE SONNET

Structure

9.1 Objectives

After reading this lesson you will be able to

(i) define what a sonnet is

(ii) distinguish between Shakespearean sonnets and other types of sonnets.

9.2. Introduction – The writer: His life and works

William Wordsworth was born in Cockermouth Cumberland, in the Lake District in England in 1770. His father John Wordsworth was an Attorney by profession. Wordsworth did not inherit his father's talent for law but gave in to his intense love for Nature and his deep imagination. Early in his life, he lost his mother and later on his father too. He was very close to his sister Dorothy. He particularly cared for her because he believed that she was in close communion with Nature. She also provided him fresh insights and impressions of Nature that became a valuable base for many of his poems.

Two of his uncles were instrumental in sending him to a local school and then to Cambridge University. He took his B.A. in 1791 from St. John's College, Cambridge. In 1792 he visited France and was greatly influenced by the French Revolution. During this period he devoted himself to the rationalist philosophy of William Godwin. In 1975 he met Coleridge. Together with Coleridge, Wordsworth brought out the famous Lyrical Ballads in 1798. In the preface to the Lyrical Ballads they declared their intention of writing poems

about Nature using a new language, the language of the common people. This marked the beginning of the English Romantic Movement.

Wordsworth began writing his philosophical and autobiographical poem titled The Prelude, published posthumously in 1850. In the winter of 1798-99, he wrote the "Lucy Poems". In 1802 he married Mary Hutchinson. He brought out his second verse collection in 1807. Most of his works were written between 1897 and 1808. His later works show him as a patriotic, conservative public man. In 1843 he became the Poet Laureate. He died on April 23, 1850. He is very much remembered for his lyrical poems such as "The Daffodils", "The Leech Gatherer" and "Lines written a few Miles above Westminster Bridge". He brought out his own experiences in the form of poems, and felt in harmony with nature. He observed Nature very minutely and with a lot of keenness and love, almost as a painter. To him the world was natural phenomenon in which he could very easily identify with his immediate surroundings and feel one with god-given Nature.

He saw an intimate connection between the worldly and the godly. To him, all life is a never-ending process of learning, limited only by death. As described in his poem "Tintern Abbey" (1798), Wordsworth's experience of Nature spans four stages. In the first stage the poet loved the outward beauty of Nature in all her unique splendour. In the second stage the poet as an adolescent sees the same objects of beauty in Nature as sources of joy and wild passion. In the third stage, the poet's philosophy of life extended to the belief that objects in Nature had a soul of their own. Between the spirit in Nature and in man, the poet believed, there was a "pre-arranged harmony" which helped Nature communicate its thoughts to man. He also believed that man inflicted misery upon himself when he went far away from Nature and fought against its natural laws. In the fourth stage, by contemplating upon the deep bond between man and Nature, the poet amassed a wealth of moral lessons. So he saw Nature as a teacher of morals who can teach man to be a better individual, Nature has a retributive and healing function by now.

9.3. The Text

Scorn not the sonnet, Critic you have frowned,
Mindless of its just honours: with this key
Shakespeare unlocked his heart: the melody
Of this small lute gave ease to Petrarch's wound:
A thousand times this pipe did Tasso sound:
With it Cameons soothed an exile's grief:
The sonnet glittered a gay myrtle leaf

Amidst cypress with which Dante crowned
His visionary brow: a glow-worm lamp,
It cheered mild Spenser, called from fairyland
To struggle through dark ways: and when a damp
Fell round the path of Milton, in his hand
The thing became a trumpet: whence he blew
Soul-animating strains – alas too few!

9.4. Glossary

sonnet	=	a short poem of fourteen lines
scorn	=	to refuse
just	=	deserved
frowned	=	to show anger; to disapprove of
melody	=	a piece of music or a song with a clear or simple tune
lute	=	a musical instrument with strings
ease	=	to make less painful or to make comfortable
Petrarch	=	famous Italian poet
wound	=	an injury to a person's feelings
pipe	=	a musical instrument
Tasso	=	Italian poet
Cameons	=	Portuguese poet
soothed	=	to make a person who is upset, quiet, calm or to comfort
exile	=	the state of being sent away from one's native country or home
grief	=	intense sorrow
glittered	=	magnificent, splendid or extremely successful
gay	=	in an attractive or cheerful way
myrtle	=	a bush with shiny leaves and sweet-smelling white flowers
amidst	=	amid, in the middle of
cypress	=	a type of tall thin evergreen tree
Dante	=	the Italian poet and visionary
crowned	=	a circular head dress; to make perfect
visionary	=	having or showing great imaginative or artistic power
brow	=	forehead
glow-worm	=	a type of insect that produces green light
cheered	=	to give support, comfort or encouragement
mild	=	gentle and kind; not violent
Spenser	=	a famous English poet
fairyland	=	the home of fairies, a beautiful or magical place
damp	=	an event that is much less impressive than expected
dark ways	=	sad, depressing or offering no hope
trumpet	=	a brass musical instrument played by blowing; to state in public loudly and with force
whence	=	from where
soul-animating	=	to give life to; to make more lively
strains	=	a part of a tune or piece of music being performed
alas	=	expressing sorrow or regret

9.5. Analysis of the text

"Scorn not the Sonnet' is a brilliant sonnet by William Wordsworth, which draws our sympathy and attention towards the sonnet and exalts its status as a poetic form. A short poem of fourteen lines, the sonnet took its birth in Italy and rose to popularity in the hands of Petrarch. Hence it came to be called the Petrarchan sonnet. It was divided into the octave and sestet. The caesura at the end of the octave indicated a change in thought leading to a final reconciliation. The sonnet later found its course into England with a slight change in its structure. The English sonnet has no caesura and the thought works up to the final couplet after three quatrains.

Wordsworth's sonnet also follows the pattern of the English sonnet, but the rhyme scheme is jumbled ABBA, ACCA, DEDE, FF. It has a three quatrain structure but does not keep each quatrain as a separate whole. There is no division of thought in the quatrains and the sonnet is bound together in subject, thought, feeling and expression leading one into the other without the break.

The sonnet as a whole conveys a pathetic note as it touches upon the hidden grief in the lives of the great poets. The poem opens with a caution to the critics who scorn the sonnet and Wordsworth asks them not to disregard its 'just honours'. He reminisces the past glory of the sonnet and goes on to describe with clear, condensed and rich metaphors, the worthy nature of this little sound. The comparison with the small musical instruments indicates how this short poetic form with its lines helped in soothing the mighty poets in times of distress.

Shakespeare 'unlocked' his heart with this key and poured out his sentiments and feelings of love and friendship through his vast output of one hundred and fifty four sonnets. Petrarch, the Italian poet used this "small lute" to ease his wound caused by his unrequited love for a lady called Laura. His sonnets are the most polished verses in European literature and they acquired worldwide fame. Torquato Tasso, another Italian poet sounded this "pipe" a thousand times to forget his troubles. Luis Vaz De Cameons, the Portugese, poet soothed the miseries which he suffered during his exile by composing beautiful sonnets.

Dante, the Italian poet and visionary who wrote the great philosophical work Divine Comedy, composed sonnets which were excellent. Wordsworth compares Dante's serious works to the 'cypress leaf' and his sonnets to the 'gay myrtle leaf'. The sonnet became a

'glow-worm lamp' in the path of Edmund Spenser and diverted his mind from his greater work The Fairy Queen. He consoled himself by writing sonnets.

Finally Wordsworth remembers Milton, whose sonnets show his mastery over this form and when he became blind, the sonnet became a trumpet in his hands. Although few in number, Milton's sonnets which convey his sorrow are soul-animating. Thus Wordsworth describes the greatness of the sonnet by recalling the great masters of the past and justifies the honourable position of the sonnet in the world of poetry.

9.6. Brief Critical Evaluation

The Sonnet is a short poem of fourteen lines arranged in a pattern and expressing one single thought or feeling. It is derived from the Italian word "Sonetto" meaning little sound or strain. It was made popular by Petrarch in the sonnets he wrote to Laura. These sonnets influenced poetry in Europe for several centuries and gave rise to the so-called Petrarchan convention of love poetry. Dante also used this poetic form and idealized a woman called Beatrice.

The Petrarchan sonnet, also called the Italian sonnet has the rhyme scheme of ABBA, ABBA, CDCDCD. There is a clear break between the first eight lines called 'octave' and the last six lines called the 'sestet'. At the end of the octave there is a caesura followed by the volte-face, a turn in thought, which is given a new application. The two greatest sonnet writers in English, Milton and Wordsworth, used the Italian form. Milton however did not always reach technical perfection. His famous sonnet 'On His Blindness,' which is one of the best sonnets in the world, has no clear break between the octave and sestet. Yet his sonnets are soul-animating and show his mastery over the form.

One example of a highly formal sonnet is Keats – "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer". In this poem Keats has succeeded in overcoming all the difficulties of the Italian sonnet form. The break after the octave is clear. The octave describes the situation and the sestet gives the poet's reflection on it. Thus it is technically brilliant.

The English sonnet which is also known as Shakespearean sonnet was introduced in England in the 16th century by Thomas Wyatt. This sonnet follows an unconnected rhyme pattern of ABAB, CDCD, EFEF, GG. Shakespeare has shown his brilliance and mastery over this form through his vast output of one hundred and fifty four sonnets. There is no

pause after the octave and the thought works right up to the final couplet where the highest peak of the poet's thought is reached.

Edmund Spenser invited a new variety of sonnet where the stanzas are related to each other structurally as well as by subject matter ABAB, BCBC, CDCD, EE. The couplet stands alone like the Shakespearean times. Wordsworth did not follow any fixed pattern and sometimes used a jumbled rhyme as in 'Scorn not the Sonnet'. But his sonnets are bound together in subject, feeling and expression leading one to the other without a break. Thus the development of thought and feeling and the delicate workmanship in a poem is more important than the pattern.

9.7. Summary:

'Scorn not the Sonnet' is a sonnet written by William Wordsworth. It is written on the virtues of a sonnet as a literary form. Wordsworth used the structure of three quatrains and a couplet. He asks the critic not to scorn the sonnet. He says that the critic frowned upon the sonnet without knowing the honours it rightly received from the great poets of the yester years.

Wordsworth lists all the great poets who made use of this wonderful literary form. Shakespeare unlocked his heart with this key and poured out all his emotions. Petrarch used the music of sonnet to get relief from the pains of tragedy. Tasso wrote a thousand sonnets. Cameons found relief through the writing of sonnets. Dante was a visionary. He wrote about the problems of human life and its various ends. In such tragic and painful conditions, the writing of happy sonnets gave him relief. The Sonnet made even a mild poet like Spenser happy. It helped him live through his dark life. When Milton became blind he used the sonnet as a trumpet of prophecy. But Wordsworth feels sad that Milton wrote only a few sonnets. The lines of Wordsworth make it clear that different writers wrote sonnets on different themes interestingly. Wordsworth used the theme of the 'sonnet' in his own sonnet.

9.8. Passages for Comprehension:

1. Scorn not the sonnet, critic, you have frowned
   Mindless of its just honours, with this key
   Shakespeare unlocked his heart.

   (a) Whom does the poet request not to scorn the sonnet?
   (Ans.) The poet requests the critic not to scorn the sonnet.

   (b) Name the author of the poem.
   (Ans.) The poet is William Wordsworth.

(c) What is the key with which Shakespeare used to unlock his heart?
(Ans.) Shakespeare used the key of the sonnet to unlock his heart.

(d) What is meant by scorn?
(Ans.) Scorn means to refuse.

(e) Name the thing that carries just honours?
(Ans.) The sonnet carries the just honours.

2. The melody of this small lute gave ease to Petrarch's wound.
A thousand times this pipe did Tasso sound.

(a) What stands for the small lute?
(Ans.) The sonnet stands for the small lute.

(b) What made Petrach wounded or sorrowful?
(Ans.) Petrarch's unrequited love for a lady called Laura made him sorrowful.

(c) Who is Petrarch?
(Ans.) Petrarch is a famous Italian poet.

(d) What eased Petrarch's wound?
(Ans.) Writing sonnets eased Petrarch of his wound

(e) What was the pipe that Tasso sounded?
(Ans.) Tasso sounded the pipe of the sonnet.

3. A glow-worm lamp
It cheered mild Spenser called from fairyland
To struggle through dark ways.

(a) What is compared to a glow-worm lamp?
(Ans.) The Sonnet is compared to a glow-worm lamp.

(b) What is meant by cheered?
(Ans.) Cheered means to encourage.

(c) Who is Spenser?
(Ans.) Spenser is a famous English poet.

(d) Name the poem and the poet.
(Ans.) The poem is 'Scorn not the Sonnet', and the poet is William Wordsworth.

(e) Why was Spenser called from fairyland?
(Ans.) Spenser was diverted from his greater work <u>The Fairy Queen</u>. He consoled himself by writing sonnets.

4. When a damp
Fell round the path of Milton in his hand
The thing became the trumpet whence he blew
Soul-animating strains – alas, too few.

(a) Who is Milton?
(Ans.) Milton is a famous English poet.

(b) What became a trumpet in his hand.
(Ans.) The sonnet became a trumpet in his hand.

(c) Did Milton write many sonnets described?
(Ans.) No, Milton wrote very few sonnets.

(d) How are Milton's sonnets described?
(Ans.) Milton's sonnets are soul-animating.

(e) Give your opinion about the sonnet.
(Ans.) Sonnet is a wonderful form of poetry though it looks very short.

9.9 Sample Questions:

1. Bring out the central idea of the poem 'Scorn not the Sonnet'.
2. Write an essay on the significance of the sonnet.
3. List and explain the comparison used in this sonnet.

9.10. Suggested Reading:

1. William J. Long. English Literature.
2. E.de Selincourt. The Poetical Works of Wordsworth.
3. A.C. Bradley. Oxford Lectures on Poetry.
4. Mathew Arnold. Wordsworth.

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Mrs. T. Nirmala Kumari

LESSON – 10

Percy Bysshe Shelley : ODE TO THE WEST WIND

Structure

10.1 Objectives

From a reading of the lesson, the learner will understand:

1. the visionary quality of Shelley's poetry.
2. Shelley's philosophy of life and freedom.
3. the decisive and concrete symbolism in the poem
4. Shelley's unrestrained, swift and proud nature, as he often mingled his own personality in the objects of Nature.
5. The revolutionary element in Shelley's poem

10.2. Introduction – The writer – His Life and Works:

Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822) is one of the most powerful poets in English literature. He was educated at Eton and University College, Oxford. In 1811 he was sent away from Oxford after circulating a pamphlet on "The Necessity of Atheism". In the same year he married Harriet Westbrook but separated from her after three years of a wandering life. He left England in 1814 with Mary Godwin Wollstonecraft, to whom he was married after the unhappy Harriet drowned herself in the Serpentine in 1816. Shelley's Alastor was published in 1816. In the same year began his friendship with Byron. In 1818 Shelley left England for Italy. He visited Byron at Venice, and in the same year wrote the "Stanzas Written in Dejection". Early in 1819, stirred to indignation by the political events at home, he wrote The Mask of Anarchy, an indictment of Castlereach's administration. He also published Peter Bell the Third, a satire on Wordsworth. In 1819 The Cenci was published.

In 1820, the composition of his lyrical drama Prometheus Unbound was published. At the end of 1819 the Shelleys moved to Pisa and there he wrote some of his best known lyrics, including the "Ode to the West Wind," "To a Skylark" and "The Cloud". On 8th July 1822 he was drowned in his thirtieth year, while sailing near Spezzia.

The Poetic form – Ode:

The word 'Ode' is simply the Greek word for 'song'. It was used by the Greeks for any kind of lyric verse, for any song sung with the lyre. An English ode may be defined as "a lyric poem of elaborate metrical structure, solemn in tone and usually lacking the form of an address." The Ode is a serious and dignified composition and longer than the lyric. It is exalted in subject matter and elevated in tone and style. It has lyric enthusiasm and emotional intensity. It is in the form of an address, often to some abstraction. The development of thought is logical and clear. Its metrical pattern may be regular or irregular, but it is always elaborate and often complex and intricate. Edmund Gosse defines the ode as "a strain of enthusiastic and exalted lyric verse, directed to a fixed purpose and dealing progressively with one dignified theme."

"Ode to the West Wind" was published in 1820. It is one of the most powerful odes in English literature, remarkable and inspiring in its structural excellence and passionate imagery. The poet who often sinks into despair rises out of it with supreme energy and exhorts his fellow beings to fight for human freedom. The line, "If winter comes can spring be far behind?" echoes his invincible optimism.

Here is Shelley's note on the poem. "This poem was conceived and chiefly written in a wood that skirts Ano, near Florence and on a day when the tempestuous wind, whose temperature is at once mild and animating, was collecting the vapours which pour down in autumnal rains. They began, as I foresaw, at sunset with a violent tempest of hail and rain, attended by that magnificent thunder and lightning peculiar to that region.

10.3 The Text

Percy Bysshe Shelley
ODE TO THE WEST WIND

1

O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O thou,
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

The winged seeds, where they lie cold and low,
Each like a corpse within its grave, until
Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow

Her Clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
With living hues and odours plain and hill:

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;
Destroyer and preserver, hear, oh, hear!

2

Thou on whose stream, mid the steep sky's commotion,
Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,
Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean,

Angels of rain and lightning: there are spread
On the blue surface of thine aëry surge,
Like the bright hair uplifted from the head

Of some fierce Maenad, even from the dim verge
Of the horizon to the Zenith's height,
The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge

Of the dying year, to which this closing night
Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre,
Vaulted with all thy congregated might

Of vapours, from whose solid atmosphere
Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst: oh, hear!

3

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,
Lulled by the coil of his crystalline streams,

Beside a pumice isle in Baiae's bay,
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
Quivering within the wave's intenser day,

All overgrown with azure moss and flowers
So sweet, the sense faints picturing them! Thou
For whose path the Atlantic's level powers

Cleave themselves into chasms, while for below
The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear
The sapless foliage of the ocean, know

They voice, and suddenly grow gray with fear,
And tremble and despoil themselves, oh, hear!

4

If I were a deaf leaf thou mightest bear;
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share

The impulse of thy strength, only less free
Than thou, O uncontrollable! If even
I were as in my boyhood, and could be

The comrade of thy wanderings over Heaven,
As then, when to outstrip they skyey speed
Scarce seemed a vision; I would ne'er have striven

As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.
Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

A heavy weight of hours has chained, and bowed
One too like thee: tameless, and swift and proud.

5

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
What if my leaves are falling like its own!
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce,
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth!
And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
Be through my lips to unawakened earth

The trumpet of a prophecy! O Wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

10.4 Glossary:

Hectic red	=	hectic fever usually accompanies consumption, attended with flushed cheeks.
Pestilence stricken	=	attacked by a fatal epidemic or disease
Winged seeds	=	seeds are carried in the wind; as they float in the air, it is imagined that they have wings; certain seeds have hairy growths on their pods, which help their dispersal.
azure	=	sky blue
sister of the spring	=	wind in the spring
Clarion	=	a trumpet call
Dreaming earth	=	the earth seems to sleep in winter. Yet in its sleep, it dreams of happier days to come.
Destroyer and preserver	=	destroyer of leaves and preserver of seeds
aery surge	=	The wind is compared to the stream – the waves of the stream.
Maenad	=	Priestess of Bacchus – the God of wine and revelry. Clouds look like the dishevelled hair of the priestess. At festivals, the priestess looks almost mad with intense emotion.
Summer dreams	=	Summer is followed by autumn. In summer, the Mediterranean sea has been sleeping calmly, dreaming her dreams. As autumn comes, the west wind awakens her.
Pumice Isle	=	An island of volcanoes in Baiaes Bay. The palaces on this Island were later destroyed by volcanic eruptions.
Atlantic level powers	=	When there is no wind, the surface of the Atlantic Ocean is almost level. But the wind ruffles this level surface.
Sapless foliage	=	Vegetation at the bottom of the sea, the leaf is without sap.
Pant beneath thy power	=	literally to breathe with difficultly by the power of the wind. The poet wishes to be strengthened by the power of the wind.
I fall upon the thorns of life	=	the romantic poets often experience sheer despair, they become melancholic. The poet submits himself to this mood.
A heavy weight of hours	=	the poet is no more a boy, every hour of his life seems to weigh heavily upon him.
Dead thoughts	=	Comparable to dead leaves and winged seeds
Quicken a new birth	=	after winter, spring comes and it revitalizes everything. The west wind preserves the seeds for summer.

10.5 Analysis of the Text

Stanza I - The poet invokes the wild West Wind which is the very life of autumn. When it rushes through the forest it drives away the dead leaves of various colours. The leaves are driven like ghosts from a magician. The Wind scatters the winged seeds which lie buried in

winter under the earth till the advent of the spring season when they germinate. Then just as a shepherd brings out his flock from the sheepfold under the open sky in pasture land, so the vernal zephyr opens out buds in the open air. The spring breeze causes plants to sprout and flowers to bloom, as if awakening Nature from its slumber. Then the whole landscape appears fresh and beautiful and full of fragrant flowers. The west wind destroys the decayed leaves and preserves seeds underground, so that in spring time they germinate. The West Wind is thus in true harmony with the spirit of the poet who also likes to destroy dead conventions in society and bring about a healthy change in social matters.

Stanza II - Just as the decaying leaves are scattered on the stream of water by the Wind, so the West Wind has scattered patches of clouds as if they were shaken off from the sky and ocean, which imperceptibly mingle at the horizon. These clouds are like the messengers of the approaching storm, accompanied with lightning and thunder. The clouds driven by storm are spread over the whole of the blue sky, from the horizon to the highest point in heaven. They appear like the dishevelled hair on the head of a frenzied and drunk Maenad. The expiring year will soon come to an end, and the howling West Wind is just like its funeral song. The night that is closing in with darkness will form the dome of the tomb in which the dying year will be buried, and the dense mass of vapours and clouds borne by the wind in storm will form its vault, which will be filled with darkness, lightning, hail and thunder bursting suddenly upon the earth. The poet invokes again the West Wind in these words describing the effect of the west wind upon the sky.

Stanza III - It is the West Wind which disturbs the calm Mediterranean sea after the end of the summer season. Before the advent of the Wind, the season was calm and seemed to have been lulled into sleep by the movement of ebb and tide of the clear waters, near the Bay of Baiae. This ancient town, once a favourite resort of the Romans and situated upon the island formed by the lava of Mt. Vesuvius became submerged under water but its ruins are still visible. Looking at the Mediterranean sea, the poet visualizes the ruins of palaces and towns now submerged in water and appearing brighter when the sun shone upon them. On those ruins is now growing marine vegetation, moss and plants with flowers. The fragrance of the flowers is so sweet that the very thought of them makes the poet swoon.

When the West Wind blows across the Alantic Ocean, deep furrows and chasms are formed on the surface of the sea, as if it were carving its passage through the high waves. On the approach of the West Wind in autumn, the marine vegetation, devoid of the sap, turned

pale as if by fear. The plants drop their leaves, and flowers shed their petals. It is such a fierce wind that the poet addresses and invokes here.

Stanza IV - After describing the effects of the West Wind on the earth, sky and sea, the poet now turns to himself and tells us the reaction of the Wind upon his own emotional nature. He is eager to share the impulse of the Wind, its strength and swiftness. He feels sorry that he is neither a dead leaf, a cloud nor a wave to which the Wind could impart its impulse. He longs to be as free and unrestrained as the Wind is. Having grown out of boyhood, he has lost his firm optimism, when nothing seemed impossible of attainment. He was more idealistic then and believed that his dreams would come true. Then he could race with the Wind. But now things are different. And so in all humility he has to approach the West Wind and implore it for inspiration. In his distress he recalls pitifully the unfortunate circumstances of his life and all its afflictions and sufferings. He is crushed in spirit and needs the inspiration from the West Wind to support him. Temperamentally he is not different from the West Wind, because he is as tameless, quick and proud as the West Wind is. His zeal for reform in society, his passion for freedom and his courageous stand against tyranny all show his kinship with the West Wind. And hence he implores it to impart to him its strength and freedom.

Stanza V - The poet's lyrical fervour becomes more impassioned and his words break forth into a prophecy. He implores the wind to make him its instrument of music as it has made the forest. The forest is without leaves in autumn. The poet's youthful vigour is also gone and he is now a little dejected. If through the leafless forest music can be produced by the wind, it can be produced through him also. It will produce sad strains. But the sad music will also have its sweetness. Then the poet desires that the Wind which is like a fierce spirit may become his spirit, imparting his strength. But not satisfied with this he passionately pleads that the Wind should become completely identified with him. Then it can do with his ideas what it does with the dead leaves. The Wind is implored to spread his idea of a better world and bring about a welcome change upon the earth. People do not realize the destiny which awaits them. Let them be awakened to a new sense of values in life by the Wind conveying to them with its force the message of hope. Just as it is the law of Nature that Spring should follow Winter, the present miserable condition must give place to a happier and brighter new order. Shelley hopes that his dead thoughts might still help to quicken a

new birth and that his words might be a true prophecy of the Spring which would surely come in society and in men's personal lives as well as in nature.

10.6. Brief Critical Evaluation

The word 'ode' comes from Greek and it means a song. The Greek ode would be sung to the accompaniment of a musical instrument. However, as far as English literature is concerned, the idea of some musical accompaniment has been given up, and the term is now applied to only one particular kind of lyric verse. An English ode may be defined as "a lyric poem of elaborate metrical structure, solemn in tone and usually taking the form of an address". Now the ode has come to be a rhymed lyric, thoughtful and reflective with a subdued emotion.

Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind" is one of the best odes. The first section very artistically presents the tremendous might of this Wind as is evident on the earth. Like an enchanter who drives away ghosts, the West Wind drives away the withered leaves. The West Wind is busy destroying the dead and hence it is extremely powerful and mighty. Then the focus of attention shifts from death to life. The Wind is now like a chariot which drives the seeds to their abode underground. Then the West Wind of spring blows its trumpet to arouse the dozing earth; like a shepherd the wind drives the buds like flocks of sheep to feed in the air.

The second section of the poem deals with the sky. Like the withered leaves the loose clouds fall from the unseen forest of the heaven into the stream of the West Wind. Suddenly the imagery of the leaves is replaced by the human imagery. The clouds become the hair of a huge giant. The West Wind becomes transformed into a mournful tune and the rapidly encroaching night becomes the dome of an extensive tomb filled by the unifying power of the West Wind.

The third section presents the effects of the West Wind on the sea. Here, the placid Mediterranean is personified as being asleep, dreaming of old palaces and towers which are only reflections. The West Wind drives away the unreal thoughts of the Mediterranean sea. The underwater vegetation feels the arrival of the West Wind and sheds its leaves in fear.

After describing the impact of the West Wind over the land, the sky, and the sea the poet becomes extremely personal and subjective. He now wants to find a relation between

himself and the West Wind. Like the leaves, the cloud and the waves, the poet craves to share the power of the West Wind. He desires to become the mouthpiece of the West Wind.

The poet asks the West Wind to drive away his old dead ideas which will help in the blossoming forth of new ideas. The poet wants the prophetic note of the West Wind to spread throughout the world through his mouth. The optimistic prophecy "If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind," makes the poem full of optimism and new hope. The optimistic note on which the poem ends makes us forget self-pity and expect that time can also change for the better.

J.M. Robertson says that Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind" represents his highest lyrical poetry and gives us the measure of his mentality. "Wild, passionate yearning, undefined aspiration, expressed with an eagerness always tending towards incoherence and unintelligibility – this is what Shelley has to give us in the most strenuous of his prosperous flights; and it may be left to readers to say for themselves finally whether at his highest such a poet is one of the greatest poets…"

10.7 Summary

The poem "Ode to the West Wind" consists of five stanzas. The poet presents the autumnal West Wind as a destroyer and preserver. The wind drives away the leaves. It takes the winged seeds to their rest in winter. Shelley compares the clouds to leaves shaken from the boughs of heaven and ocean. Clouds are angels of rain and lightning. They are like the bright hair uplifted from the head of Maenad, a semi-divine priestess of Bacchus. The sky is overcast with clouds. The night turns into a sepulchre filled with vapours. From this sepulchre will burst out black rain and fire.

The poet describes the effect of the West Wind on the Mediterranean and the Atlantic seas. The streams beside Pumice sing a lullaby for the Mediterranean sea and the sea sleeps in summer. In its sleep it dreams of the palaces and towers that stood on the island before the volcanoes destroyed them. The remains are overgrown with blue-green moss and flowers. The West Wind awakens the Mediterranean sea from its summer dreams. It shakes the Atlantic sea and breaks up its even surface and forms deep troughs. The sea plants shed their leaves on hearing the voice of the West Wind. The poet wishes that the West Wind lifts him like a leaf, a wave or a cloud. The poet wants to be the lyre of the West Wind and the West

Wind to be the trumpet of his prophecy. He also wishes the West Wind would identify itself with the poet.

The poet is like the West Wind in spirit, though he is less free. The poet wishes that it would fill him with power and energy. He has experienced the hard and bitter aspects of life. Let the West Wind drive away his dead thoughts like withered leaves in order to create new life. Let it scatter his words and spread his message in the world that if Winter comes, Spring cannot be far behind. Evil days will surely be followed by happy days. The poet becomes a comrade of the West Wind.

10.8 Passages for comprehension

1. Wild spirit, which art moving everywhere;
Destroyer and preserver, hear, oh, hear!

(a) Name the poem.
(Ans) These lines are taken form the poem "Ode to the West Wind".

(b) Name the poet.
(Ans) The poet is P.B. Shelley

(c) What is the wild spirit?
(Ans) The West Wind is the wild spirit.

(d) Who is the Destroyer and preserver?
(Ans) The West Wind is the destroyer and preserver.

(e) Who wants whom to hear?
(Ans) The poet P.B. Shelley wants the West Wind to hear his call.

2. Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay.
Lulled by the coil of his crystalline streams
Beside a pumice isle in Baiae's bay,

(a) Who is referred to as 'Thou'?
(Ans) Thou stands for the West Wind.

(b) Who is woken up from his summer dreams?
(Ans) The Mediterranean sea is woken up from his summer dreams.

(c) Who woke up the Mediterranean sea?
(Ans) The West Wind woke up the Mediterranean Sea from its sleep.

(d) What is Pumice isle?
(Ans) Pumice island is an island of volcanoes.

(e) Where is the Pumice Island?
(Ans) Pumice island is in Baiae's bay.

3. If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share
The impulse of thy strength.

(a) Who is the 'I' referred to ?
(Ans) 'I' referred to here is the poet P.B. Shelley.

(b) Who is referred to as thou?
(Ans) Thou refers to the west wind.

(c) What does the poet want to be?
(Ans) The poet wants to be a leaf, a cloud, or a wave.

(d) What does the poet want to share?
(Ans) The poet wants to share the power of the West Wind and be strengthened by it.

(e) What is meant by pant?
(Ans) Pant means to breathe with difficulty.

4. Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth!
And, by the incantation of this verse,
Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!

(a) To what does the poet compare his dead thoughts?
(Ans) The poet compared his dead thoughts to dead leaves and winged seeds.

(b) What does the phrase 'quicken a new birth' mean?
(Ans) The phrase 'quicken a new birth' means after winter, spring comes and it revitalizes everything.

(c) Who is the speaker here?
(Ans) Here the speaker is the poet.

(c) What does the poet want to be scattered?
(Ans) The poet wants his words to be scattered among mankind.

(d) Whom does the poet request to scatter his words?
(Ans) The poet requests the West Wind to scatter his words.

10.9 Sample Questions:

1. Write an essay on the imagery used in the "Ode to the West Wind."
2. Write an essay on the features of an ode.
3. Explain how Shelley was successful in writing an ode.

10.10. Suggested Reading:

1. William Hazlitt. Lectures on the English Poets.
2 Matthew Arnold. Essays in Criticism – II Series.
3. A.C. Bradley. Oxford Lectures on Poetry.

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Smt. T. Nirmala Kumari

Lesson – 11

Thomas Gray: ELEGY WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCH YARD

Structure of the Lesson

11.1. Objectives

After a study of the lesson the student will have an idea about:

a) what an Elegy is

b) Thomas Gray, the poet

c) the democratic spirit of the poet, love for humanity and the poor, realization of death as a step for a new life.

11.2. (a) Introduction: The Poet

Thomas Gray was born on 26th December, 1716. His father was Philip Gray, who was reported to be harsh and violent in nature. Out of the twelve children born to Philip Gray only five survived. Thomas Gray claimed closeness with his mother, Dorothy Grave. Thomas Gray had his education at Eton and Cambridge. In 1727 Gray was sent to Eton. Antropus was Dorothy Grave's nephew and it is said that Mrs. Gray was a humble friend of Lady Walpole and that this was the starting point of the friendship between Horace Walpole and Gray at Eton. Gray entered Cambridge in 1734. Another uncle Robert Antropus had been a Fellow of that college, but Gray had little sympathy with his studies at Cambridge. Gray lived in comfort after his father's death in 1741. He graduated as LLB in 1744.

The eighteenth century was meant for prose, not poetry. Dryden and Pope ruled the roost. Gray loved the fields since his boyhood. He had little or no share or skill in the sports

of the boys. In 1751 he published "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" which brought him immediate fame and popularity.

In 1762 Gray tried to obtain the Professorship of Modern History at Cambridge, but it was offered to him unsolicited in 1768. Gray never married. He had few relations. Most of them died while he was still young. He lived a retired life. He spent a year in London doing research in the British Museum. He visited different parts of England and Scotland. He died in Pembroke College on 30th July, 1771 and shared the same tomb with his mother.

Gray's poetic output is meagre. In his writing there is a trace of romanticism which started in the Elizabethan period. Gray was unique in his writing. He was not particularly influenced by any writer or by any movement. He wrote poetry when he felt like writing it. He had a love of nature, particularly pastoral.

11.2. (b) The Poetic form - The Elegy

In Greek and Roman literature, the elegy was any poem composed in a special elegiac meter. It covered war songs, love poems, political verses and lamentations for the dead. The subjects of the poems were both grave and gay.

In modern usage the meaning of the word 'elegy' has changed. It is the theme that matters not the meter. In England, until the seventeenth century and even later, the term was often applied to any poem of solemn meditation. The theme of an elegy must be mournful or sadly reflective. It is usually a lamentation for the dead. It is written as a tribute to someone loved and lost. It is less spontaneous than lyric.

In present usage, an elegy is a formal and sustained poem of lament for the death of a particular person, such as Tennyson's 'In Memoriam' on the death of his dear friend Arthur Hallam. Sometimes, the term is more broadly used for meditative poems. Though grief is the dominant emotion in the early part of the elegy, there is a note of change towards resignation by the close of the poem. The poet reconciles himself to the inevitable. He expresses his faith in immortality and future reunion.

An important type of the elegy is the 'pastoral elegy'. It represents both the mourner and the one he mourns. The conventions of pastoral elegy are:

(a) The scene is pastoral. The poet and the person he mourns are represented as shepherds.

(b) The poet begins with an invocation of the Muse and refers to many mythological characters during the poem.
(c) Nature is involved in mourning the shepherd's death.
(d) The poet inquires of the guardians of the dead shepherd where they were when death came.
(e) There is a procession of mourners.
(f) The poet reflects on divine justice and contemporary evils.
(g) There is a flower passage, describing the decoration of the bier.
(h) At the end, there is a renewal of hope and joy, with the idea expressed that death is the beginning of a new life.

Many English poets have made varied and noteworthy contributions to the elegy. Many more have written noble elegiac poems.

11.3. The Text

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea,
The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the. sight,
And a1l the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning fight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds;

Save that from yonder ivy - mantled tower
The moping owl does to the moon complain
Of such as, wandering near her secret bower,
Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew - tree's shade
Where heaves the turf in many a mould' ring heap
Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense - breathing morn,
The swallow twittering form the straw - built shed
The cock's shrill clarion or the echoing horn,
No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
Or busy housewife ply her evening care:
No children run to lisp their sire' s return,
Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share:

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield
Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke;
How jocund did they drive their team afield!
How bow'd the woods beneath their sturdy stroke!

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys and destiny obscure;
Nor Grandeur hear, with a disdainful smile,
The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
awaits alike the inevitable hour.
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye Proud, to these the fault,
If Memory o'er their tomb no trophies raise,
Where through the long - drawn aisle and fretted vault
The pealing anthem sweels the note of praise.

Can storied urn or animated bust
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?
Can Honour's voice provoke the silent dust,
Or Flattery soothe the dull cold ear of Death?

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;
Hands that the rod of empire might have swayed,
Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre.

But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page
Rich with the spoi1s of time did ne'er unroll;
Chill Penury repressed their noble rage,
And froze the genial current of the soul.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear:
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air. ./

Some village Hampden that with dauntless breast,
The little tyrant of his fields withstood;
Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,
Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood.

The applause of listening senates of command,
the threats of pain and ruin to despise,
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
And read their history in a nation's eyes,

Their lot forbade: nor circumscribed alone
Their growing virtues, but their crimes confined;
Forbade to wade through slaughter to a throne,
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind,

The struggling pangs. of conscious truth to hide,
To quench. the blushes of ingenuous shame,
Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride.
With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife
Their sober wishes never learned to stray;
Along the cool sequestered vale of life
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.

Yet even these bones from insult to protect
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture decked
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.

Their name, their years, spelt by the unlettered Muse
The place of fame and elegy supply:
And many a holy text around she strews,
That teach the rustic moralist to die.

For who to dumb Forgetfulness a prey,
This pleasing anxious being ever resigned,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
Nor cast one longing lingering look behind?

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
Some pious drops the closing eye requires;
Even from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,
Even in our ashes live their wonted fires.

For thee who, mindful of the unhonored dead,
Dost in these lines their artless tale relate;
If chance, by lonely Contemplation led,
Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy fate,

Haply some hoary - headed swain may say,
"Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn"
Brushing with hasty steps the dews away
To meet the sun upon the upland lawn.

'There at the foot of younder nodding beech
That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,
His listless length at noontide would he stretch,
And pore upon the brook that babbles by. .

‘Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,
Muttering his wayward fancies he would rove,
Now drooping, woeful wan, like one forlorn,
Or crazed with care, or crossed in hopeless love.’

One morn I missed him on the customed hill,
Along the heath and near his favourite tree;
Another came; nor yet beside the rill,
Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he;

‘The next with dirges due in sad array
Slow through the church - way path we saw him borne.
Approach and read (for thou canst read) the lay,
Graved on the stone beneath yon aged thorn.’

THE EPITAPH

Here rests his head upon the lap of earth
A youth to Fortune and to Fame unknown.
Fair science frowned not on his humble birth,
And Melancholy marked him for her own.

Large was his bounty and his soul sincere,
Heaven did a recompense as largely send:
He gave to Misery all he had, a tear,
He gained from Heaven ('twas all he wished) a friend

No farther seek his merits to disclose,
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,
(There they-alike in trembling hope repose)
The bosom of his Father and his God

11. 4. Glossary

Curfew	=	the ringing of a bell as a signal to put out fires and lights. An order to people to keep inside their houses
toll	=	to ring a bell with slow measured strokes
parting	=	moving away
lowing	=	coming down
herd	=	a company of animals
winds	=	to progress on a path with many twists and turns
lea	=	field, meadow, pasture land
ploughman	=	someone who steers a plough
plod	=	to walk slowly
weary	=	very tired after the day's work
fade	=	to become less bright
glimmering	=	shining faintly
solemn	=	not happy, looking serious
stillness	=	the quality of being quiet and not moving
beetle	=	an insect, large and black, with a hard case on its back
droning	=	making a continuous low noise
drowsy	=	tired
tinklings	=	a light high rising sound
lull	=	to make somebody relaxed and calm
folds	=	people who share same ideas and beliefs
yonder	=	that is over there
ivy	=	a climbing plant
mantled	=	covered the surface
moping	=	to get rid of the last
molest	=	attack some one physically
rugged	=	strong
elm	=	a tall tree with broad leaves
yew	=	a small tree with dark green leaves and small red berries. It is often planted near churches
heave	=	to rise up and down with strong, regular movements
turf	=	short grass

mouldering	=	becoming gradually rotten with age
breezy	=	lively
clarion	=	an old kind of trumpet with a shrill sound
blaze	=	to burn or shine brightly
hearth	=	place of fire in a room
ply	=	keep giving
lisp	=	to speak or pronounce the sound of ‘s’ and ‘z’ in the same way as the ‘th’ sounds
sire	=	father
glebe	=	a piece of church owned land
jocund	=	cheerful, merry
afield	=	away from home
bowed	=	surrendered
ambition	=	a strong desire for success
mock	=	to laugh at somebody in an unkind way
toil	=	long hard work
obscure	=	not clear
disdainful	=	showing dislike
annals	=	historical records
heraldry	=	history of old families
pomp	=	ceremonial grandeur
trophies	=	silver cups that are given as prizes for winning competitions
aisle	=	a passage between two rows of seats
fretted	=	worried, especially unnecessarily, to show or express anxiety
vault	=	a room in a cemetery used for burying people
pealing	=	ringing loudly
swell	=	to become bigger
urn	=	a tall decorated container, especially one used for holding the ashes of a dead person
animated	=	made to look as if they are moving
bust	=	a stone or metal model of a person’s head, shoulders and chest
fleeting	=	lasting only a short time
provoke	=	to cause a particular reaction
soothe	=	to make somebody who is anxious, upset, etc. feel calmer
pregnant	=	full of a quality or feeling
celestial	=	heavenly, divine
swayed	=	moved slowly from side to side
ecstasy	=	a feeling or state of great happiness
lyre	=	an ancient musical instrument with strngs in a frame shaped like a ‘U’
penury	=	the state of being very poor
repressed	=	having emotions or desires that are not allowed to be expressed
rage	=	a feeling of violent anger that is difficult to control
genial	=	friendly and cheerful
unfathomed	=	of unknown depth

blush	=	blossom
dauntless	=	fearless
tyrant	=	a cruel, unjust and oppressive ruler with absolute power
mute	=	dumb
inglorious	=	not glorious
guiltless	=	innocent
applause	=	the noise made by a group of people clapping their hands to show their approval or enjoyment
threats	=	warnings that one is going to hurt or punish
despise	=	to look down on someone or something with scorn and contempt
forbade	=	impossible to do something, not destined
circumscribe	=	to limit somebody's freedom rights, power
confined	=	kept somebody inside the limits
wade	=	to walk with an effort through something
slaughter	=	the cruel killing of large numbers of people at one time, especially in a war.
pangs	=	sudden strong feelings of physical or emotional pain.
ingenuous	=	honest, innocent and willing to trust people
Muse	=	(in ancient Greek and Roman stories) one of the nine Goddesses who encourage poetry, music and other branches of art and literature
ignoble	=	not good or honest
strife	=	conflict
sober	=	serious and sensible
stray	=	to move away from the place where one is supposed to be
sequestered	=	quiet and far away from people
vale	=	Valley
tenor	=	general character or meaning of something
frail	=	weak
memorial	=	a statue, stone, etc. that is built in order to remind people of on important past event or of a person who has died
erected	=	built
nigh	=	near
uncouth	=	rude or socially unacceptable
implore	=	beseech, beg, request
strew	=	to cover a surface with things
rustic	=	typical of the country or country people
prey	=	to be harmed or affected by something bad
precincts	=	the area around a place or a building
longing	=	a strong feeling of wanting something
lingering	=	slow to end or disappear
parting	=	the act or occasion of leaving a person or place
rely	=	to need or be dependent on somebody or something
wont	=	in the habit of doing something
haply	=	perhaps, by chance
swain	=	a young man who is in love
upland	=	an area of high land that is situated away from the coast

wreathes	=	to surround or cover something
listless	=	having no energy or enthusiasm
pore upon	=	to look at something carefully
brook	=	a small stream
babble	=	to make a low murmuring sound
rove	=	to wander over
drooping	=	grow weak with tiredness
woeful	=	pitiful
wan	=	pale looking especially from exhaustion
forlorn	=	unhappy
crossed	=	betrayed
morn	=	morning
customed	=	accustomed, habituated
hearth	=	an area of open land with shrubs
rill	=	a small stream or brook
dirges	=	funeral songs
array	=	well ordered arrangement
borne	=	carried
frowned	=	disapproved
humble	=	having a low rank or social position
Melancholy	=	the Goddess of sadness
bounty	=	generous actions
recompense	=	repayment or reward, compensation for loss.
seek	=	to look for someone or something
disclose	=	make something known, reveal
frailties	=	weaknesses
abode	=	the house or place where one lives, a dwelling
repose	=	rest
bosom	=	the heart

11.5. Analysis of The Text

Thomas Gray's "Elegy written in a Country Churchyard" is a pastoral elegy in 32 stanzas. Each stanza has four lines. The first line rhymes with the third, and the second line with the fourth. The origin of the poem goes back to 1742 to the death of Jonathan Rogers, the poet's uncle. Gray published this poem in 1751. The death of a dear one is the slender material for the elegy. Pathetic scenes of poverty and pastoral atmosphere find an important place in the poem.

Lines 1-8: It is dusk and the curfew bell rings. It is time to stop work for the day and take rest. Working and domestic cattle are returning home slowly. Farmers, having been tired of the day's work are slowly walking home. The poet is left alone on the outskirts of the village. Everything around the poet is dim and dull. The air is silent. A beetle is flying in the air circularly making a droning noise. The tinkling bells of animals from a distance are something like a lull. It is all drowsy.

Lines 9-16: The poet looks around. There is an old town. It is all covered with ivy creeper. An owl has its nest somewhere on the tower. The moon has just risen. The owl complains to the moon about moonlight because it cannot rule over the place in light. There are full grown sturdy elm and yew trees. The rude forefathers of the hamlet have been buried in the shades of the trees. None of them has a tomb because they are poor. There are only heaps and mounds. It is the graveyard of the hamlet.

Lines 17-24: The people of the village generally wake up very early in the morning. The morning atmosphere – the pleasant smell of incense burning at places of worship, twittering swallows around their nests, the shrill clarion calls of the cocks or the echoing horns of huntsmen may wake up all villagers but not those who are in their long sleeps lying low in their graves. The dead have almost been forgotten. Fire does not burn for them in their hearths. Their wives do not make any preparations for them and wait for them. The children of the dead do not expect to be fondled, patted and kissed by their fathers.

Lines 25-32: The dead of the hamlet were a happy and contented lot. Very often they had good harvests. They were hardworking people and took delight in ploughing the hard surface of their lands. They were very happy to return home with their harvest and cattle. They were strong and the woods surrendered to their sturdy strokes. They were all innocent and hard working people. They did not have any ambitions. They were happy with their families. They were neither rich nor popular. They were not touched by modernity and its vices. They do not figure in the records of history.

Lines 33-40: The poet sympathises with the dead. He says that they need not feel sad for what they did not have. Family pride, political power physical beauty and material wealth do not save anyone from death. Death comes to all alike. However great one may be, one must die ultimately. To have been born poor was not their fault. It was their fate and lot. The only difference between the rich and the poor is that the rich have memorials and tombs, but the poor do not have them to sing their praise.

Lines 41-48: The poet emphatically asks if great memorials and monuments bring the dead people back to life. He further asks if honour and flattery can possibly save anyone from death. Everyone is equal to death. The poet is of the opinion that the hamlet is neglected. The people have not got opportunities to prove their talents. There would have been someone with great poetic talent, or someone who would have become a great ruler, or a great

musician.

Lines 49-56: The villagers were illiterate. They did not have knowledge of the world. They were busy in fighting poverty. They did not have time and opportunity to cultivate their spirit and intellect to become great. Poverty had repressed them. Some rare gems may lie deep in the darkest parts of the ocean and may not see the light of the world. Many flowers might have blossomed in a desert and might not have been seen by human beings to be appreciated for their beauty and fragrance.

Lines 57-64: There might have been a brave person like Hampden, a man of great poetic talent like Milton or a great politician like Cromwell in that hamlet. Hampden, Milton and Cromwell could become great because of opportunities and education. The people of the hamlet did not have opportunities and education to achieve fame and greatness. If the dead of the hamlet had been lucky, they would have been praised by the senates; they would have driven out poverty and disease and would have marked a place for themselves in their national history.

Lines 65-72: The dead of the hamlet need not be sorry for what they could not be. It was their lot to be like that. They did not have materialistic prosperity. Their innocence saved them from committing crimes. What is the history of any royal dynasty? It is all merciless and inhuman killing. Killing the near and dear for political power. But the villagers were innocent and had clean hearts. They did not have any necessity to struggle to hide the truth. They did not heap wealth, cheat anyone and go to temple to offer prayers for atonement.

Lines 73-80: The villagers lived a peaceful life. They were not greedy. They did not leave conventional and moralistic way of life. They just live a contented life and never wanted to have anything more. They did not want to have any memorials and tombstones. They never wanted to have epitaphs and statues to be made after them. The dead, anyhow, do not and cannot see any of these. The writings on the epitaphs and the sculpture may just invite bad comments. Then it is better for the villagers not to have tombs and statues.

Lines 81-88: The tombstones may give information about the dead regarding the name, years of living and their fame to compose an elegy. The rustic moralist is not interested in all these. He does not want pomp in and after his death. Human beings forget everything and everyone soon. The dead, however great they may be, are forgotten very soon. Their memorials and tombstones cannot immortalize them.

Lines 89-96: The parting soul generally likes someone who is very much dear to it. The soul expects some pious tears from its dear ones when it leaves its human body. The soul responds from its tomb. The thoughts of the dead live in their ashes. The poet says that if the readers are so mindful of the unhonoured dead, his poetry would give them an idea about the artless and innocent lives of the dead villagers. The poet is deeply pained by the death of his friend. He goes on inquiring whether anyone had seen his friend recently.

Lines 97-112: A genial young man may say that he has often seen him at dawn walking fast through the dew to the uplands for the day's work. At noon he may be found under that mighty beech tree, stretching his tired body and looking at the brook passing by. The friend may be found wandering in the forest. Sometimes he is found smiling and at other times sorrowful like a lonely person or a disappointed lover.

Lines 113-120: One morning the poet missed his friend at the hill, where they usually meet. The poet asked everyone and looked everywhere for his friend, but in vain. The poet went towards the church. Dirges were being sung. His friend was being carried slowly and was laid low under the aged tree. A tombstone was also there.

Lines 121-132: The epitaph says that the dead youth is laid upon the lap of the earth and is unknown. He did not know what science and learning was. Melancholy marked him for herself. Though he was not rich, he had every heavenly virtue. He gave everything he had to Misery and suffered a lot. He just wished to have a good friend and Heaven granted him a friend in the person of the poet. We should not try to know any more about the virtues or weaknesses of the dead youth, because he is reposing in the bosom of God.

11.6. Brief Critical Evaluation:

"Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" established Thomas Gray's fame. The poem enjoyed an immediate and immense popularity. The moralizing mood, the chiseled perfection of phrase and the stately march of the verse were in the great romantic tradition. Meditation in churchyards was a favourite exercise of the poets who wanted to get away from the modern world. The darkness, the "solemn stillness" the ivy-mantled tower and moping owl, the lonely youth, marked by Melancholy for her own, are typical romantic touches.

There are critics who deny it a place among great poems on the ground that it is

merely a collection of commonplaces felicitously phrased. They complain that the poem just expresses the thoughts that occur to all of us when we are "mindful of the unhonored dead". It is true that Gray does not startle or exalt. There is nothing in his meditations on the mystery of life and death to stir our pulses.

Dr. Johnson, who disliked most of Gray's poems, had high appreciation for the elegy. He said: "Had Gray written often thus, it had been vain to blame, and useless to praise him." The genuineness of feeling and beautiful clearness and simplicity of style make Gray's thoughts our thoughts. We are possessed by them and persuade ourselves that we have always felt them.

11.7. Summary

Thomas Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" is a pastoral elegy. The origin of the poem goes back to 1742 to the death of Jonathan Rogers, the poet's uncle. Pathetic scenes of poverty and pastoral atmosphere find an important place in the poem. It is dusk. It is time to stop work and take rest. The poet is left alone on the outskirts of the village. Everything around him is dim and dull. The poet looks around. There are sturdy elm and yew trees. The rude forefathers of the hamlet have been buried in the shades of the trees. None of them has a tomb because they are poor. Only heaps and mounds are present in the graveyard of the hamlet.

The people of the village wake up early in the morning and are deeply engaged with their daily routine. The dead have been almost forgotten. The dead of the hamlet were a happy lot. They were all innocent and hard working people. They were neither rich nor popular. They do nor figure in the records of history. The poet sympathises with the dead. Family pride, political power physical beauty and material wealth do not save anyone from death. Death comes to all, alike. However great one may be, one must die ultimately. The poet observes that the hamlet is neglected. The people have not got opportunities to prove their talents. The villagers were illiterate. They were busy fighting poverty. Poverty had repressed them. Otherwise there might have been born a brave man like Hampdon, a man of great poetic talent like Milton, or a great politician like Cromwell. If the dead of the hamlet had been lucky, they would have been praised by the senates and they would have driven out poverty and disease.

The dead of the hamlet need not be sorry for what they could not be. Their innocence saved them from committing crimes. They were not greedy. They never wanted to have epitaphs and statues to be made after them. He does not want pomp even after his death. Human beings forget everything and everyone very soon. The dead, however great they may be, are forgotten very soon. The soul of the dead only expects some pious tears from its dear ones. The soul responds from its tomb. The poet says that if the readers are so mindful of the unhonoured dead, his poetry would give them an idea about the artless and innocent lives of the dead villagers.

The poet is deeply pained by the death of his friend. He goes on inquiring whether anyone has seen his friend recently. The friend is not found. One morning the poet missed his friend at the hill, where they usually meet. The poet went towards the church. His friend was being carried slowly and was laid low under the aged tree. A tombstone is also erected. The epitaph says that the dead youth is laid upon the lap of the earth and is unknown. He just wished to have a good friend and Heaven granted him a friend in the person of the poet. We should no longer try to know about the weaknesses or virtues of the dead youth, because he is reposing in the bosom of God.

11.8. Passages for Comprehension:

8.1. The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea,
The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

1. What is the time mentioned in the stanza?
Ans: Dusk.
2. Where is the herd coming from?
Ans: From the lea.
3. Who is going home?
Ans: The ploughman
4. Why does he plod?
Ans: He is tired of the day's work and cannot walk fast.
5. Does the poet have any human companion?
Ans: No

8.2. The breezy call of incense-breathing morn,
The swallow twittering from the straw built shed,
The cock's shrill clarion or the echoing horn,
No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.

1. How is the morning described?
Ans: Breezy and incense – breathing.
2. What is the swallow doing?
Ans: Twittering.
3. What does the cock do?
Ans: It crows very early in the morning and wakes up the people of the hamlet.
4. Why cannot all the sounds and smells wake 'them'up?
Ans: Because they are dead.
5. What is the 'lowly bed'?
Ans: The grave.

8.3. Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;
Hands that the rod of empire might have swayed,
Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre.

1. What is the neglected spot?
Ans: The hamlet.
2. What does the poet say?
Ans: If people get opportunities, education and encouragement, they will become great.
3. Who are laid there?
Ans: The dead people of the hamlet.
4. What is a lyre?
Ans: A stringed musical instrument.
5. Who are generally considered great?
Ans: Poets, rulers and musicians.

8.4 But knowledge to their eyes her ample page
Rich with the spoils of time did ne'er unroll;
Chill penury repressed their noble rage,
And froze the genial current of the soul.

1. What is denied to the villagers?
Ans: Literacy and knowledge.
2. How is knowledge described?
Ans: Infinite.
3. How are the people?
Ans: Very poor.
4. What is the effect of poverty on them?
Ans: They could not think of anything else than to work and eat.
5. How is their poverty?
Ans: Frightening.

8.5 One morn I missed him on the customed hill,
Along the heath and near his favourite tree;
Another came; not yet beside the rill,
Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he;

1. Who is ‘I’ in this stanza?

Ans: The poet

2. Where did the poet miss his friend?

Ans: On the hill where they usually meet.

3. Where did the poet look for his friend?

Ans: Along the heath and near the beech tree.

4. What is a ‘rill’?

Ans: A stream.

5. Why does the poet look for his friend?

Ans: Because he has great love for his friend and wants to meet him.

11.9. Sample Questions:

1. What is an elegy?
2. In what way is “Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard” a great poem?
3. Justify “Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard” as a pastoral elegy.
4. Show how Thomas Gray sympathises with the lot of the poor?

11.10. Suggested Reading:

1. Emile Legouis. A Short History of English Literature.
2. William J. Long. English Literature.

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Lesson – 12

W.B. Yeats : THE BALLAD OF FATHER GILLIGAN

Structure of the Lesson

12.1. Objectives:

After a study of the lesson the student will have an idea about:

(a) the ballad form
(b) W.B. Yeats as a great Irish poet and
(c) "The Ballad of Father Gilligan" as a beautiful ballad.

12.2.(a) Introduction to the Poet:

William Butler Yeats was born in a Dublin suburb on June 13, 1865. He lived and travelled in Ireland, London and Paris. He won the Nobel Prize in 1923. He directed his genius to solving problems through intuition, folklore and contemplation. Though counted among the modern English poets, Yeats remained an alien among them. He was essentially Irish in his thinking and also worked sometime for its freedom.

Yeats was influenced by Ezra Pound and T.S. Eliot. He was also influenced by Mohini Chatterjee who had gone to Dublin to preach Theosophy and Vedanta. In Rabindranath Tagore, Yeats discovered a poet for whom the past and traditions were a living and meaningful reality. He became a pioneer of the Celtic Revival. He had deep interest in the traditional Irish legends, themes, folklore and the supernatural world of ghosts and fairies. He was inspired by the oriental philosophy of the Upanishads and the mysticism of Blake.

Yeats was a genius in poetry like John Keats. He published several poems from an early age. Yeats lived for seventy-four years and has behind him a wealth of literary works. In modern poetry Yeats stands out as a dominant figure because he taught younger poets how to write. T.S. Eliot's tribute to Yeats is worth repeating: "He was one of the few whose history was the history of our own time, who are part of the unconsciousness of our age which cannot be understood without them".

Yeats's poetry, like all great poetry, is not only aristocratic but also came "from contact with the soil." His early work is dreamy, melodious and ornate in keeping with later romantic tradition. But the majority of scholars prefer the later poetry for its chiselled style, controlled emotion, structural brilliance and organic imagery.

12.2 (b) Introduction to Ballad

The word 'ballad' is derived from Italian 'ballare' which means 'to dance'. Fundamentally a ballad is a song that tells a story. It was originally a musical accompaniment to dance. Ballads were folk songs, originally recited, in sing song fashion among the common folk of the Middle Ages when there was no printed page. They were strong-songs – songs out of the hearts of the people. They were handed down from one generation to another by word of mouth. They are called ballad literature. The themes of the old ballads were "the essential passions of the heart".

The earliest ballads were composed in couplets. There is refrain and incremental repetition. The story unfolds slowly and gradually leading upto a terrific climax. The later ballads turned to the four-lined stanzas.

<u>Characteristic features of a ballad:</u>

a) The beginning is often abrupt.
b) The language is simple.
c) The story is told through dialogue and action.
d) The theme is often tragic (though there are a number of comic ballads).
e) There is often a refrain.
f) A ballad usually deals with a single episode.
g) The events leading to the crisis are related swiftly.
h) There is a strong dramatic element.
i) The narrator is impersonal.
j) Stock, well-tried epithets are used in the oral tradition.
k) There is frequently incremental repetition.
l) Imagery is simple.

There are two kinds of ballads: (i) the folk or popular ballad, (ii) the literary ballad. The Folk or Popular ballad is anonymous and is transmitted from singer to singer by word of mouth. It thus belongs to the oral tradition. It exists among illiterate or semi-literate people.

The Literary ballad is written down by a poet as he composes it.

Ballads of both traditions have distinct similarities. The ballad poet drew his materials from community life, from local and national history, from legend and folklore. His tales are usually of adventure, war, love, death and supernatural. Some of the greatest literary ballads were composed in the Romantic period. Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner" and John Keats's" La Belle Dame Sans Merci" are famous literary ballads.

12.3. The Text: THE BALLAD OF FATHER GILLIGAN

The old priest, Peter Gilligan,
Was weary night and day,
For half his flock were in their beds,
Or under green sods lay.

Once, while he nodded on a chair,
At the moth hour of eve,
Another poor man sent for him,
And he began to grieve.

I have no rest, nor joy, nor peace,
For people die and die;
And after, cried he, 'God forgive!
My body spake, not I !

He knelt, and leaning on the chair,
He prayed and fell asleep;
And the moth hour went from the fields
And stars began to peep.

They slowly into millions grew,
And leaves shook in the wind;
And God covered the world with shade
And whispered to mankind

Upon the time of sparrow chirp,
When the moths came once more,
The old priest Peter Gilligan
Stood upright on the floor.

‘Mavrone, Mavrone! The man has died
While I slept on the chair
He roused his horse out of his sleep
And rode with little care.

He rode now as he never rode,
By rocky land and fen;
The sick man’s wife opened the door;
‘Father! you come again!’

‘And is the poor man dead?’ he cried
‘He died an hour ago’.
The old Priest Peter Gilligan
In grief swayed to and fro.

‘When you were gone, he turned and died
As merry as a bird’.
The old priest Peter Gilligan
He knelt him at the word.

‘He who hath made the night of stars,
For souls, who tire and bleed,
Sent one of His great angels down
To help me in my need”.

‘He who is wrapped in purple robes,
With planets in His care,
Had pity on the least of things
Asleep upon a chair’.

12.4. Glossary:

weary	=	get tired of hard work
flock	=	a group of people under somebody’s spiritual and religious care (the villagers)
in their beds	=	the parishioners were sick and were in their beds
sod	=	mound of clay
under the sod	=	in the grave
nodded	=	rested
the moth hour of eve	=	the time of the day when moths come out; evening
grieve	=	feel sad because somebody has died
millions grew	=	many more stars appeared in the sky
Mavrone	=	an Irish word meaning ‘my dear one’
fen	=	an area of low flat wet land

12.5. Analysis of the Text:

The poem "The Ballad of Father Gilligan" is a short poem in twelve stanzas, each stanza consisting of four short lines. The ballad is based on Irish folk lore. W.B. Yeats believed in occultism, black magic and supernatural element. The poem is an assertion of Christian faith. The supernatural element is not introduced directly, but in a subtle way. Peter Gilligan is pleasantly surprised and thrilled that God has immediately answered his prayer by giving him a nightful sleep and at the same time sending an angel in the person of the priest to the man who is in need of his service. The poem also echoes the Christian doctrine that we should not complain. The priest complained that he had "no rest, nor joy, nor peace" because half his flock were either dead or in beds. In the next moment he felt sorry for what he had said and asked God's forgiveness. This statement reminds us of the words which Jesus said when he found Peter sleeping: (St. Mathew Ch. XXVI verse 41). "The spirit is willing enough, but flesh is weak." (My body spake, not I).

Lines 1-4: Peter Gilligan was an old priest in a parish. His parishioners were passing through a hard time. Half of the parishioners were either dead or were seriously ill and bed-ridden. The old priest had to work day and night for them. He was tired of his work.

Lines 5-8: One evening, when moths had just come out of their hiding, the old priest was sitting in a chair. He was in deep thought. He received a message from a dying man and felt very sad over the number of people dying every day.

Lines 9-12: He felt that he had no rest, no joy and no peace because people had been dying and dying. Later he repented for his complaint and dissatisfaction. Realization dawned on him. He prayed to God for his forgiveness and said that it was his body which needed rest and all that, not his soul.

Lines 13-16: Peter Gilligan knelt before God and sincerely prayed to God. While in prayer he leaned on the chair and fell asleep. The evening had slipped into the night. Stars began to appear in the sky one by one.

Lines 17-20: It was a cloudless night. There were millions of stars. There was a fine breeze and the leaves on the trees shook. It was all calm and cool. God covered the world with shade and whispered something to mankind.

Lines 21-24: It was slowly dawning. Sparrows were chirping. Once again moths came into the sky. The world was slowly waking up. The old priest also woke up suddenly. He felt surprised and shocked that he had slept the whole night. He stood upright on the floor.

Lines 25-28: The old priest was sorry because he had neglected the call of a dying man and fell asleep. He felt duty bound. He woke up his horse. His idea was to go to the dying man as fast as he could. While in a hurry, the old priest did not take any care of himself.

Line 29-32: Father Gillian rode his horse very fast. Rock or plane was no matter. He had never ridden like that. He reached the sick man's door. The sick man's wife opened the door for the priest. She was surprised to see the priest and asked him why he had come there again.

Lines 33-36: The priest asked the woman if the sick man had died. She said that he had died an hour ago. The priest felt very sad because he fell asleep, while in prayer and could not attend on the dying man.

Lines 37-40: The woman said that Father Gillian had come to their house, sat by the dying man, listened to him and prayed for him. The sick man felt happy and had a peaceful death an hour after the priest had left him. This was all a big surprise to the priest. He knew well that he did not come to the sick man but slept the whole night like a log.

Lines 41-44: Father Gilligan understood that it was all a miracle of God. God, who has created millions of stars, knows full well what to do for the tired and the suffering lot. God had listened to his prayer for rest. He gave him sound sleep. God also had directed one of his angels to assume the person of Father Gillian and sent him to the house of the sick man, who had sent the message.

Lines 45-48: God is richly dressed in purple robes. He is the master of the world. All the planets are in his care. He pities everyone and answers every prayer. Father Gillian's prayer is immediately answered and his heart overflows with love for God and his belief in God has strengthened.

12.6. Brief Critical Evaluation:

The poem statisfies the characteristics of a literary ballad. It is based on Irish folk lore. The language is simple and musical. The supernatural element adds lustre to the poem. The poem has beautiful dramatic element in the conversation between the priest and the woman. The poem is read even today for its simplicity in its flow and for its noble message of ascertaining faith in the existence of God.

12.7. Summary:

The poem "The Ballad of Father Gilligan" is based on Irish folklore. It is also an assertion of Christian faith. It also echoes the Christian doctrine that we should not complain. Peter Gilligan was an old priest in a parish. His parishioners were passing through a hard time. Half of the parishioners were either dead or were seriously ill and bed-ridden. The old priest had to work day and night for them. He was tired of his work. One evening when he was in deep thought, he received a message from a dying man and felt very sad. He felt he had no rest, no joy because people had been dying and dying. Later he repented for his complaint and prayed to God to forgive him. It was his body which needed rest but not his soul.

Peter Gilligan sincerely prayed to God and while in prayer he fell asleep. It was a cloudless night. All was calm and cool. It was slowly dawning. The priest woke up suddenly. He was shocked that he had slept the whole night. The priest was sorry because he had neglected the call of a dying man. He felt duty bound. He woke up his horse. In his hurry to reach the dying man the priest did not take any care of himself. He rode his Horse very fast as he had never done before. He reached the sick man's door. When the sick man's wife opened the door she was surprised to see the priest and asked him why he had come there again. She said that the man died an hour ago. The woman said that Father Gilligan had come to their house, sat by the dying man, listened to him and prayed for him. The sick man was happy and died

peacefully. The priest was surprised at this news. He knew that he did not come to the sick man but slept the whole night like a log.

Father Gilligan understood that it was a miracle of God. God had listened to his prayer for rest and granted him sound sleep. God also directed one of his angels to assume the person of Father Gilligan and sent him to the sick man. God is the master of the world. He pities everyone and answers every prayer. God gave immediate answer to Father Gilligan's prayer and so his heart overflew with love for God. By experiencing this miracle the priest's faith in God is further strengthened.

12.8. Passages for Comprehension

8.1 The old priest, Peter Gilligan,
Was weary night and day,
For half his flock were in their beds,
Or under green sods lay.

1. Who is the person described in the stanza?
Ans: Father (Peter) Gilligan.

2. How is the old Priest?
Ans: Tired.

3. Were the parishioners hale and healthy?
Ans: No.

4. What does 'in their beds' mean?
Ans: Seriously ill and confined to beds.

5. Explain the line 'under green sods lay'.
Ans: They were in the graves buried deep in the earth.

8.2 I have no rest, nor joy, nor peace,
For people die and die;
And after, cried he, God forgive!
My body spake, not I.

1. What did Father Gillian want to have?
Ans: Rest, joy and peace.

2. Why was he deeply troubled?
Ans: Because people had been dying in large numbers.

3. What did Father Gillian wish?
Ans: He wished that his parishioners should have good health and happy lives.

4. Why did he seek God's forgiveness?
Ans: As a true Christian he should not complain and find fault with God. But, as he did so, he immediately realized his mistake and prayed to God for forgiveness.

5. Explain "My body spake, not I."

Ans: This has a reference in the Bible. The body complains of pains but the soul is not affected by physical problems. Peter Gilligan submitted to God only that his wearied body wanted to have rest.

8.3. He rode now as he never rode,
By rocky lane and fen;
The sick man's wife opened the door;
'Father! You come again!'

1. Why did Father Gilligan ride so fast?

Ans: To attend on the sick man who had sent him message last evening.

2. How was his way?

Ans: Rocky lane and flat low land.

3. Who opened the door for the priest?

Ans: The sick man's wife.

4. Why was the woman surprised?

Ans: Because Father Gilligan had come there once again.

5. Did Father Gilligan visit the sick man earlier?

Ans: No. Father Gilligan realized that God took pity on him and sent an angel in his person to the sick man. Here we find the supernatural element. Yeats was interested in the supernatural element.

8.4. "He who hath made the night of stars,
For souls, who tire and bleed,
Sent one of His great angels down
To help me in my need."

1. Who has made the stars?

Ans: God.

2. Who comforts the tired and the bleeding?

Ans: God.

3. Why did God send an angel?

Ans: Because he took pity on the old priest and wanted to give him some rest.

4. What was the need of the old priest?

Ans: He was tired and was in need of rest.

5. What is the tone of the speaker?

Ans: In all humility the speaker praises God.

12.9. Sample Questions:

1. Write an essay on the origin and evolution of the 'ballad'.

2. Write a critical appreciation of the poem "The Ballad of Father Gilligan".

3. How does Yeats bring out the typical features of a ballad in his poem "The Ballad of Father Gilligan"?

12.10. Suggested Reading:

1. Adams, Hazard. Blake and Yeats: The Contrary Vision.
2. Jeffares, A. Norman. W.B. Yeats: The Poems.
3. Kirby, Sheelah. The Yeats Country.
4. Menon, V.K. Narayana. The Development of William Butler Yeats.
5. Parkinson, T. W.B. Yeats, Self Critic
6. Stock A.G. W.B. Yeats: His Poetry and Thought.

Dr. Y.S.R. Anjaneyulu

Lesson – 13

Robert Burns: A RED, RED ROSE

Structure of the Lesson

13.1. Objectives:

After a study of the lesson, the student will have an idea about

a) what a lyric is
b) the contribution of Robert Burns to lyric poetry
c) ideal love

13.2. (a) Introduction to the Poet:

Robert Burns, the "heaven taught ploughman" was born near the Town of Ayr in Scotland in 1759. Burn's father was a gardener. As a child Burns listened to ballads from his mother's lips. His father was a reading man and had a collection of songs. "I pored over them," said Burns, "driving my cart, or walking to labour, song by song, verse by verse." He had a longing to immortalize the scenery and life of the "dear native country" Scotland. An early biographer records: His favourite time for composition was at the plough." He got very close to nature's heart at such times. The fruit of his labours was the Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect published at Kilmarnock in 1786. These poems brought him fame and popularity. Appointment as an exciseman gave Burns a living wage and leisure to continue his writing. He died in 1796, in his thirty seventh year.

Burns was deeply moved by the dying songs of his country – old Highland melodies. His genius was essentially lyrical and he is known and admired by the world over, chiefly for his lyrics. There is simplicity and lucidity in his songs and lyrics. Naturally, he is regarded as the pet poet of common men. Some of his lyrics are intensely personal and emotional. He has an astonishing skill to describe his own emotions with vividness and simplicity and directly appeals to the readers. The most important characteristic of Burns's poetry is his wide-ranging humanity. He sympathizes not only with all humanity but with all living creatures.

13.2.(b) Lyric

The Greeks defined a lyric as a song to be sung to the accompaniment of a lyre. A lyric is usually short, not longer than fifty or sixty lines. It usually expresses the feelings and thoughts of a single speaker in a personal fashion. Lyric poetry comprises the bulk of all poetry.

An abundance of lyric poetry survives from the later Middle Ages. From the 13th and 14th centuries a large number of religious and devotional lyrics in English survive. Many of them are of great beauty. Chaucer was a great lyricist of this period. The Renaissance period was the great age of the lyric. Sir Thomas Wyatt and the Earl of Surrey made outstanding contributions to lyric. The principal lyric poets in this period were Sidney, Spenser, Shakespeare and Milton.

The lyric form was not favoured much by the 18th century poets. Toward the end of the 18th century and during the Romantic period there was a major revival of lyric poetry. Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley and Keats were the most accomplished lyricists of this period. Robert Burns is also considered a talented lyricist. Throughout the 19th century many poets used the lyric form. Tennyson, Browning and Hopkins were great lyricists of this period.

Structure of the Lyric: The lyric can be divided into three parts. The first part or the first stanza states the emotion which has set the poet's imagination. The second part, which forms the bulk of the poem consists of the thoughts suggested by the emotion. The expression reaches its high pitch. The third part is almost as short as the first part. It is usually the last stanza. It marks the poet's return to his initial mood.

The subject-matter of the Lyric: The Lyric gives expression to a single emotion or feeling. It appeals more to the heart than to the intellect. It is always short and brief. It goes without saying that the lyric is a subjective poem. It expresses the poet's imagination. The favourite subject of lyric poets has always been love.

13.3. The Text:

My love is like a red red rose
That's newly sprung in June:
My love is like the melodie
That's sweetly played in tune.

As fair art thou, my bonnie lass,
So deep in love am I:
And I will love thee still, my dear,
Till a' the seas gang dry.

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi' the sun:
And I will, love thee still, my dear,
While the sands o' life shall run.

And fare thee well, my only love,
And fare thee well a while!
And I will come again, my love,
Tho' it were ten thousand mile.

13.4. Glossary:

a red, red rose	=	the rose flower stands for beauty, purity, freshness and innocence. The poet compares his passionate love for his lady love to a red rose.
newly	=	freshly, very recently
sprung	=	born, blossomed on the rose plant
melodie	=	musical tune
fair	=	beautiful
bonny	=	very pretty, attractive
lass	=	girl
gang	=	(here) collectively and completely together
fare thee	=	goodbye to you
a while	=	for some time

13.5. Analysis of the Text

"A Red, Red Rose" is a short lyric in four stanzas. Burns's lyric renews its hold upon the hearts of every passing generation. It is a simple unpretentious song. It springs so naturally and flows so freely from the moment's mood that it seems as

artless as bird song. Burns's genius was a natural flowering from the soil of Scottish song. He was influenced by several poets but he never imitated them. He wove old phrases into new patterns. 'My love is like a red, red rose' is typical of this process. In an old ballad, he found the lines:

Her cheeks are like the Roses
That blossom fresh in June,
O, she's like a new-strung instrument
That's newly put in tune.

In another ballad, he found the line: "And the rocks melt with the sun."

In another, the following lines occur:

The seas they shall run dry
And rocks melt into sands;
Then I'll love you still, my dear,
When all those things are done.

And in yet another poem, he found the lines:

Fare you well, my own true love,
And fare you well for a while,
And I will be sure to return back again,
If I go to ten thousand miles.

When Burns wrote this poem old phrases were lilting in his mind. These bits have become a single, a complete, and an integral thing, transformed by his magic touch into pure music. In the old phrases something is lacking. When Burns has touched them, they glow.

Lines 1-4: The poet glorifies his love. It is fresh and true. It is fully-grown like a red rose which has just sprung in the month of June. His love is not only sincere and pious but also gives him joy and delight. It is like a sweet song wonderfully sung to the accompaniment of some musical instrument.

Lines 5-8: The poet has great appreciation for the beauty of his lady love. She is charming and pretty. His love for her is deep and the depth cannot be measured. He will continue to love her. It ever grows and grows. It will continue to remain there fresh and pious till all the seas in the world have dried. The passage of time will not bring any change in the intensity of his love.

Lines 9-12: The poet further declares that his love for her will remain fresh till all the water in the seas has dried and all the rocks in the word have melted in the heat of the

sun. Drying of the seas and melting of the rocks are extremes. When they do happen, there will not be any life anywhere. Here the poet is of the opinion that the ravages of time will not and cannot alter his love. To live is to love. He assures her that as long as he has breath in him and life runs in his body, he will continue to love her.

The poet has a fear of the inevitable death which may separate him from his lady love. His only love in the world is she alone. In the face of death he bids her farewell. He believes in rebirth. His separation from her will be just short and brief. He knows that the earth is the right place for love. He will definitely come back to her for her love, however far away he may have been taken. Distance is no matter, no problem for true and sincere love. His love for her will not be quenched even after many births and deaths. There is no death to their love.

13.6. Brief Critical Evaluation:

Robert Burns's lyric is so hearty and red-blooded. The poem is usually and unanimously considered the most sentimental lyric. The poet describes his pious and ardent love in a touching and picturesque manner. It bears all the qualities of the romantic poetic tradition. There is alternate rhyming throughout. It is musical and can be sung easily. The figurative language, lovely metaphors, and the symbolic image of death as a cause of parting of lovers are certainly heart-rending. The lyric arrests the attention of the readers all over.

13.7. Summary:

Robert Burns' "A Red Red Rose" is a wonderful love song of a passionate lover. The lover addresses his lady love in the lyric and tells her that his love for her is pure, steady and even death cannot separate him from her forever. The poet glorifies his love. His love is not only sincere and pious but also gives him joy and delight. It is full-blown like a red rose. The poet has great appreciation for the beauty of his ladylove. She is charming and pretty. His love for her cannot be measured. He will continue to love her. It will continue to remain fresh and pious, till all the seas in the world have dried. The passage of time will not change his love for her.

The poet declares that his love for her remains the same till all the rocks in the world have melted in the heat of the sun. The poet feels that the ravages of time will

not and cannot alter this love. For him, to live is to love. As long as he has breath in him he will continue to love her. The poet has a fear of the inevitable death which may separate him from his lady love. He believes in rebirth. Distance is no matter, no problem for true and sincere love. There is no death to their love.

13.8. Passages for Comprehension:

1. O, my love is like a red, red rose,
That's newly sprung in June.
O, my love is like the melodie
That's sweetly played in tune.

1. Whom does the poet address?
Ans: His lady love.
2. How is his love for her?
Ans: It is like a red rose which has just sprung in the month of June.
3. What is the reason for the poet to compare his love to a red rose?
Ans: To make clear that his love is pure and fresh.
4. What is the word in the stanza which means 'Musical'?
Ans: Melodie.
5. How does the poet appear in this stanza?
Ans: As a passionate and sincere lover.

2. Till all the seas gang dry my dear,
And the rocks melt with the sun!
And I will love thee still, my dear,
While the sands of life shall run.

1. What is the meaning of the first two lines?
Ans: His love will remain constant inspite of natures' extremities.
2. Who is 'my dear' in the stanza?
Ans: The poet's lady love.
3. How long will the poet love her?
Ans: As long as he has life.
4. What is the poet's primary concern and ambition?
Ans: To love.
5. Will the time bring a change in his love?
Ans: No.

3. And fare thee well, my only love!
And fare thee well a while!
And I will come again, my love,
Tho' it were ten thousand mile.

1. Why does the poet bid farewell?
Ans: Because he knows death is inevitable.
2. How many does the poet love?
Ans: His only love is his ladylove.

3. What is the poet's confidence?

Ans: That he will have rebirth and their love will continue.

4. How long may they be separated?

Ans: Only for a short time.

5. What type of love do you find in this stanza?

Ans: It is immortal and a love of many many lives.

13.9. Sample Questions:

1. Write an essay on the 'lyric' form.
2. Write a critical appreciation of the poem 'A Red, Red Rose'.

13.10. Suggested Reading:

1. Marjorie Boulton. The Anatomy of Poetry.
2. William J. Long. English Literature.
3. A.C. Bradley. Oxford Lectures on Poetry.

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Lesson – 14

Robert Browning : MY LAST DUCHESS

Structure of the Lesson

14.1. Objectives:

After a study of the lesson the student will be in a position to understand

a) what a Dramatic monologue is.

b) the characteristic features of the Victorian Age.

c) the contribution of Robert Browning to English literature.

d) what a character study is.

14.2. (a) Introduction to the Poet:

Robert Browning was born in Camberwell, a Parish near London on May 7, 1812. His father was a bank clerk and had a proud possession of six thousand volumes in his library. His mother was religious and had a fine taste for music. Browning has learnt a lot from his father and systematically used his father's library. When he was seventeen, he went for a term to a Greek class at University College, Gower Street. When Browning was just fourteen, his mother presented him the works of Shelley and Keats. He was greatly influenced by Byron, Shelley and Keats. He made up his mind, while in teens, to make poetry his career and profession. His decision was supported by his dear father.

Browning wrote his first poem Pauline when he was twenty-one. The poem showed Shelley's influence. It was so savagely reviewed by critic John Stuart Mill that Browning was deeply humiliated. Then he turned to the theatre. He considered the drama as the highest form of expression. He, therefore, took to writing plays for the stage and produced eight plays in a period of eight years. His dramas were helpless failures. He failed because his plays were deficient in action and lacked a sustained plot. His real interest lay in soul study, in introspection and psychological analysis. His dramatic skill could be exercised to advantage in the Dramatic Monologue.

Robert Browning met Elizabeth Barrett, a poet of high rank on May 20, 1845. She was six years his senior. She was a very delicate woman, who spent most of her life on a sofa. Her father was unwilling to allow her to marry. But Browning fell in love with her and made her a proposal and Elizabeth had to agree that elopement was the only possible course of action. They got married in a church on September 18, 1846 and fled to Italy.

The Brownings were extremely happy in Italy. Browning loved Italy, especially, the art and life of Italy. He had a strange fascination for painting and sculpture. He felt a genuine satisfaction about his own achievement as a lover and husband because he restored the health of his wife. A son was born to them in 1849. The happy life of the Brownings came to a close on June 29, 1861, when Elizabeth died. Browning spent his later life chiefly in London. He was the centre of an admiring group of friends and disciples. He died in Venice on December 12, 1889. He was buried at Westminster Abbey.

Fame and Popularity: Fame came more slowly to Robert Browning. Both critics and public found his poems dense and difficult. Before his wife's death in 1861, Browning was often referred to as "Mrs. Browing's hushand." Only later in life did he become popular.

According to Hugh Walker, "Browning did not love to work on topics connected with his own generation. If he had a preference, it was for the Italian Renaissance rather than for any other age or country." Browning's philosophy of life is characterized by robust optimism. The universe, the beauty of Nature, he believes,

is an expression of the creative joy of God. According to him true joy is in effort, not in success. Faith in god, faith in the immortality of the soul, faith in the earnest endeavour are the cardinal points of Browning's philosophy of human life.

Browning's optimism, says Chesterton, "is found on imperfections of man; he drives hope from human inefficiency." The famous line in Pippa Passes " God is in his heaven, all is right with the world" is often cited for his strong and pious optimism. Browning in his own way sought to give the world some message of reassurance and hope, especially of courage.

The Dramatic Monologue was used by Browning with amazing skill and success. As Hugh Walker points out, "Browning did not invent the dramatic monologue, but he made it specially his own, and no one else has ever put such rich and varied material into it."

14.2. (b) Dramatic Monologue:

The Dramatic Monologue is 'dramatic' because it is the utterance of an imaginary character. The poet does not speak it. In it character is developed not through any description but through conflict between the opposite thoughts and emotions of the character. It is a 'monologue' because it is a conversation of a single individual with himself. 'Mono' means 'one' and 'logue' means 'conversation.' The form is also referred to as 'monodrama.'

The dramatic monologue is different from the soliloquy. In the soliloquy we find the character at a critical moment talking to himself and within himself. The dramatic monologue too has a speaker. He talks to a real or imaginary audience. The monologue expresses a conflict of thought, a conflict between a desire and an external situation, or a conflict between man's view and god's view. The conflict would be a kind of monodrama.

In the dramatic monologue the poet lays bare all the details, the entire mental apparatus, and begins reconstructing a soul before our very eyes. We watch the details and observe the subtle nuances. We are given all the secrets of the soul and there is no obscurity or vagueness. Thus the character is made to explain itself

through speech. The dramatic monologue, therefore, is an expression of the thought of a given character.

The dramatic monologue is the technique in which Browning found his natural expression and an art that he perfected. His main idea and aim was to throw light upon the realm of consciousness by means of the method of psychological analysis which can finally reveal the individual expression of each individual.

14.3. The Text: My Last Duchess

That's my last duchess painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive. I call
That piece a wonder, now: Frà Pandolf's hands
Worked busily a day, and there she stands,
Will't please you sit and look at her? I said
"Frà Pandolf" by design, for never read
Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
The depth and passion of its earnest glance,
But to myself they turned (since none puts by
The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)
And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,
How such a glance came there; so, not the first
Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 'twas not
Her husband's presence only, called that spot
Of joy into the duchess' cheek: perhaps
Frà Pandolf chanced to say, "Her mantle laps
Over my lady's wrist too much,' or "Paint
Must never hope to reproduce the faint
Half-flush that dies along her throat:" such stuff
Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough
For calling up that spot of joy. She had
A heart – how shall I say? – too soon made glad,
Too easily impressed: she liked whate'er
She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.
Sir, 'twas all one! My favor at her breast,
The dropping of the daylight in the West,
The bough of cherries some officious fool
Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule
She rode with round the terrace – all and each
Would draw from her alike the approving speech,
Or blush, at least. She thanked men, — good! But thanked
Somehow – I know not how – as if she ranked
My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name
With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to blame
This sort of trifling? Even had you skill
In speech – (which I have not) – to make your will
Quite clear to such an one, and say, "Just this

Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,
Or there exceed the mark" – and if she let
Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set
Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse,
– E'en then would be some stooping; and I choose
Never to stoop. Oh, sir, she smiled, no doubt,
Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without
Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands;
Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands
As if alive. Will't please you rise? We'll meet
The company below, then. I repeat,
The Count your master's known munificence
Is ample warrant that no just pretence
Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;
Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed
At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go
Together down, sir. Notice Neptune, though,
Taming a sea-horse, though a rarity,
Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me!

14.4. Glossary:

duchess	=	the wife of a Duke
Fra Pandolf	=	great Italian painter
countenance	=	a person's face
depth	=	the quality in a work of art or a photograph which makes it appear not to be flat
passion	=	a strong feeling of love, enthusiasm, etc.
earnest	=	sincere
glance	=	look, zealous
durst	=	(old poetic from) do
spot of joy	=	dimple in the cheeks
mantle	=	a loose piece of clothing without sleeves, worn over other clothes
laps	=	coils, folds, warps
half-flush	=	half-suffused with warm colour; half-inflamed with passion and pride
such stuff	=	simple comment or praise
courtesy	=	polite behaviour that shows respect for other people
everywhere	=	not merely towards her husband
bough	=	bunch
officious	=	given to offering unwanted service
fool	=	(old usage) a common or ordinary man
mule	=	the offspring of a male donkey and a female horse
blush	=	the red colour that spreads over one's face
trifling	=	small and not important
disgust	=	to sicken, to provide intense dislike or disapproval in someone

lessoned	=	taught, tutored, guided
stoop	=	bend down, lower oneself in dignity
rise	=	stand up
munificence	=	extremely generous
ample	=	plenty
warrant	=	(old usage) to assert something with confidence
pretence	=	the act of pretending, make believe
avowed	=	openly stated
nay	=	(old fashioned) used to emphasize something
Neptune	=	a star, the sea god
taming	=	riding, controlling
rarity	=	something for its uniqueness, a great work of art
Innsbruck	=	a famous Italian artist and sculptor

14.5. Analysis of The Text:

Robert Browning's "My Last Duchess" is regarded as one of the finest dramatic monologues, not only of Browning, but in the whole range of English literature. In all probability the speaker was Alfonso II, fifth Duke of Ferrara, born in 1553. Ferrara was an important cultural centre during the Renaissance. It is also possible that the character of the Duke in the poem is just an imaginary and fictitious creation. But Browning has captured the very spirit of Renaissance Italy, its intrigues, its sensuality, its greed, as well as its cultural and artistic activity in his 'My Last Duchess'.

Lines 1-5: The Duke of Ferrara takes the messenger to the portrait of his last Duchess painted beautifully on the wall and shows it to him. It is a wonderful, realistic and lively picture painted by monk and painter Fra Pandolf in a single day. The Duke is proud of the portrait and invites the messenger to sit down and look well at the picture for proper appreciation of the art.

Lines 6-13: The Duke tells the messenger about the painter in particular with a design. The painter was a monk who had no interest in the fair sex and would not flirt. Moreover the painter was given just one day to complete the painting. The Duke did not want to give any possibility either for the artist or for his lost Duchess to be drawn to each other. Visitors who have looked at the picture have always noticed the deep and passionate look in her eyes and turned to the Duke with an inquiring look to know the reason. But none ever had the courage to ask him.

Lines 13-20: The Duke tells the messenger about his wife's dimples on her cheeks and her behaviour. His wife was just seventeen and had beautiful dimples. Her face would glow and her dimple cheeks would blush with happiness in her husband's presence. She would also respond in the same way even to little acts of courtesy. She was an embodiment of childish innocence and would take casual remarks as compliments and so would blush with pleasure.

Lines 21-34: The Duchess had an innocent heart and was always glad. She liked everyone and everything and was open in her happiness. She had no discrimination and would react in the same way when her husband presented her beautiful jewellery, or when she looked at the beautiful sunset, or when some admirer presented her some petty thing. The Duke did not like this. His pride was hurt. She was married to a Duke whose family has a great history of nine hundred years. But she never maintained dignity and pride. She thanked everybody in the same way.

Lines 35-43: The Duke never liked her way of thanking everyone and everything. He did not try to educate her and bring her into his way because he thought that it was beneath his dignity. Even if he tried, there might not have been any change. So he decided not to stoop.

Lines 43-56: Her habit of smiling and thanking continued. The Duke could no longer tolerate it. Therefore, he gave orders that her smilings should stop. What were the orders he gave? The poet has left the meaning vague. Perhaps the Duchess was murdered.

This is the tragic story of the innocent Duchess. The Duke asks the messenger to rise so that they would go and meet the people waiting for him. The Duke reminds the messenger that he knows the generosity of the Count and he expects a good dowry from him. The cunning Duke tells the messenger that his primary concern is the Count's daughter not the dowry.

As the Duke and the messenger come down, the Duke calls the attention of the messenger to a bronze statue of Neptune, the sea-god. The statue shows the god riding and controlling a sea horse. Comparison may be drawn between Neptune riding a horse and the Duke who is desirous of grooming a new bride.

14.6. Brief Critical Evaluation:

As John Bryson remarks, “The outstanding quality of this short monologue is the terseness and economy with which the dramatic situation is handled. It displays Browning’s mastery of irony and understatement. It also demonstrates his historical imagination, his power of projecting himself into the mood and characters of past age”.

In the tradition of dramatic monologue, “My Last Duchess” has only one speaker, the Duke. Besides the Duke, there are two more characters – the Duchess Lucrezia di Thedici and the emissary who has brought a marriage proposal from a powerful and well known Count to the widowed Duke. Browning asks the reader here and elsewhere to collaborate with him in imagining the implied situation.

The proud egoistic, stone-hearted and business-like Duke seeks to impress on the envoy and on his master that his wife has to exhibit a certain specific kind of behaviour. He would not tolerate any rivals for the smiles of his next wife. As Neptune, the sea god tamed a horse, he tamed and killed his last wife and was ready to tame and groom another one. The new wife must concentrate all her attention and life on himself alone.

The characters of the Duke and the Duchess are sketched in a masterly fashion. The Duke has jealousy and no love. He has self-love and the tyranny of possession. He does not know giving and sharing. He is vain of “a nine-hundred-years-old name.” There is wide contrast between the Duke and the Duchess. The poem is a beautiful study in psychology.

14.7. Summary:

Robert Browning’s “My Last Duchess” is regarded as one of the finest dramatic monologues not only of Browning, but in the whole range of English literature. The setting is the Duke’s place. The Duke’s wife has died recently. Now he is looking for a suitable alliance for remarriage. A messenger from a powerful and well known Count has come to the Duke with a marriage proposal. The Duke of Ferrara has artistic taste and is a patron and collector of arts. He has a collection of paintings and statues made of bronze.

The Duke of Ferrara takes the messenger to the portrait of his last Duchess painted beautifully on the wall and shows it to him. It is a wonderful, realistic and lively picture painted by monk and painter Fra Pandolf in a single day. The Duke is proud of the portrait and invites the messenger to look at the picture. The Duke tells the messenger about the painter in particular. The painter was a monk who had no interest in the fair sex and would not flirt. The Duke did not give any possibility for the artist or for his last Duchess to be drawn to each other. The visitors noticed the deep and passionate look in her eyes but never dared to ask the Duke about it. She was an embodiment of childish innocence and would take casual remarks as compliments and so would blush with pleasure.

The Duchess had an innocent heart and was always glad. She does not show any discrimination between her husband and her admirers. The Duke did not like this attitude in her. His pride was hurt. The Duke's family had a great history of nine hundred years. Being a Duchess she never maintained dignity and pride. She thanked everyone in the same way. The Duke never tried to educate her because he thought that it was beneath his dignity. Her habit of smiling and thanking continued. The Duke could no longer tolerate it. Therefore he gave orders that her smilings should stop. Here the poet has left the meaning vague. Perhaps the Duchess was murdered. This is the tragic story of the innocent Duchess. The Duke is ready to remarry. He tells the messenger that his primary concern is the Count's daughter not the dowry. The proud, egoistic, stone-hearted and business-like Duke seeks to impress on the envoy. As Neptune, the sea god tamed a horse, the Duke tamed and killed his last wife and was ready to tame and groom another one.

14.8. Passages for Comprehension:

1. That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,
   Looking as if she were alive. I call
   That piece a wonder, now: Fra Pandolf's hands
   Worked busily a day, and there she stands.

1. Who is the speaker of these lines?
Ans: The Duke of Ferrara.
2. How does the painting look?
Ans: It looks as if it were alive.
3. What does the Duke call the painting?
Ans: A wonder.
4. Who is Fra Pandolf?

Ans: The painter who painted the Duchess.
5. Why is the painting a wonder?
Ans: He was a talented painter and completed the work in just a day.

2. She had
A heart – how shall I say – too soon made glad
Too easily impressed; she liked whate'er
She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.

1. Does the Duke appreciate or criticize his last Duchess?
Ans: He criticizes her.
2. What type of heart did the Duchess have?
Ans: She had a heart which was always glad.
3. What did she like?
Ans: She liked everyone and everything she looked on.
4. What type of a woman was she?
Ans: She was a woman who was not proud of her social status and considered everyone her equal.
5. What did the Duke expect of her?
Ans: He expected that she would maintain his family respect and dignity.

3. Oh, sir, she smiled, no doubt,
Whenever I passed her; but who passed without
Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands;
Then all smiles stopped together.

1. Whom is the Duke addressing?
Ans: The messenger who has brought him a proposal of marriage.
2. What did she do when the Duke passed her?
Ans: She was all smiles for him and showed her respect.
3. What grew according to the Duke?
Ans: Her smiling at everyone and her habit of being courteous to all.
4. What are the commands?
Ans: To kill the Duchess, probably.
5. Why did all smiles stop?
Ans: The Duke's commands were implemented and the Duchess was no more living to smile at anyone.

4. Nay, we'll go
Together down, sir. Notice Neptune,
Though, taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,
Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me.

1. Where will the Duke and the messenger go?
Ans: To the company of people waiting for the Duke.
2. What did the Duke ask the messenger?
Ans: To notice the statue of Neptune, the sea god taming a sea-horse.

3. What is a rarity?
Ans: The statue and the artistic talent in it
4. Who is Claus of Innsbruck?
Ans: The artist who cast Neptune taming a sea-horse in bronze.
5. How does the Duke appear in these lines?
Ans: He appears as one who has great love for arts and as one who respects others.

14.9. Sample Questions:

1. What are the characteristics of a dramatic monologue?
2. Sketch the character of the Duchess.
3. What type of a man is the Duke?
4. What is the psychology of the Duke?

14.10. Suggested Reading:

1. Stopford A. Brooke, The Poetry of Browning.
2. A Symons, Introduction to the Study of Browning.
3. H. Walker, Literature of the Victorian Era.
4. Brockington, Browning in the Twentieth Century.
5. Dallas Kenmare, Browning and Modern Thought.

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Dr. Y.S.R. Anjaneyulu

UNIT - 3
ELEMENTS OF DRAMA

Plot / Structure : Farrell Mitchell “The Best Laid Plans”

Character : J.B.Priestly “Mother’s Day”

Dialogue : Anton Chekov “The Marriage Proposal”

The three plays prescribed for your study are One - Act plays. Before we get acquainted with the One - Act play and its components it would be useful to learn about the origin of drama and its development.

Drama is derived from the Greek verb ‘dran’ which means ‘to do’ or ‘to act’. It is a literary form wherein a story is enacted on stage to entertain a body of spectators or an audience. A drama is also called a play. A writer who composes dramas or plays is called a dramatist or a playwright. The place where dramas are performed is called a theater.

In a dramatic composition the story or the text is in the form of written dialogue to be spoken by characters in the story. On stage actors play the roles of characters uttering the written dialogue along with the relevant action. As. M.H. Abrams puts it “Drama is the literary form designed for the theater, where actors take the roles of the characters, perform the indicated action and utter the written dialogue”. In poetic drama the dialogue is written in verse (poetry).

A closet drama is written to be read and not to be perfomed. Ex. Milton’s “Samson Agonistes”.

The Origin of Drama : Drama finds its origin in ancient Greece. The ancient Greek poet Thespis may be considered the first dramatist as he devised the form. Tragic drama became a regular feature at the ancient Dionysian festival and later at religious festivals throughout the ancient Hellenic (Greek) world. Some of the well known Greek tragedians were Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes, Homer and Virgil. Aristotle, the Greek philosopher, laid down the rules for Tragic drama in his “Poetics.”

Roman drama by and large imitated ancient Greek drama or classical drama. Drama in Roman times became a form of commercial entertainment. The foremost of the Roman dramatists were comedians Plautus and Terence and the tragedian Seneca.

Medieval English drama can be traced to the religious drama of the Catholic church in the form of Mystery or Miracle plays. They were followed by Morality plays and Interludes. The Interlude which served as a gap filler between Acts was a transitional form from the Morality play to the Elizabethan drama.

Early Native English drama was modelled on classical drama. However English dramatists chose the free tradition of the popular stage instead of the classical tradition. Nicholars Udall wrote the first true English comedy “Roister Doister”. The first English tragedy “Gorbuduc” was written by Sackville, Norton and Buckhurst. English Drama was refined by the “University Wits” especially

John Lily who refined English comedy and Christopher Marlowe who gave a definite form to the English tragedy. With the emergence of William Shakepeare, Romantic drama flourished in England. His plays left a profound influence on English drama. Other important dramatists who constributed to the development of English drama were Ben Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, Thomas Dekker, John Webster, Philip Massinger, William Congreve, Oliver Goldsmith, Sheridan, Wilde and others.

Modern English Drama has acquired a larger significance as it incorporates English translations of non - English plays and American drama. The Norwegian dramatist Henrik Ibsen is considered to be the father of modern English drama. His experimentation with various forms influenced the entire course of twentieth century drama. Some of the popular playwrights of the modern age are Bernard Shaw, W.B. Yeats, J.M. Synge, Anton Chekov, Eugene o' Neill, T.S. Eliot, Harold Pinter, Arthur Miller, Tennessee Williams, August Wilson, Samuel Beckett, Wole Soyinka and Tagore just to name a few.

There are various types of drama such as Comedy of Humours, Commedia dell'Arte, Drama of Sensibility, Folk Drama, Heroic Drama, Masque, Melodrama, Miracle plays, Morality plays, Interludes, Pantomime, Dumb Show, Problem Play, Sentimental Comedy, Tragicomedy, Farce, Romantic Comedy, Satiric Comedy, City comedy, Comedy of Manners, High comedy, Low comedy, Classical tragedy, Revenge tragedy, Domestic tragedy etc.

THE ONE - ACT PLAY

The One - Act play finds its origin in the Mystery and Morality plays and Interludes of Medieval English drama. It is confined to a single act. It deals with a single dominant incident or situation. Since its duration is limited, its composition demands great artistic unity and economy of plot, a well defined structure and precision in dialogue. It is similar to the short story. As a genre its artistic possibilities are unlimited.

Characteristics of a One - Act Play :

1. It is confined within a single act.
2. It deals with a single dominant incident or situation or character.
3. It themes are based on every day life situations of common people.
4. Its characters are limited, prominence being given to one or two characters.
5. It depends largely on the delicate art of suggestion.
6. It adheres to the three unities of time, place and action.

LESSON - 15

FARRELL MITCHELL "THE BEST LAID PLANS"

Structure :

15.1 Objectives

1. To acquaint the student with the elements that make up a plot.
2. To apprise the student about the affinity between plot and character.
3. To familiarize the student with the structure or form of a play.
4. To introduce slang and colloquial words and their meaning.

15.2 The Writer : His Life and Works :

Farell Mitchell was an English teacher at Bothal Country Modern School in Ashington, England. Most of his one-act plays were written to be staged by senior school students. His plays have been published as two volumes entitled Six One Act Plays For Boys and Six One Act Plays For Girls.

15.3. THE TEXT :

CHARACTERS

WOOD
SPENDER
PRIMROSE : the butler
'SLICK' JACK } two friends
'BUNGLER BILL'
CUTHBERT : disguised as a policeman
DETECTIVES } burglars

SCENE : *A man is seated in an armchair in a room which is expensively furnished. There is a curtained window at the back of the stage, a fireplace mid-right. A door mid - left, is open : while the door, bottom right, is shut.*

WOOD : *[speaking in the direction of the open door]* : Spender, old boy, are you going to be up all night ?

SPENDER : *[off stage]* : I won't be a moment, Wood.

WOOD : You've said that for the last half - hour, old chap.

SPENDER : *[off stage]* : Only for the last twenty - five minutes.

WOOD : We ought to be away by now. There's somebody waiting for us, you know.

SPENDER : *[off stage]* I know, *(He comes in.)* Here I am. Are you all set to go ?
WOOD : I was all set half an hour ago, my dear fellow.
SPENDER : Twenty - six minutes to be exact.
[Enter PRIMROSE, the butler.)
PRIMROSE : Will there be anything else, sir?
SPENDER : No, thank you, Primrose.
WOOD : Come on Spender. Don't dawdle any more. Let's get going.
SPENDER : Yes. It's time we did. *(TO PRIMROSE)* You have your instructions clear in your mind?
PRIMROSE : Yes, sir.
WOOD : Is every thing arranged ?
SPENDER : Yes, everything, all the jewellery locked away.
WOOD : And the key to your safe hid under the carpet by the fireplace.
SPENDER : Nobody would think of looking there.
WOOD : Not even a burglar, my dear Spender.
SPENDER : No. Not even a burglar. Come along. We'll go now.
(Primrose helps them into their overcoats)
BOTH : Good night, Primrose.
PRIMROSE : Good night, Sir. Good night, Mr. Wood.
(Both go out. PRIMROSE straightens up the room, turns off the lights, then goes off after them. Only the glow of the fire lights the room. A minute passes, then the curtains part and two figures enter).
JACK : Done it nicely, Bill, One of the easiest cribs I've ever cracked.
BILL : Talk about inviting a bloke in! It was as good as leaving the front door open with a notice on it, 'Walk in and pinch my jewellery'.
JACK : Along the wall, on to the roof, up the fire escape, and there you are.
BILL : Couldn't have been easier, Jack.
JACK : Have you drawn the curtains properly ?
BILL : Yes, You can switch on the light now.
(JACK does so. BILL looks round the room)
Blimey. We'll make a pretty rich haul out o' this place.
JACK : Don't be greedy. We've come for the sparklers and we'll take nothing else.
(He sits down)
BILL : I wish I'd brought a sack. Look at this silver cigarette box. I'd get a couple o' quid from Jago for that.
(He picks it up and imitates WOOD'S accent.)
Have a cigarette, old bean.
JACK : *(angrily)* : Don't be an ass! Give it a good rub and put it down! You'll leave your fingerprints all over the place if you go on touching things like that!
BILL : *[Grumbling]* : All right! All right! Don't get your shirt off! I didn't mean no harm.
(He sits down and rubs the box with his handkerchief).
JACK : I know that. But you may as well stick up a notice for the flatties saying 'This job was done by Bill North', if you go on pawing everything. You're listed at the Yard for all the other things you've done, you know.
BILL : You don't need to remind me. Two years to Wormwood Scrubs, just for helping myself to a few articles from them who could afford it. Blimey! It's hard luck on a bloke when he's caught on a job.
JACK : Not hard luck. Carelessness. Bad planning.
BILL : It was nothing of the kind.
JACK : Oh yes, it was, Brains is what you need. I'm not called Slick Jack for nothing. I plan everything down to the least thing; then when I'm sure everything's in apple - pie order, I do the job.
BILL : I've got to admit it's worked so far. One day it won't. Then we'll both go up for a stretch.
JACK : Don't worry. The police would give a lot to catch me, but it won't be this time or any other time. I'm too clever for every flattie on this earth.'
BILL : Ain't it time you got going on this job, instead of us sitting here like this ?

JACK : There you go again. Always in a hurry. Relax, William make yourself at home. Come on. Settle down for a while. That's better. Now what time is it ?
BILL : Five minutes past nine.
JACK : Exactly what it should be. And at ten past, Sergeant Willis of the Metropolitan Police comes down the street on his usual beat, phones from the box at the corner to his Section House, and at twenty - past nine, pushes off to see his favourite cook. Then the cast's clear until Police constable Travers comes slowly down the street at ten 'o' clock exactly - which gives us forty minutes clear. If we did the job now Sergeant Willis would see us climbing out of the window, and we'd fall right into the wide - open arms of the law.
BILL : You certainly have studied the situation, Jack.
JACK : Yes. If that Spender bloke hadn't dilly dallied about, we'd have had the sparklers by now and been away. That half-hour's thrown all my calculations out of joint. But that's what I mean by planning. You're ready for anything that happens.
BILL : What about the butler ?
JACK : I've had a long talk with him. I told him I was a new salvage officer for the borough. He tells me that he always listens to the nine O' clock news, and then after that to the radio play that starts at twenty - past nine.
BILL : Suppose he changes his mind and starts prowling ?
JACK : There's no fear of that. He hasn't heard to - night's play and he's looking forward to it.
BILL : *(lost in admiration)* : You think of everything, don't you ?
JACK : Everything. Now we'll get to work. Put your gloves on. *(He gets up. BILL does too)* Pull this cabinet away from the wall. *(They do so.)* Now look under the corner of the carpet there, Bill, and you'll find a key. *(BILL does so, and hands it to him).* It's as easy as a pie.
BILL : It certainly is.
JACK : *[working behind the cabinet]* : This ice - box would have taken a couple of hours to get open without the key, It's a gift. Here you are, Bill. *(he hands the jewel cases to BILL)* See if they're loaded.
BILL : *(opening them)* : Beauties! Diamonds! Worth a fortune! I'll be able to retire for a couple a' years.
JACK : Not to the Scrubs this time. *(He gets up and pushes back the cabinet)* There you are. It's all over. *(He puts the key back under the hearthrug.)* Another job done by yours truly, Slick Jack. And those flat - footed bobbies will wonder how it was done. I'll let them know one day -- when I write my life story.
(The door, bottom - right, suddenly opens. Enter WOOD and SPENDER The latter has a revolver)
SPENDER : You'll have plenty of time to write it when you go to prison. Stand still! Don't try to escape! This revolver's loaded, and I won't hesitate to shoot.
WOOD : And my friend is a crack shot. Shoots the pip out of the ace of hearts at fifty paces.
BILL : Copped! This mean a five - year stretch for me.
SPENDER : And a good job too. It's what you deserve.
BILL *(to JACK)* : And you said you had it all planned! Well, it didn't work this time, did it?
JACK : *(very clamly)* : No. It didn't work this time.
WOOD : By Jove, You're a mighty cool customer!
JACK : There's nothing else to do but to be cool, is there ?
BILL : You've never been in choky before, have you? You won't like it.
JACK : It should be a very interesting experience for me.
SPENDER : Interesting? I'd hardly call it that. Your friend is likely to be right. You won't like it.
WOOD : By gad, no.
JACK : I hope I can take my punishment like a man.
WOOD : Jolly well spoken, old fellow.
SPENDER : Put the jewels on the table, Bill.
BILL : *(putting them down)* : You've got a pretty collection of sparklers there, mister.
SPENDER : Yes. They're worth sixty - five thousand pounds.
BILL : Sixty - five thousand ? He said they were worth only about five thousand !
SPENDER : That's interesting. Perhaps he didn't want you to have your share. He knew what they were worth, I'm certain.

BILL : Did you, Lawrence ?
JACK : Yes. I did.
BILL *(angrily)* : You double - crossing rat! Do me out of my share, would you? Wait till I get a chance to lay me hands on you!
JACK : There's no need to get your wool off. If I'd told you how much they were worth, you'd never have agreed to take on the job with me. You'd have been windy. That's true, Isn't it ?
BILL : May be you're right ! But what about my proper share ?
JACK : You'd have got it. I never swindle a pal.
SPENDER : There's honour among thieves, they say, Ah well! It's quite a pity. But this time you'll share a prison sentence instead of the money.
WOOD : Quite a good joke that, old fellow.
SPENDER : Phone the police, Wood, while I keep my eye on these two birds.
WOOD : Certainly, old chap.
JACK : Before you do, would you do me a favour ?
WOOD : A favour ?
JACK : Yes, Please look out of the window and see if it's raining.
WOOD : It wasn't when we returned to capture you.
JACK : Perhaps it may be now I'd just like to see. It's a very little thing for you to do for me, sir.
WOOD : All right. I'll make sure.
(He draws the curtains apart and looks out.)
No. It's absolutely fair,
(He draws the curtains close again)
JACK : Are you absolutely certain, sir.
WOOD : Positive.
JACK : You didn't seem to look very closely. I thought I caught a glimpse of rain.
WOOD : You didn't. There wasn't a drop.
SPENDER : What the deuce do you want to know that for ?
JACK : Just a fancy on my part. Will you make absolutely certain, sir ?
SPENDER : You're just trying to delay your arrest for a few minutes.
JACK : It isn't that, Mr. Spender.
WOOD : I'll have another look just to satisfy him.
SPENDER : I'd like to know what the idea is first.
JACK : I'll tell you when your friend makes sure.
WOOD : All right. *(He looks out again very carefully, then redraws the curtains)* There's no doubt about it. It's as dry as a bone. Are you satisfied ?
JACK : Thank you, sir. I am satisfied.
SPENDER : And now, what is your explanation ?
JACK : it's rather a long story, sir, and you'll think I'm just stalling.
SPENDER : If you're hoping I'll let you go, or that you've got any chance to escape you can think again. But let me have the story, anyhow.
JACK : Very well, I'll not tell you all the details. I'll keep it as short as I possibly can.
WOOD : Good idea.
JACK : I once fell in with a woman who told fortunes. She had never met me before, nor any of my friends. But the things she told me were amazing.
SPENDER : Come on. Get to the point and don't waste time. Where does the rain come in?
JACK : Long before I ever took up house - breaking I had a good job in the City. She said that one day I'd lose my job and I'd take to this sort of life. It came true, as you can see.
SPENDER : It's finished now. Did she tell you about your prison sentence ?
JACK : That's what I'm coming to, Mr.Spender. She said I'd never be caught as long as it was a dry night. I've always got away with it. Now I'm caught, and yet it isn't raining.
WOOD : By Jove. Your fortune - teller wasn't really much good.
SPENDER : Very interesting. I hop you didn't pay her much for her trouble. If you did, you had better look her up again and demand your money back - in a year or two's time!
JACK : Don't rub it in, Mr. Spender. It was a fair cop and I haven't grumbled. May I ask you a favour, Sir ?

SPENDER : Mr. Wood granted you one. So I may as well if I can.
JACK : Would you care to tell me how you got wise to my plans ?
SPENDER : Certainly. Primrose suspected you from the beginning. He's a wise old bird, is Primrose, and he spotted that you knew very little about salvage. He used to be in charge of its collection during the war, and he knows everything about it that's worth knowing. So he led you on and gave you plenty of information - false information. And here you are. Easy, isn't it ?
JACK : And I fell for it ?
BILL : You're mighty smart, ain't you ? A five - year - old kid could have done better.
JACK : You'll have to take a five-year-old kid with you when you come out of ckoky, Bill.
BILL : Huh! It's your first cop! It's my second! The beak won't be very kind to me.
SPENDER : We certainly hope he won't go and make that phone call, Wood. We've talked long enough. *(To BILL and JACK)* Sit down, you two. You may as well be comfortable for the last time.
WOOD : I'll ring the police
(As he moves to the door mid - left, a knock comes on the other door).
SPENDER : Come in!
(Enter PRIMROSE. WOOD stands still)
What is it, Primrose ?
PRIMROSE : A policeman, Sir ?
WOOD : Just what the doctor ordered.
SPENDER : A policeman ? Show him in at once.
PRIMROSE : Very good, sir,
(Exit PRIMROSE)
JACK : Our policemen are so marvellous! It's the first time I've ever known one to be on the spot when he was wanted.
(Re-enter PRIMROSE with a policeman)
POLICEMAN : Good evening, sir. Sorry to disturb you.
SPENDER : That's all right, officer, As a matter of fact, You've just come in time.
POLICEMAN : How do you mean, sir ?
SPENDER : These two here. We caught them in the act of burgling my jewels.
POLICEMAN : You did, sir? Let's have a look at 'em. Ah! I'm not mistaken, I know them both, sir. 'Slick Jack' Lawrence and 'Bungler Bill' North. We've been wanting Lawrence for a long time now. He's done a lot of jobs around here. You've done well, sir.
SPENDER : Yes, Not a bad catch, is it ?
WOOD : I say, this calls for a celebration. What about a spot, sergeant ?
POLICEMAN : I'm not a sergeant yet, sir, only a constable. No, thank you, sir. Got to get going with these two men.
BILL : Nonsense! Stay here a minute till I get the glasses
(He goes off mid - left)
PRIMROSE : Might I suggest that I do that instead of Mr. Wood, Sir ?
(He follows Wood off.)
SPENDER : I suppose it won't do any harm.
POLICE MAN : Sorry, sir. But you know the police rules. No drinking on duty. It's more than my position's worth.
SPENDER : Quite right. I never thought of that, officer. I'm afraid my friend is just a little bit too enthusiastic.
POLICEMAN : That's all right, sir. I expect he means well.
SPENDER : Yes, I'll tell him not to bring anything. (Shouts) Primrose!
(Enter PRIMROSE)
PRIMROSE : Yes, Sir ?
SPENDER : Tell Mr. Wood the officer can't drink on duty.
PRIMROSE : Very good, sir.
(Enter PRIMROSE)
POLICEMAN : Thank you, sir. And now, if you don't mind, I'll get a long with these two. The sergeant will be at the telephone - box and he'll get the Black Maria to come and pick them up.
(Re-enter PRIMROSE, followed by WOOD. Exit PRIMROSE bottom - right)

WOOD : Sorry you can't have a quick one, sergeant.
POLICEMAN : I hope you'll understand, sir.
WOOD : Of course, old bean. No need to mention it. But I say, what brought you here just at the right time ?
POLICEMAN : I happened to be passing on my beat when I saw two figures in the grounds of the house. I thought they might belong here, but when they moved round to this side, I got suspicious and I nipped round too.
WOOD : Pretty smart of you, sergeant.
POLICEMAN : They had both vanished when I got round, and I didn't quite know what to do. I made my usual routine call from the box, then I thought I'd look back and make a few enquiries. When I knocked at the door your butler brought me straight up and you introduced me to these two. I'd better fix 'em now.
(He takes out a pair of handcuffs and locks BILL and JACK together.)
You'll get a lot of thanks from the Force, sir. This is a real good night's work.
SPENDER : Anything to help the forces of law and order!
WOOD : I hope they remember their gratitude to you when they arrest you for speeding! Are you sure you can manage 'em both yourself, sergeant ?
POLICEMAN : Quite certain, sir. There's no escape from them.
(He points at the handcuffs.)
WOOD : No. Of course not. Are you quite sure you won't have a drink before you go ?
POLICEMAN : Certain, sir. Regulations are very strict.
WOOD : Not even a small one.
SPENDER : Don't press the point. Wood. He mustn't, you know that.
POLICEMAN : Quite right, sir. Please don't make it awkward for me, Mr. Wood.
WOOD : Perhaps the prisoners would like one ?
JACK : No, thanks
WOOD : What a pity ! What about you. Bill ?
BILL : You bet your life! A double Scotch would just put me right. I'll have bad dreams if I don't have my nightcap.
JACK : You're not having one !
BILL : Who says not ?
JACK : Me ! It's a fair cap, and we may as well get on our way.
WOOD : No. I insist. Let Bungler Bill have one, sergeant, before you take him along.
POLICEMAN : I'm sorry again, sir. These men are under my charge now, and I can't permit it. Thank you both, gentlemen, and now, if you'll excuse me, I'll say good night and take these two with me.
SPENDER : Good night, officer.
POLICEMAN : Come on, you two.
BILL : What ? No Whisky ? It's shame. That's what it is.
WOOD : I say. One minute, sergeant. Will we be needed as witnesses ?
POLICEMAN : Yes, sir, when the case comes into court. I hope you won't mind that ?
WOOD : Not at all. Will you Spender ?
SPENDER : No. Why should I ?
WOOD : You never know. I just wondered whether our part of the job ended here. I don't like police courts.
POLICEMAN : That's all right, sir. You'll find the atmosphere a bit different when you aren't the prisoner !
WOOD : Jolly good, sergeant. I hope I never will be one.
POLICEMAN : I hope so too. Right *(To Prisoners)* Now, no monkey tricks from either of you. You can't get away, so come quietly. Get going.
(As they move to the door bottom - right, it suddenly opens and four men, followed by PRIMROSE rush in.)
Ist MAN : Caught in the act! Consider yourselves under arrest! We'll offer a formal charge against you when we get you to the Station. Meanwhile, I'd like to warn you that anything you say will be taken down, and may be used in evidence against you.

(The policeman rushes for the door mid - left)

2nd MAN : Ah! Would you!

(He and another man catch the policeman and hold him while he struggles.)

SPENDER : What is this ? A circus ?

PRIMROSE : Let me explain, sir. These men are detectives from Scotland Yard.

SPENDER : Detectives ? But why arrest a policeman ?

1st MAN : He isn't a policeman at all, sir. He's just dressed up as one.

SPENDER : But look at him. He'd take anyone in.

WOOD : Anyone except me, old boy.

SPENDER : What ? You ? You knew he wasn't one ?

WOOD : Yes, Spotted it straight away, No police man on duty would ever dare to come out in light soled shoes like that. They have to wear regulation boots. I expect he's wearing shoes in case he has to do any climbing while he's burgling.

SPENDER : Good heavens ! You're right! I never noticed them.

WOOD : So when I pretended I was seeking a drink. I went and phoned police - head quarters just to make sure this wasn't a policeman breaking regulations. Then I talked to keep everybody here until the Flying Squad arrived -- and there you are.

1st MAN : And very smart it was of you.

WOOD : Thank you, old boy.

SPENDER : I'd never have guessed it. Was it all arranged ?

JACK : Yes, Mr. Spender. I may as well tell you the truth. Cuthbert, here, is in the swim too. I always had him standing by if I was ever caught on a job. He just has to come in and bluff it out as he did tonight. Then he walks us out of the house, and we're free. It would have worked too, if it hadn't been for your observant friend.

SPENDER : But how was Cuthbert to know you had been caught ?

JACK : When Mr. Wood drew the curtains twice that was the sign.

WOOD : Well, I'll be hanged! I say, that was a clever wheeze on your part! You actually got me to signal to your friend for you!

JACK : I did.

1st MAN : Very smart, Lawrence. But criminals always overstep the mark sooner or later. You did this time. *(To WOOD)* It isn't everyone who's as observant as you are, sir. You'd make a good policeman. *(To the others)* Bring them along, men!

WOOD :I did the signalling for him! And I thought I was clever ! Spender, old boy, I need a drink to restore my self confidence!

15.4. Glossary :

Old boy	:	close friend
dawdle	:	waste time
to crack a crib	:	to break into a house
bloke	:	(slang) fellow
pinch	:	(slang) pilfer, steal
Sparklers	:	(slang) diamonds
quid	:	(slang) currency notes
old beau	:	intimate friend
Don't get your shirt off	:	(slang) Don't get angry
flattie	:	(slang) policeman
Wormwood Scrub	:	name of a prison
Blimey	:	an exclamatory word meaning "May God blind me".
slick	:	clever
in apple - pie order	:	in perfect order
a stretch	:	a term in prison
salvage officer	:	officer in charge of saving valuables from buildings damaged by fire
as easy as pie	:	(slang) quite easy

crack shot	:	expert marksman
copped	:	captured, caught
chokey	:	(slang) prison
no need to get you wool off	:	to loose temper, get angry
windy	:	flustered, nervous
pal	:	(colloquial) friend
birds	:	(colloquial) fellows
rub it in	:	cause discomfort by repeatedly reminding one of his mistake or error.
beak	:	(slang) magistrate
bungler	:	a clumsy fellow
Black Maria	:	vehicle used to transport prisoners to jail.
a quick one	:	a quick drink, nip
night cap	:	alchoholic drink taken at bed time.
bluff it out	:	save oneself by pretence.
be hanged	:	exclamation expressing wonder at being out smarted

15.5. Plot :

The plot : The plot is the story of a play or a narrative work. It comprises of a series of incidents, situations etc. invented by a writer, upon which a play or story is built, especially series of complications in such a work solved or explained by a 'denouement'.

A plot is a story generally dealing with the response of a person or persons to internal or external conflict arising from adverse circumstances and the effects of the consequences thereof, upon their lives and of those with whom they interact.

It is therefore important to keep in mind that plot and character are interdependent and they should develop in harmony in a play. Sometimes the development of the plot is influenced by the nature and action of its characters or the plot as a scheme of circumstances in accordance with the author's theme, influences the nature and action of its characters. As the novelist Henry James pointed out "What is character but the determination of incident ? What is incident but the illustration of character?" Peacock observes "Plot and persons go hand in hand in this respect."

There are generally two types of plot, simple and complex. A simple plot is built upon a simple theme. It has a definite beginning, a sustaining middle and a logical end. It is closely knit and events follow one after another in an orderly sequence. According to Aristotle "A plot is a continuous sequence of begining, middle and end. The beginning initiates the action with an expectation of more to come, the middle presumes what has gone before and requires something to follow and the end follows from what has gone before but requires nothing further."

A good example is the plot of the present one act play "The Best Laid Plans." It is built upon a simple theme. A clever thief 'Slick Jack' plans meticulously to rob the safe in Wood and Spender's house. He enlists the help of his accomplices 'Blundering Bell' and Cuthbert. If caught, Cuthbert disguised as a policeman, would pretend to arrest them and help them to escape from the scene of the crime. 'Slick Jack' tries to trick the butler Primrose into divulging information about Wood and Spender's house. Primrose suspects him, and along with his masters Wood and Spender, lays a trap to catch them red-handed in the act. Primrose gives 'Slick Jack' false information which would lead the thieves to fall into the trap laid for them. 'Slick Jack' and 'Bungler Bill' are caught and their bid to escape with the help of their accomplice Cuthbert is foiled. The plot is therefore a continuous sequence of beginning, middle and end. Events follow one another in an orderly sequence with a logical ending.

A complex plot is built upon a complex theme. A theme is said to be complex when it gives rise to various complications. Complications create tension or an anxious uncertanity which needs to be relieved and the author introduces a subplot or secondary story which performs several functions like providing 'comic relief', broadening the audience's perspective on the main plot and

enhancing the overall effect. Generally, tragic plays have complex plots. A good example is Shakespeare's 'Hamlet' which has a sub plot in the form of a play within the play.

There are a variety of forms of plot.

Generally plots are constructed to achieve tragic or comic effects which in turn display an infinite variety of plot patterns. It is therefore necessary to take into consideration the following terms as they are careful in analysing the basic parts that make up the plot.

Protagonist : The chief character commonly called the hero.

Antagonist : The hero's opponent or the villian.

Conflict : Conflict is the response of a character to a crisis. It gives rise to complication. Sometimes the conflict is external i.e., between the protagonist and the antagonist or between the protagonist and fate or against adverse circumstances. In some plays the conflict is internal i.e. between opposing desires or values in the mind of the protagonist.

Intrigue : Intrigue is the antagonist's devious scheme against the protagonist or other characters, taking advantage of their ignorance or gullibility.

Suspense : The anxiety or excitement that develops in the mind of the audience due to the uncertainity about the future course of events in a play is known as suspense.

Surprise : When events in a play happen contrary to the expectations of the audience it is known as surprise.

Dramatic Irony : It involves a situation in the play where the dialogue and action of the characters convey the author's intended meaning to the audience of which the characters appear ignorant. The characters speak and act contrary to the expectations of the audience.

The Three Unities : The unities of time, place and action constitute the rules of drama known as 'the three unities' -- that the action be limited to a single location, that the time of action is limited to a definite period and that the action be a single, complete and ordered structure of actions, all directed towards the intended effect, either comic or tragic.

In the present play Wood assumes the role of the protagonist and Slick Jack that of the antagonist. The conflict arises when they pit their wits against each other. Jack resorts to intrigue to escape from the scene of the crime. Intrigue generates suspense as the audience is uncertain about the future course of events. In accordance with Jack's plan of escape, Cuthbert, his accomplice, enters the scene of the crime disguised as a policeman. He pretends to arrest Jack and Bill and take them away. The play concludes with the entry of the detectives and the arrest of the burglars.

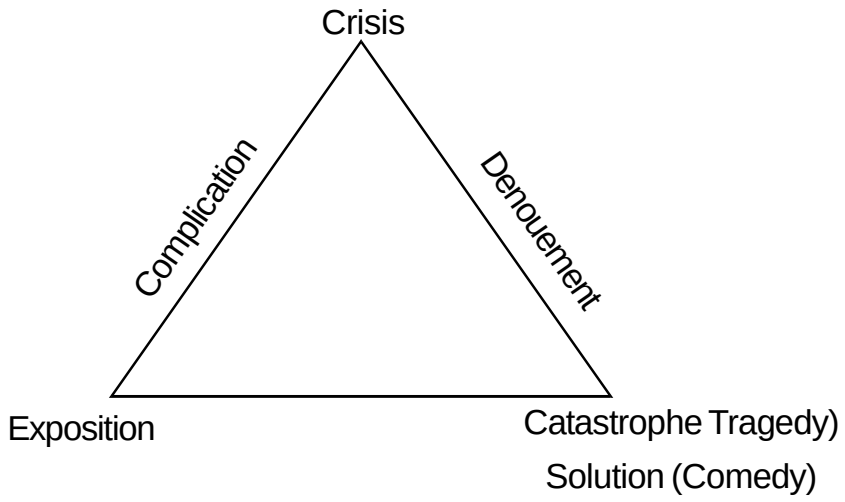
The plot also follows the three unities of time, place and action. The duration of the play is limited to a few hours. The action is limited to a single location, that of the house of Wood and Spender. The action of the play is closely constructed with the events in an orderly sequence, directed to achieve a comic effect.

15.6. The Structure or Form of a play :

The plot of a play usually follows a logical pattern based on the general 'working' of the intellect and sequence of emotions of the reader or the audeince while reading or witnessing a play i.e. Exposition, (initial incident), Complication (rising action), Crisis (turning point) and Denouement (falling action, concluding in a catatrophe in a tragicplay or solution in a comic play. These constitute the structure of the play. The Greek terms for Exposition, Complication, Crisis and Denouement are Protasis, Epatisis, Peripeteaia and Catabasis. The structure of the play is generally represented in the form of a diagram resembling a pyramidal structure.

Exposition : The introductory part of the play is called Exposition. It gives general information about the plot and the characters to rouse the interest of the audience.

For instance the introductory part of the present play introduces Wood, Spender and their



butler Primrose. We understand that Wood and Spender are wealthy and belong to the affluent society. They own a lot of jewellery. There is also a subtle hint of the trap they have laid to catch the burglars, in the precautionary measures they discuss, i.e. Spender reminding Primrose about the instructions given to him and Wood mentioning the location of the key to the safe.

Complication : The Exposition is followed by the Complication, wherein the action or conflict begins and continues to its point of crisis. In the play the complication begins with the entry of the burglars 'Slick Jack' and 'Bungler Bill'. We come to know that Jack is crafty by the way he had meticulously planned the burglary. Relying on the 'information' given to him by the butler whom he thought he had duped, he locates the key to the safe. He plans to steal only diamonds which could be easily disposed. He cautions Bill against leaving finger prints. But we also come to know that Jack is too over confident which ultimately is his undoing. But as they prepare to leave they are confronted by Wood and Spender at gun point. However Jack remains unperturbed by the unexpected turn of events.

Crisis : Crisis marks the turning point in the conflict. Slick Jack has one more ace up his sleeve. In accordance with his plan, his accomplice Cuthbert enters the scene disguised as a policeman. He pretends to arrest Jack and Bill and take them away. However Wood sees through the disguise and alerts the police.

Denouement : The play ends on a satisfactory note as Wood manages to alert the police who arrive just in time to foil the burglars bid to escape.

15.7. Brief Summary of the Text :

Farell Mitchell's play is about a burglar Slick Jack's best laid plans to burgle the house of two wealthy English gentlemen Wood and Spender and their own plans to outwit him. A cunning thief 'Slick Jack' plans meticulously to rob the safe in the house of Wood and Spender, two rich English gentlemen. He enlists the help of two burglars 'Bungler Bill' and Cuthbert. If caught Cuthbert would enter the scene disguised as a policeman, pretend to arrest them and help them to escape. Claiming to be a salvage officer, Jack tries to get information about Wood and Spender's house. Primrose suspects his intentions and in connivance with his masters Wood and Spender, lays a trap to catch 'Slick Jack' and his accomplices in the act. In accordance with their plan, Primrose gives information to Jack about his master's plans to go out for the evening and about the contents of the safe and its key which was kept under the carpet.

Relying on the information he thought he had duped the butler into giving to him, Jack along with Bill enters the house, locates the key under the carpet and opens the safe. Jack warns

Bill to desist from touching anything as he would leave fingerprints all over the place, a mistake which had led to Bill's arrest and imprisonment on a previous occasion. Jack is proud of the way he carefully planned every robbery he committed. He boasts that because of his meticulous planning he had never been caught. "Brains is what you need. I plan every thing down to the least thing, then when I'm sure everything's in apple pie order I do the job".

The burglars leave no traces of identification and Jack exudes confidence that the police would be dumbfounded by the neat execution of the robbery. He even thinks of writing his life story one day in which he would reveal his best laid plans to the police. He plans to steal only diamonds which could be easily disposed. But as they prepare to leave, they are confronted by Wood and Spender who hold them at gun point. Jack is unperturbed by the unexpected turn of events as he has one more ace up his sleeve. In order to distract Wood and to alert Cuthbert by a pre-arranged signal of drawing the window curtain aside twice, Jack spins a yarn about a fortune teller and her predictions that he would never be caught as long as he committed a robbery on a dry night and that he would be caught if it rained. In the pretext of confirming whether her prediction had come true, Jack requests Wood to draw the curtains and see if it was raining. Wood, unable to see through Jack's plan, complies with his request. The signal being given, Cuthbert enters the scene disguised as a policeman. Cuthbert pretends to arrest Jack and Bill. However Wood sees through the disguise. Instead of wearing regulation boots that policemen wear on duty, Cuthbert wears soft-soled shoes which burglers wear. Wood manages to prevent them from escaping and alert the police who arrive just in time to foil the burglars' bid to escape.

15.8. Conclusion :

In this lesson you have been briefed about the origin of drama and its development, special features of the One - Act play and the elements that make up the plot and structure of the play with special reference to the One - Act play prescribed for your study "The Best Laid Plans" by Farell Mitchell. You have observed that the plot of the play "The Best Laid Plans" is closely constructed as events follow one another in a credible sequence; that all the parts of the play are equally important and that no part of the play is indispensable. You have also observed that the structure of the play is well defined as it follows a logical order of Exposition, Complication, Crisis, Denouement and Conclusion. You have observed how the playwright makes use of colloquial speech and slang, dramatic irony, plot within the plot to heighten the dramatic effect.

15.9. Critical Evaluation :

The plot of the play "The Best Laid Plans" is unravelled in a subtle way against a backdrop of suspense and mounting excitement. The play generates humour as the plot is racy and presented in a lighter vein. The use of colloquial speech and slang gives the language a distinct English flavour. The use of plot within the plot, i.e., the introduction of Cuthbert pretending to be a policeman heightens the dramatic effect. One also finds the application of dramatic irony in the play. Wood and Spender are ignorant of the policeman's real identity, that of Jack's accomplice whereas the audience do. The structure of the play is well defined as the Exposition, Complication, Crisis, Denouement and Conclusion follow an orderly sequence. Mitchell's style is marked by clarity and precision. The characters of Jack and Wood complement each other and enrich the plot as they try to outwit each other and foil each other's plans.

15.10. Passages for Comprehension :

Comprehension Passage - I :

Bill : You don't need to remind me. Two years at Wormwood Scrubs, just for helping myself to a few articles from them who could afford it. Blimey! its hard luck on a bloke when his caught on a job.

Jack : Not hard luck. Carelessness. Bad planning.

Bill : It's nothing of the kind.

Jack : Oh yes, it was, Brains is what you need. I'm not called 'Slick Jack' for nothing. I plan every thing to the least thing; then when I'm sure everything's in apple-pie order, I do the job.

1. How many years did Bill spend at Wormwood Scrubs ?

A. Bill spent two years at Wormwood Scrubs.
2. What does Bill consider hard luck for a burglar ?
A. Bill considers getting caught on a job hard luck for a burglar.
3. Why according to Jack, did Bill get caught ?
A. According to Jack, Bill got caught due to carelessness and bad planning.
4. What according to Jack did Bill lack ?
A. According to Jack, Bill lacked 'Brains'.
5. Why was Jack called 'Slick Jack'
A. Jack was called 'Slick Jack' because he planned everything down to the least thing.

Comprehension Passage - II :

Bill : What about the butler ?
Jack : I've had a long talk with him. I told him I was a new salvage officer for the borough. He tells me that he always listens to the nine o' clock news, and after that to the radio play that starts at twenty past nine.
Bill : Suppose he changes his mind and starts prowling
Jack : There's no fear of that. He hasn't heard to-night's play and he's looking forward to it.
Bill : (lost in admiration) : You think of every thing, don't you ?

1. With whom did Jack have a long talk ?
A. Jack had a long talk with the butler Primrose.
2. What did Jack tell him ?
A. Jack told him that he was the new salvage officer.
3. What did Primrose always listen to ?
A. Primrose always listened to the nine o' clock news.
4. When does the radio play start ?
A. The radio play starts at twenty past nine.
5. Who according to Bill thinks of everything ?
A. According to Bill, Jack thinks of everything.

Unworked Passage - I:

Jack : Would you care to tell me how you got wise to my plans ?
Spender : Certainly, Primrose suspected you from the beginning. He's a wise old bird, is Primrose, and he spotted that you knew very little about salvage. He used to be in charge of its collection during the war, and he knows everything about it that's worth knowing. So, he led you on and gave you plenty of information, false information. And here you are. Easy, isn't it ?

1. Who suspected Jack from the beginning ?
2. What does Spender consider Primrose to be ?
3. What did Primrose spot about Jack ?
4. What was Primrose in charge of during the war ?
5. What kind of information did Primrose give to Jack ?

Answers :

1. Primrose suspected Jack from the beginning.
2. Spender considers Primrose a wise old bird.
3. Primrose spotted that Jack knew very little about salvage.
4. Primrose used to be in charge of salvage collection during the war.
5. Primrose gave false information to Jack.

Unworked Passage - II :

Spender : What ? You ? You knew he wasn't one ?
Wood : Yes. Spotted it straight away. No policeman on duty would ever dare to come out in light-soled shoes like that. They have to wear regulation boots. I expect his wearing shoes in case he has to do any climbing while he's burgling.
Spender : Good heavens ! You're right ! I never noticed them.

Wood : So when I pretended I was seeking a drink, I went and phoned police head quarters just to make sure this wasn't a policeman breaking regulations. Then I talked to keep everybody here until the Flying Squad arrived and there you are.

1. Who knew that the man wasn't a policeman ?
2. What would a policeman not wear on duty ?
3. What did policemen have to wear on duty ?
4. What did Wood pretend to do ?
5. Who arrived to arrest the burglars ?

Answers :

1. Wood knew that the man wasn't a policeman.
2. A policeman would not wear soft soled shoes on duty.
3. Policeman would have to wear regulation boots on duty.
4. Wood pretended to seek a drink.
5. The Flying Squad arrived to arrest the burglars.

15.11. Sample Questions :

1. Attempt a character sketch of Slick Jack.
2. Comment on the plot and structure of "The Best Laid Plans" ?

15.12. Suggested Reading :

M.H.Abrams : A Glossary of Literary Terms
Ronald Peacock : The Art of Drama
Marjorie Boulton : The Anatomy of Drama

- Mr. N. SURESH CHANDRA RAO

LESSON - 16

ANTON CHEKOV : "THE MARRIAGE PROPOSAL"

Structure :

16.1 Objectives

1. To acquaint the student with the dramatist's life and works.
2. To apprise the student about the technique and functions of dialogue.
3. To consider the play as a comedy of manners.
4. To introduce new words and their meanings.

16.2. The Writer : His Life and Works :

Anton Pavlovich Chekhov was born on January 29, 1860, in Tagaurog, Russia. As a medical student at the University of Moscow he began writing short stories. Early in his career he began to freelance as a journalist and writer of comic sketches. He mastered the form of the one-act play and produced several master pieces including *The Bear (1888), The Wedding (1889), Swan Song, The Boor and A Marriage Proposal.* However it was his association with the Moscow Art Theatre and its production of his major plays like *The Seagull (1897), Uncle Vanya (1899), The Three Sisters (1901) and the Cherry Orchard (1904)* that brought him great fame.

Besides plays he wrote heart-touching short stories like *Vanya* and novels like *The Peasants* and *My Life*. Though presenting a realistic portrayal of Russian middle class life at the end of the 19th century his works exhibit a timeless quality, as they refleet the universal predicament of the poor man.

During his final year, Chekov was forced to live in exile from the intellectual circles of Moscow. He had to spend most of his time in the Crimea where he had gone for reasons of health. He died of tuberculosis on July 14, 1904 at the age of forty four and was buried in Moscow.

Chekov is considered the greatest literary artist. He profoundly influenced modern drama and the short story. An entire school of writers from James Joyce to Katherine Mansfield has been strongly influenced by his works. He was at his best in the diagnosis of the human psyche in crisis. Since his death, Chekov's plays have been celebrated worldwide and he has come to be acclaimed as the greatest Russian story teller and dramatist of modern times.

16.3. THE TEXT : A MARRIAGE PROPOSAL :

*(Translated by : **Joachim Neugroschel**)*

CHARACTERS

STEPAN STEPANOVICH CHOOBOOKOV	:	a landowner
NATALIA STEPANOVNA	:	his twenty-five year old daughter

IVAN VASSILIEVICH LOMOV : Choobookov's neighbor, a healthy and well-fed, but terribly hypochondriac landowner.

The action takes place in the drawing room of CHOOBOOKOV'S country house.

(CHOOBOOKOV and LOMOV. The latter enters, wearing tails and white gloves.)

CHOOBOOKOV (going over to welcome his guest) : Why, of all people! My old friend, Ivan Vassilievich! How nice to see you ! (Shakes his hand.) This really is a surprise, old boy . . . . How are you ?

LOMOV : Very well, thank you. And may I ask how you are?

CHOOBOOKOV : Not bad at all, old friend, with the help of your prayers and so on . . . . . Please have a seat. . . . . Now, really, it's not very nice of you to neglect your neighbors, my dear boy. And what are you all dressed up for ? Morning coat, gloves, and so on! Are you off on a visit old boy ?

LOMOV : No, I'm just calling on you, my esteemed neighbor.

CHOOBOOKOV : But why the morning coat, old friend ? This isn't New Year's Day !

LOMOV : Well, you see, the fact of the matter is . . . . *(Takes his arm.)* I've burst in on you like this, Stepan Stepanovich, my esteemed neighbor, in order to ask a favor of you. I've already had the honor more than once of turning to you for help and you've always, so to speak, uh ! . . . . But forgive me, my nerves . . . I must have a sip of water, dear Stepan Stepanovich.

CHOOBOOKOV : *[aside]* : He's after money. Fat chance !

(To LOMOV) What is it, my dear fellow ?

LOMOV : Well, you see, my Stepan dearovich, uh! I mean dear Stepanovich . . . uh! I mean, my nerves are in a terrible condition, which you yourself are so kind as to see. In short, you're the only one who can help me, although, ofcourse, I've done nothing to deserve it and . . . . and I don't even have the right to count on your help . . . .

CHOOBOOKOV : Now, now; don't beat about the bush, old friend. Out with it! . . . Well ?

LOMOV : All right here you are. The fact of the matter is, I've come to ask for your daughter Natalia's hand in marriage.

CHOOBOOKOV : *[overjoyed]* : My dearest friend ! Ivan Vassilievich. Could you repeat that -- I'm not sure I heard right !

LOMOV : I have the honor of asking ---

CHOOBOOKOV : *[breaking in]* : My oldest and dearest friend . . . . I'm so delighted and so on . . . Yes really, and all that sort of thing. *(Hugging and kissing him.)* I've been yearning for this for ages. It's been my constant desire. *(Sheds a tear.)* And I've always loved you like a son, you wonderful, person, you. May God grant you love and guidance and so on, it's been my most fervent wish. . . . . But why am I standing here like a blockhead? I'm dumbstruck by the sheer joy of it, completely dumbstruck. Oh, with all my heart and soul . . . I'll go get Natasha, and so on.

LOMOV : *[deeply moved]* : Stepan Stepanovich, my esteemed friend, do you think I may count on her accepting me ?

CHOOBOOKOV : A handsome devil like you ? How could she possibly resist ? She's madly in love with you, don't worry, madly, and so on . . . . I'll call her right away.

(Exit.)

LOMOV : *[alone]* : It's so cold . . . . I'm shaking all over, like before a final exam. The important thing is to make up your mind. If you think about it too along, or waver, talk about it too much, and wait for the ideal woman or for true love, you'll never marry . . . Brr! It's cold! Natalia Stepanovna is an excellent housekeeper, she's not bad-looking, and she's got some education . . . . What more could I ask for ? Oh, I'm so nervous, I can hear a buzzing in my ears. *(Drinks some water.)* It would be best for me to get married . . . First of all, I'm thirty - five years old already - and that, as they say, is a critical age. And then, I have to start leading a steady and regular life. . . . . I've got a heart condition, with palpitations all the time. . . . . I've got an awful temper and I'm always getting terribly wrought up . . . . Even now, my lips are trembling and my right eyelid is twitching. . . But the worst thing is when I try to sleep. The instant I get to bed and start dropping off, something stabs me in my left side -- ungh! And it cuts right through my shoulder straight into my head - ungh! I jump like

a lunatic, walk about a little and then I lie down again, but the moment I start to doze off, I feel it in my side again - ungh! And it keeps on and on for at least twenty times . . . . .
NATALIA : *[entering]* : Ah, it's you. And Papa said a customer had come for the merchandise. How do you do, Ivan Vassilievich!
LOMOV : How do you do, my esteemed Natalia Stepanovna!
NATALIA : I'm sorry about my apron and not being dressed . . . We're shelling peas for drying. Where've you been keeping yourself ? Have a seat . . . . *(They sit down.)* Would you like a bite of lunch ?
LOMOV : Thank you so much, but I've already eaten.
NATALIA : Well, then have a cigarette. . . . The matches are over here . . . . The weather's magnificent today, but yesterday it rained so hard that the men couldn't do a thing all day long. How much hay did you get done ? Can you imagine, I was so greedy that I had the whole meadow mown, and now I regret it, I'm scared that all my hay may rot. I should have waited. But what's this ? I do believe you're wearing a morning coat! How original! Are you going to a ball or something ? Incidentally, you're getting quite handsome . . . But honestly, why are you all dolled up ?
LOMOV : *(nervously)* : You see, my esteemed Natalia Stepanovna . . . the fact is I've made up my mind to ask you to listen to me . . . . Naturally you'll be surprised and even angry, but I . . . . *(Aside.)* God, it's cold!
NATALIA : What is it ? *(Pause.)* Well ?
LOMOV : I'll try to be brief. You are well aware, my esteemed Natalia Stepanovna, that for a long time now, in fact since my childhood, I have had the honor of knowing your family. My late aunt and her husband, whose estate as you know I inherited, always held your father and your late mother in utmost esteem. The Lomov family and the Choobookov family have always maintained extremely friendly, one might even say, intimate relations. Furthermore, as you know, my property borders on yours. Perhaps you will be so kind as to recall that my Ox Meadows run along you birch forest.
NATALIA : Excuse me for interrupting you. You said "my Ox Meadows" . . . . Are they yours ?
LOMOV : Of course . . . . .
NATALIA : Oh, come now ! The Ox Meadows belong to us, not you !
LOMOV : Oh no! They're mine, dear Natalia Stepanovna.
NATALIA : That's news to me. How did they ever get to be yours ?
LOMOV : What do you mean ? I'm talking about the Ox Meadows that are wedged in between your birch forest and the Burnt Marsh.
NATALIA : Exactly . . . . They're ours.
LOMOV : No, you're mistaken, dear Natalia Stepanovna they're mine.
NATALIA : Do be reasonable, Ivan Vassilievich! Since when have they been yours ?
LOMOV : Since when ? They've always been ours, as far back as I can remember.
NATALIA : Excuse me, but this is too much !
LOMOV : You can look at the documents, dear Natalia Stepanovna. At one time, there were some quarrels about the Ox Meadows, you're quite right. But now, everyone knows they're mine. Why argue about it ? If you will permit me to explain : my aunt's grandmother lent them to your paternal great - grandfather's peasants for an indefinite period and free of charge in return for their firing her bricks. Your great - grandfather's peasants used the Meadows free of charge for some forty years and began thinking of them as their own . . . . and then after the Emancipation, when a statute was passed -----
NATALIA : You've got it all wrong! Both my grandfather and great - grandfather regarded their property as reaching all the way to the Burnt Swamp -- which means that the Ox Meadows were ours. What's there to argue about ? --- I don't understand. How annoying!
LOMOV : I'll show you the documents, Natalia Stepanovna.
NATALIA : No, you're joking or trying to tease me . . . . What a surprise ! We've owned the land for practically three hundred years and now suddenly we're told it's not ours! I'm sorry, Ivan Vassilievich, but I just can't believe my ears. Those Meadows don't mean a thing to me. The whole area probably doesn't come to more than forty acres, it's worth about three hundred rubles; but I'm terribly upset by the injustice of it all. You can say what you like, but I simply can't stand injustice.
LOMOV : Please listen to me, I beseech you. Your paternal great - grandfather's peasants. as I have already had the honor of telling you, fired bricks for my aunt's grandmother. Now, my aunt's

grandmother, wishing to do them a favour in return ------
NATALIA : Grandfather, grandmother, aunt . . . . I don't know what you're talking about! The Meadows are ours, and that's that.
LOMOV : They're mine!
NATALIA : They're ours ! You can keep arguing for two days, you can put on fifteen morning coats if you like, but they're ours, ours, ours! . . . . I don't desire your property, but I don't care to lose mine . . . . Do as you like !
LOMOV : I don't need the Meadows, Natalia Stepanovna, but it's the principle of the thing. If you want, I'll give them to you.
NATALIA : It would be my privilege to give them to you, they're mine! . . . . . All this is rather odd -- to put it mildly, Ivan Vassilievich. Up till now we've always considered you a good neighbor and friend. Last year we let you borrow our threshing machine, and as a result we couldn't finish our own grain until November, and now you're treating us like Gypsies. You're giving me my own land. Excuse me, but that's not a neighborly thing to do ! To my mind, it's impertinent, if you care to ----
LOMOV : Are you trying to tell me that I'm a landgrabber ? Madam, I've never seized anyone else's property, and I won't allow anyone to say I have . . . . *(Hurries over to the carafe and drinks some water.)* The Ox Meadows are mine!
NATALIA : That's not true, they're ours.
LOMOV : They're mine.
NATALIA : That's not true. I'll prove it to you! I'll send my men over to mow them this afternoon.
LOMOV : What ?!
NATALIA : My men will be there this afternoon!
LOMOV : I'll kick them out !
NATALIA : You wouldn't dare !
LOMOV : *[clutching at his heart]* : The Ox Meadows are mine! Do you hear! Mine!
NATALIA : Stop shouting ! Please ! You can shout your lungs out in your own place, but I must ask you to control yourself here.
LOMOV : Madam, if it weren't for these awful, excruciating palpitations and the veins throbbing in my temples, I'd speak to you in a totally different way! *(Shouting.)* The Ox Meadows are mine.
NATALIA : Ours!
LOMOV : Mine !
NATALIA : Ours !
LOMOV : Mine !
(Enter CHOOBOOKOV.)
CHOOBOOKOV : What's going on ? What's all the shouting about ?
NATALIA : Papa, please tell this gentleman whom the Ox Meadows belong to. Us or him.
CHOOBOOKOV : *[to LOMOV]* : Why, the Meadows belong to us, old friend.
LOMOV : But, for goodness' sake, Stepan Stepanovich, how can that be? Can't you be reasonable at least ? My aunt's grandmother lent the Meadows to your grandfather's peasants for temporary use and free of charge. His peasants used the land for forty years and got in the habit of regarding it as their own, but after the Land Settlement.
CHOOBOOKOV : Excuse me, old boy . . . . You're forgetting that our peasants didn't pay your grandmother and so on precisely because the Meadows were disputed and what not. . . . But now every child knows that they're ours. I guess you've never looked at the maps.
LOMOV : I'll prove they're mine !
CHOOBOOKOV : You won't prove a thing, my boy.
LOMOV : I will so prove it !
CHOOBOOKOV : My dear boy, why carry on like this ? You won't prove a thing by something. I don't want anything of yours, but I don't intend to let go of what's mine. Why should I ? If it comes to that, dear friend, if you mean to dispute my ownership of the Meadows and so on, I'd sooner let my peasants have them than you. So, there!
LOMOV : I don't understand. What right do you have to give away other people's property?
CHOOBOOKOV : Allow me to decide whether or no I've got the right. Really, young man, I'm not accustomed to being spoken to in that tone of voice, and what not. I'm old enough to be your father, and I must ask you to calm down when you speak to me and so forth.

LOMOV : No! You're treating me like an idiot, and laughing at me. You tell me that my property is yours and then you expect me remain calm and talk to you in a normal fashion. That's not a very neighborly thing to do, Stepan Stepanovich. You're no neighbor, you're a robber baron.
CHOOBOOKOV : What ? ! What did you say, my good man ?
NATALIA : Papa, have the men mow the Ox Meadows right now !
CHOOBOOKOV : *[to LOMOV]* : What did you say, sir ?
NATALIA : The Ox Meadows are our property, and I won't let anyone else have them. I won't I won't, I won't!
LOMOV : We'll see about that ! I'll prove to you in court that they're mine.
CHOOBOOKOV : In court ? My good man, you can take it to court, and what not. Go right ahead! I know you, you've just been waiting for a chance to litigate, and so on. You're quibbler from the word go, Your whole family's nothing but a bunch of pettifoggers. All of them !
LOMOV : I must ask you not to insult my family. The Lomovs have always been law-abiding folk. None of them was ever hauled into court for embezzlement the way your uncle was.
CHOOBOOKOV : Every last one of them insane.
NATALIA : Every last one of them, every last one !
CHOOBOOKOV : Your grandfather drank like a fish and the whole country knows that your youngest aunt, Nastasia, ran off with an architect, and what not ------
LOMOV : And your mother was a hunchback ! *(Clutching at his heart.)* There's a twitching in my side . . . . . My head's throbbing . . . . Oh, God . . . . Water !
CHOOBOOKOV : And your father was a gambler and he ate like a pig !
NATALIA : And no one could beat your aunt at scandal mongering.
LOMOV : My left leg's paralyzed . . . . And you're a schemer . . . . Oooh! My heart ! . . . And it's no secret to anyone that just before the elections you ---- There and stars bursting before my eyes . . . . . Where's my hat ?
NATALIA : Vermin ! Liar ! Brute !
CHOOBOOKOV : You're a spiteful, double - dealing schemer ! So there !
LOMOV : Ah, my hat . . . . My heart. Where am I ? where's the door ? Oooh ! . . . . I think I'm dying . . . . . My foot's totally paralyzed.
[Drags himself to the door.]
CHOOBOOKOV : *[calling after him]* : And don't ever see your foot in my home again !
NATALIA : Go to court ! Sue us ! Just wait and see !
[LOMOV staggers out.]
CHOOBOOKOV : He can go straight to hell, damn him.
(Walks about, all wrought up.)
NATALIA : Isn't he the worst crook ? Catch me trusting a good neighbor after this!
CHOOBOOKOV : The chiseler ! The scarecrow!
NATALIA : The monster ! He not only grabs other people's property, he calls them names, to boot.
CHOOBOOKOV : And that clown, that . . . . . freak had the colossal nerve to ask me for your hand in marriage, and so on. Can you imagine ? He wanted to propose.
NATALIA : Propose ?
CHOOBOOKOV : Exactly ! That's what he came for. To propose to you.
NATALIA : Propose ? To me ? Why didn't you say so ?
CHOOBOOKOV : And he got all dolled up in a morning coat. That pipsqueak. That upstart.
NATALIA : Propose ? To me? Ohhh! *(Collapses into an armchair and wails)* Bring him back. Get him. Ohh ! Get him !
CHOOBOOKOV : Get whom ?
NATALIA : Hurry up, hurry ! I feel sick. Bring him back *(Hysterical.)*
CHOOBOOKOV : What is it? What's wrong ? *(Grabbing his head.)* This is awful! I'll shoot myself. I'll hang myself. They've worn me out.
NATALIA : I'm dying! Bring him back !
CHOOBOOKOV : All right. Stop yelling!
(Runs out)
NATALIA : *(alone, wailing)* : What've we done ? Bring him back ! Bring him back!
CHOOBOOKOV : *(running in)* : He's coming and all that, goddamn him. Ughh! you talk to him,

alone, I really don't feel like . . . .
NATALIA : *[wailing]* : Bring him back !
CHOOBOOKOV : *[shouting]* : He's coming, I tell you. Oh God! What did I ever do to deserve a grown-up daughter ? I'll cut my throat. I swear, I'll cut my throat. We insulted and abused him, and it's all your fault!
NATALIA : My fault ? It was yours !
CHOOBOOKOV : Now I'm the culprit !
[LOMOV appears at the French doors. CHOOBOOKOV exits.]
LOMOV : *(entering, exhausted)* : What horrible palpitations . . . my foot's gone numb . . . . . there's a jabbing in my side . . . .
NATALIA : My apologies, Ivan Vassilievich, we got so worked up . . . . . I do recall now that the Ox Meadows are actually your property.
LOMOV : My heart's palpitating . . . . . The Meadows are mine . . . . There are stars bursting in both my eyes.
(They sit down.)
NATALIA : We were wrong.
LOMOV : It's the principle of the thing . . . . I don't care about the land, it's the principle of the thing ------
NATALIA : Exactly, the principle . . . . Let's talk about something else.
LOMOV : Particularly since I have proof. My aunt's grandmother let your paternal great -grandfather's peasants ----
NATALIA : All right, all right . . . . *(Aside.)* I don't know how to go about it . . . . *(To LOMOV)* Will you start hunting soon ?
LOMOV : Yes, for grouse, Natalia Stepanovna. I think I shall begin after the harvest. Oh, have you heard what bad luck I had ? My hound Guess ---- you know the one -- he's gone lame.
NATALIA : What a pity ! How did it happen ?
LOMOV : I don't know. He must have twisted his leg, or else some other dog bit him . . . *(Sighs)*. My very best hound, not to mention the money ! Why, I paid Mironov a hundred and twenty - five rubles for him.
NATALIA : You overpaid him, Ivan Vassilievich.
LOMOV : I don't think so. It was very little for a wonderful dog.
NATALIA : Papa bought his dog Leap for eight-five rubles, and Leap is vastly superior to your Guess.
LOMOV : Leap superior to Guess ? Oh, come now, *(Laughs)* Leap superior to Guess !
NATALIA : Of course he is ! I know that Leap is still young, he's not a full-grown hound yet. But for points and action, not even Volchanietsky has a better dog.
LOMOV : Excuse me, Natalia Stepanovna, but you're forgetting that he's pug-jawed, which makes him a poor hunting dog.
NATALIA : Pug-jawed? That's news to me.
LOMOV : I can assure you, his lower jaw is shorter than his upper jaw.
NATALIA : Have you measured it ?
LOMOV : Indeed, I have. He'll do for pointing, of course, but when it comes to retrieving, he can hardly hold a cand ----
NATALIA : First of all, our Leap is a pedigreed greyhound -- he's the son of Harness and Chisel, whereas your Guess is so piebald that not even Solomon could figure out his breed . . . . . Furthermore, he's as old and ugly as a broken-down nag -----
LOMOV : He may be old, but I wouldn't trade him for five of your Leaps . . . . . The very idea ! Guess is a real hound, but Leap . . . . . Why argue ? It's ridiculous . . . . Every huntsman's assistant has a dog like your Leap. At twenty-five rubles he'd be overpriced.
NATALIA : You seem to be possessed by some demon of contradiction, Ivan Vassilievich. First you fancy that the Ox Meadows are yours, then you pretend that Guess is a better hound then Leap like it's a person who says the opposite of what he thinks. You know perfectly well that Leap is a hundred times better than . . . . than that stupid Guess of yours. Why do you insist on denying it ?
LOMOV : You obviously must think, Natalia Stepanovna, that I'm either blind or mentally retarded. Can't you see that your Leap has a pug jaw ?

NATALIA : That's not true.
LOMOV : A pug jaw.
NATALIA : *(screaming)* : That's not true.
LOMOV : Why are you screaming, Madam ?
NATALIA : Why are you talking such rubbish ? It's exasperating ! Your Guess is just about ready to be put out of his misery, and you compare him to Leap.
LOMOV : Excuse me, but I can't keep on arguing like this. My heart's palpitating.
NATALIA : I've noticed that the sportsmen who argue most don't understand the first thing about hunting.
LOMOV : Madam, pleeeease, keep quiet . . . . My heart's bursting . . . . . *(shouts.)* Keep quiet !
NATALIA : I won't keep quiet until you admit that Leap is a hundred times superior to your Guess !
LOMOV : He's a hundred times inferior. Someone ought to shoot him. My temples . . . My eyes . . . . my shoulder . . . .
NATALIA : No one has to wish that idiotic mutt of yours dead, because he's just skin and bones anyway.
LOMOV : Keep quiet ! I'm having heart failure !
NATALIA : I will not keep quiet !
CHOOBOOKOV : *[entering]* : What's going on now ?
NATALIA : Papa, tell me, honestly and sincerely : which is the better dog - our Leap or his Guess ?
LOMOV : Stepan Stepanovich, I beseech you, just tell me one thing : is you Leap pug-jawed or isn't he ? Yes or no ?
CHOOBOOKOV : So what ! Who cares? He's still the best hound in the country, and what not.
LOMOV : And my Guess isn't better ? Tell the truth.
CHOOBOOKOV : Don't get all worked up, old boy . . . . Let me explain . . . Your Guess does have a few good qualities . . . . . He's pure-bred, he's got solid legs, he's well put together, and what not. But if you must know my good man, your dog's got two basic faults : He's old, and his muzzle's too short.
LOMOV : Excuse me, my heart's racing madly . . . . Let's examine the facts . . . . Please don't forget that when we were hunting in the Mapooskin Fields, my Guess ran neck and neck with the count's dog Waggy, while your Leap lagged behind by half a mile.
CHOOBOOKOV : That was because the Count's assistant struck him with his riding crop.
LOMOV : Naturally. All the other dogs were chasing the fox, but yours started running after sheep.
CHOOBOOKOV : That's a lie ! My dear boy, I fly off the handle easily, so please let's stop arguing. The man whipped him because people are always envious of every one else's dogs. Yes, they're all filled with spite ! And you, sir are no exception. Why, the minute you notice that anyone else's dog is better than your Guess, you instantly start up something or other . . . . and what not. I've got the memory of an elephant!
LOMOV : And so do I.
CHOOBOOKOV : *(mimicking him)* : "And so do I." . . . . And what does your memory tell you ?
LOMOV : My heart's palpitating . . . . My foot's paralyzed . . . . . I can't anymore. . . .
NATALIA : *[mimicking]* : "My heart's palpitating . . . ." What kind of hunter are you anyway ? You ought to be home in bed catching cockroaches instead of out hunting foxes. Palpitations ! . . . . .
CHOOBOOKOV : That's right, what kind of hunter are you ? If you've got palpitations, stay home; don't go wobbling around the country side on horseback. It wouldn't be so bad if you really hunted, but you only tag along in order to start arguments or meddle with other people's dogs, and what not. We'd better stop, I fly off the handle easily. You, sir, are not a hunter, and that's that.
LOMOV : And you are, I suppose. The only reason you go hunting is to flatter the count and carry on your backstabbing little intrigues . . . . Oh, my heart ! . . . . You schemer !
CHOOBOOKOV : Me, a schemer. *(Shouting.)* Shut up !
LOMOV : Schemer !
CHOOBOOKOV : Upstart ! Pipsqueak !
LOMOV : You old fogy ! You hypocrite !
CHOOBOOKOV : Shut up, or I'll blast you with a shot gun like a partridge.
LOMOV : The whole county knows that -- Oh, my heart ! ---- your late wife used to beat you . . .

. My leg . . . my temples . . . I see stars . . . I'm falling, falling . . . .
CHOOBOOKOV : And your housekeeper henpecks you all over the place !
LOMOV : There, you see . . . . my heart's burst ! My shoulder's torn off . . . . . Where's my shoulder ? . . . . I'm dying! *(Collapses into armchair.)* Get a doctor! *(Faints.)*
CHOOBOOKOV : Pipsqueak. Weakling. Windbag. I feel sick. *(Drinks some water.)* I feel sick.
NATALIA : What kind of hunter are you anyway ? You don't even know how to sit in a saddle! *(To her father)* Papa! What's the matter with him ? Papa ! Look, Papa! *(Screams.)* Ivan Vassilievich! He's dead!
CHOOBOOKOV : Oh ! . . . . . What is it ? What's wrong ?
NATALIA : *(moaning)* : He's dead . . . he's dead!
CHOOBOOKOV : Who's dead ? *(Glancing at LOMOV.)* He really is dead! Oh, my God! Get some water! Get a doctor! *(Holds a glass to LOMOV's mouth.)* Go ahead and drink! . . . . He won't drink . . . . I guess he's dead and so on . . . . Why does everything have to happen to me ? Why didn't I put a bullet through my head long ago ? Why didn't I cut my throat ? What am I waiting for ? Give me a knife ! Give me a gun !
[LOMOV stirs.]
He's reviving, I think . . . . Drink some water ! . . . . That's right.
LOMOV : Stars . . . . for . . . where am I ?
CHOOBOOKOV : You two'd better hurry up and get married . . . Dammit ! She accepts . . . *(Joins LOMOV'S hand with NATALIA'S.)* She accepts . . . . . My blessings and so forth. . . . . Just do me a favor and leave me in peace.
LOMOV : What ? *(Getting up.)* Who ?
CHOOBOOKOV : She accepts. Well ? Kiss her and . . . . . the two of you can go straight to hell.
NATALIA : *[moaning]* : He's alive . . . . I accept, I accept . . . .
CHOOBOOKOV : Kiss and make up.
LOMOV : What ? Who ? *(Kisses NATALIA.)* Enchante . . . . Excuse me, but what's going on. On yes, I remember . . . My heart . . . . stars . . . . I'm very happy, Natalia Stepanovna. *(Kisses her hands.)* My leg's paralyzed. . . . .
NATALIA : I . . . . I'm very happy, too . . . .
CHOOBOOKOV : That's a load of my back . . . . Whew !
NATALIA : But . . . . all the same, why don't you finally admit that Guess isn't as good as Leap.
LOMOV : He's much better.
NATALIA : He's worse.
CHOOBOOKOV : The launching of marital bliss! Champagne!
LOMOV : He's better.
NATALIA : Worse! Worse! Worse!
CHOOBOOKOV : *(trying to outshout them)* : Champagne! Champagne!

16.4. Glossary :

tails	:	a formal coat, cut behind
esteemed	:	respected, highly thought of
nerves	:	nervous weakness
fat chance	:	No chance, impossible
yearning	:	eagerly looking forward
beat about the bush	:	not coming to the point
Blockhead	:	idiot
buzz	:	a droning sound
palpitation	:	quick irregular heartbeat
lunatic	:	mad person

mow	:	to cut down
ball	:	a formal party with dancing
birch	:	a tree
Marsh	:	swamp, water-logged land
statute	:	Law
Gypsies	:	a nomadic tribe
landgrabber	:	one who takes another's property by force
temples	:	either side of the forehead
peasant	:	poor farmer
litigate	:	to take a claim or dispute to a court of law
quibbler	:	one who argues about a small matter
pettifogger	:	one who is concerned with unimportant things
embezzle	:	to steal
freak	:	a person who behaves in a very strange way
jab	:	to pierce
grouse	:	a game bird
pug - jaw	:	wide flat jaw
pointing	:	to locate
retrieve	:	to bring back
pedigree	:	of pure stock or breed
muzzle	:	snout or nose of an animal
fly off the handle	:	to loose temper
intrigues	:	plans to decieve others
Enchant	:	captivating
marital bliss	:	the joy of marriage
Champagne	:	wine drunk on special occasions

16.5. Technique and Functions of Dialogue :

Dialogue is dramatic speech. It is the artistical reproduction of conversation by characters in a dramatic or narrative work. As J.L. Styan puts it : "A snatch of phrase caught in every day conversation may mean little. Used by an actor on stage, it can assume general and typical qualities." No matter how simple the words, when uttered in a particular context the dialogue takes on greater significance than its general conversational value. A good example is Othello's bare repitition of words before he murders Desdemona, 'Put out the light and then put out the light.' The comparison between the lamp Othello is holding and Desdemona's life subtly recalls the sinister intentions of Othello and the impending death of Desdemona.

J.L. Styan goes on to say, "Dramatic speech with its basis in ordinary conversation, is speech that has had a specific pressure put on it." Thus the actor playing a part forces his words upon the audience and in different ways tries to fix the quality of their attention. In a good play, the reproduction of an ordinary conversation comprises of words meticulously put together to perform many things. According to Prof. Eric Bentley the dialogue "sheds light on the character speaking, it sheds light on the character spoken to, on the character spoken about, it furthers the plot and it functions ironically in conveying to the audience a meaning different from that conveyed to the character."

Hence we come to know something about the nature of the character speaking, the nature of the character whom he or she is speaking to about another character, the direction of the plot and the motives and dispositions that lie behind the conversation of the characters. In dramatic speech one finds economy in the use of words.

Styan points out that "The desultory and clumsy talk of real life with its interruptions, overlappings, indecisions and repititions, talk without direction wastes our interest unless it hides relevance in irrelevances." Dialogue which simply impresses is unacceptable. It is easy to be

impressed with the wit and vitality in a dialogue and ignore the question of its relevance to the action.

Therefore dialogue must be compact with implicit and relevant references.

Language is another important aspect of dramatic speech or dialogue. Language and accent differ according to social positions, standards of education, character, habit, community, life style mannerisms etc. and a realistic reproduction of such is of utmost importance.

The functions of a Dialogue :

The following are the functions of a dialogue in a play.

1) To shed light on the characters.

2) To further the plot

3) To entertain the audience by its wit, vitality and other intrinsic qualities.

4) To convey the hidden motives and dispositions in a character's personality.

16.6. Types of Dialogue :

Dialogue is of different types generally used as stage devices.

Soliloquy : The act of talking to oneself is called soliloquy or monologue. It is a convenient device by which a character alone on stage, utters his thoughts aloud to inform the audience about his or another character's motives, intentions and state of mind. A good example is Hamlet's speech "To be or not to be."

Aside : Aside is another stage device wherein a character moves away from the other characters on the stage and utters his thoughts aloud. It is assumed that nobody has heard him as he speaks out his mind on stage.

16.7. Brief Summary of the Text :

The Play "A Marriage Proposal" presents a satirical portrayal of the decadence of Russian middle class life at the end of the 19th century. The plot revolves around three characters, Choobookov Stepan Stepanovich, his daughter Natalia Stepanovna and their neighbour, a landowner Lomov Ivan Vassileivich. One day Lomov, an eligible bachelor, pays a visit to his neighbour Choobookov to ask for his daughter's hand in marriage. Choobookov is overjoyed by Lomov's proposal as he had been worried that his daughter Natalia aged twenty-five had passed the marriageble age and that it would be hard to find her a suitable husband. Choobookov eagerly assures Lomov that his daughter would be more than willing to marry him. He hurries to call Natalia.

Natalia greets Lomov and engages him in polite conversation, unaware of Lomov's proposal as her ecstatic father had forgotten to inform her. Instead of proposing to her, Lomov indulges in circumlocuation talking about the cordial relations between their two families and his meadows that bordered their birch woods.

The allusion to 'his' meadows annoys Natalia who vehemently contests the ownership of the meadows. A bitter quarrel ensues which brings back Choobookov to the scene who takes sides with his daughter. Upset by Choobookov's tirade against him labelling him as a loafer and a swindler, he walks out in a huff. A furious Choobookov wonders out loud how a fool like Lomov could have come seeking to marry his daughter. Staggered by the news of Lomov's proposal, Natalia implores her father to bring him back. An embarrassed Choobookov invites Lomov back to the house. He goes out leaving the two to sort things out.

Natalia accedes ownership of the meadows to Lomov and Lomov on his part begs her to pardon him for losing his temper. They begin to talk about hunting, their favourite sport. They start

arguing about their hunting dogs. Lomov asserts that his dog Guess is far superior than Natalia's dog Leap. Natalia disputes his claim which leads to a bitter quarrel. Choobookov reenters and once again takes sides with his daughter. Lomov and Choobookov rage at each other calling each other the worst of names. A hysterical Lomov collapses into a chair crying out for a doctor. Natalia is scared that Lomov might die. Choobookov manages to revive Lomov. He urges Lomov and Natalia to marry and brings them together, heaving a sigh of relief and hoping the worst was over. However, true to their nature, Lomov and Natalia resume their argument about whose dog was better and start quarrelling again. A frustrated Choobookov tries to calm them down by calling out loudly for a toast as the curtain drops.

16.8. Conclusion :

This lesson discussed the technique and function of Dialogue i.e., to convey information, to further the plot and to entertain the audience with its, oddity and other intrinsic qualities. You have observed that dialogue reveals the hidden motives and dispositions of a character. You have seen the importance 'Aside' and 'Soliloquy' and its effective usage in the present play 'A Marriage Proposal' by the dramatist Chekov. You have also learnt that language is a significant aspect of dialogue. The lesson also defined two types of comedy the 'Comedy of Manners' and the 'Farce' with reference to the present play. You have seen how the use of repartee or a comic verbal exchange, overdramatization of characters and the exaggeration of their idiosyncracies generate humour in the play.

16.9. Critical Evaluation :

Chekov's one act play "A Marriage Proposal" is a comedy of manners bordering on the Farce. According to Abrams this form of drama deals with the relations and intrigues of gentlemen and ladies living in a polished and sophisticated society. It relies for comic effect in great part on the wit and sparkle of the dialogue, often in the form of repartee, and to a lesser degree, on the ridiculous violations of social conventions and decorum by stupid characters such as would be wits, jealous husbands and foppish dandies. For instance in the play comic effect is generated by the repartee or a comic verbal exchange between the characters, Choobookov Lomov and Natalia.

On the surface however the play appears to be a Farce overdramatizing the behaviour of its characters and exaggerating their idiosyncracies. The play induces laughter at the boorish behaviour of the 19th century Russian landed gentry like Choobookov and Lomov. Yet one finds an undercurrent of pathos beneth the surface. For instance the two lovers Lomov and Natalia are past the age when men and women usually prefer to marry. Yet they behave with childish vanity and conceit garishly displayed in their petty quarrel over the ownership of the meadows and the pedigree of their dogs and nearly squander their chance of getting married.

16.10. Passages for Comprehension :

Comprehension Passage - I :

Lomov : I'll be brief. You are well aware, my esteemed Natalia Stepanovna, that for a long time now, in fact since my childhood I have had the honour of knowing your family. My late aunt and her husband, whose estate as you know I inherited, always held your father and late mother in utmost esteem. The Lomov family and the Choobookov family have always maintained extremely friendly, one might even say, intimate relations. a

A. The two families had always maintained intimate relations.

5. What did Lomov claim to be his property ?

A. Lomov claimed Ox Meadows to be his property.

Comprehension Passage - II :

Lomov : I'll show you the documents, Natalia Stepanovna.

Natalia : No, you're joking or trying to tease me . . . . What a surprise ! We've owned the land for practically three hundred years and now suddenly we're told it's not ours! I'm sorry Ivan Vassilievich, but I just can't believe my ears. These meadows don't mean a thing to me. The whole area probably doesn't come to more than forty acres, its worth about three hundred roubles; but I'm

terribly upset by the injustice of it all. You can say what you like, but I simply can't stand injustice.
1. What documents does Lomov want to show Natalia ?
A. Lomov wants to show Natalia documents of his ownership of the Ox Meadows.
2. Who had owned the land for three hundred years ?
A. Natalia's family had owned the land for three hundred years.
3. What didn't mean a thing to her ?
A. The Ox meadows didn't mean a thing to her.
4. What was it's worth ?
A. It was worth three hundred roubles.
5. Why was Natalia terribly upset ?
A. Natalia was terribly upset by Lomov's argument that the meadows belonged to him.

Unworked Passage - III:
Natalia : *(To Lomov)* Will you start hunting soon ?
Lomov : Yes for grouse, Natalia Stepanovna. I think I shall begin after the harvest. Oh, have you heard what bad luck I had ? My hound Guess - you know the one - his gone lame.
Natalia : What a pity ! How did it happen ?
Lomov : I don't know. He must have twisted his leg, or else some other dog bit him . . . *(sighs.)* My very best hound, not to mention the money ! Why, I paid Mironov a hundred and twenty five roubles for him.
1. What does Lomov expect to do after the harvest ?
2. What had happened to Lomov's dog ?
3. What kind of a dog was Guess ?
4. Who might have twisted his leg ?
5. How much did Lomov pay Mironov for Guess ?

I. Answers :
1. Lomov expected to hunt for grouse after the harvest.
2. Lomov's best huting dog had gone lame.
3. Guess was a hound.
4. Guess might have twisted his leg.
5. Lomov paid Mironov a hundred and twenty five roubles for Guess.

Unworked Passage - IV :
Natalia : Papa bought his dog Leap for eighty - five roubles, and Leap is vastly superior to your Guess.
Lomov : Leap superior to Guess ? Oh come now. *(Laughs)* Leap superior to Guess !
Natalia : Of course he is ! I know that Leap is still young, he not a full grown hound yet. But for points and action, not even Volchanietsky has a better dog.
Lomov : Excuse me Natalia Stepanovna, but you're forgetting that he is pug-jawed, which makes him a poor hunting dog.
1. For how much did Natalia's father buy Leap ?
2. Who is vastly superior to Guess ?
3. What is Leap good for ?
4. With whose dog does Natalia compare her dog ?
5. Why does Lomov consider Leap a poor hunting dog ?

II. Answers :
1. Natalia's father bought Leap for eighty five roubles.
2. Leap is vastly superior to Guess.
3. Leap is good for points and action.
4. Natalia compares her dog with Volchanietsky's dog.
5. Lomov considers Leap a poor hunting dog because it is pug-jawed.

16.11. Sample Questions :

1. Write an essay on the functions and technique of dialogue with special reference to “A Marriage Proposal”.
2. Sketch the character of Lomov.
3. “A Marriage Proposal” is a comedy of manners. Elaborate.

16.12. Suggested Reading :

1. J.L. Styan : The Elements of Drama
2. Ronald Peacock : The Art of Drama

- Mr. N. SURESH CHANDRA RAO

LESSON - 17
J.B.PRIESTLEY "MOTHER'S DAY"

Structure :

17.1 Objectives

1. To acquaint the student with the author's life and works.
2. To apprise the student about the meaning and significance of character in a play.
3. To familiarize the student with the art of characterization.
4. To introduce new words with their meanings.

17.2 The Writer : His Life and Works :

John Boynton Priestley was born on September 13th, 1894 in Bradford, West Yorkshire, in the North of England. His father, Jonathan Priestley was a well to do school master. His mother died when he was an infant. Priestley was educated at the Bradford Grammar School and Trinity Hall, Cambridge. During the First World War he served with the Duke of Wellington's and the Devonshire Regiments and survived the front lines in Flanders. From 1922 he worked as a journalist in London, as an essayist and critic for the various newspapers and periodicals including. *The Saturday Review, Weekend Review* and *the New Statesman*. His essays were published in several volumes entitled *Brief Diversions, Papers from Liliput, All About Ourselves, Self Selected Essays* and *Essays of Five Decades*. His prose style is marked by clarity and ease of expression, candidness and a subtle sense of humour.

Priestley rose to fame with his novel *The Good Companions*. which was awarded the Tait Black Memorial Prize in 1929. *Angel Pavement (1930). Far Away (1932), Wonder House (1933), The Doomsday Men (1938), Bright Day (1946), The Magicians (1954), Lost Empires (1965)* and *Found, Lost, Found (1976),* are some of his notable novels which are marked by warm humanity and a fine sense of humour reminiscent of Dickens.

Priestley began writing for the theatre in 1932. He wrote popular comedies like *Dangerous Corner (1932), Laburnum Grove (1933), When we are Married (1938) and Time and The Conways (1937).* A prolific writer, he wrote about fifty plays popular among them being *Cornelius (1935), I Have Been Here Before (1937), The Linden Tree (1947), An Inspector Calls (1947) and Mother's Day (1953)*. Priestley owned his own production company, English Plays, Ltd., and was Director of the Mask Theatre, London (1938-39).

Priestley also published two novellas, *The Carfitt Crisis* and *The Pavilion of Masks* in 1975.

His other works include *Life of George Meredith (1926), A Short History of the English Novel (1927), Midnight In The Desert (1937), Literature and Western Man (1960), The Edwardians (1970), Victoria's Heyday (1972)* and *English Humour (1977)*.

As a radio broadcaster during World War II, Priestley became popular as 'the voice of the common people'. He was an ardent supporter for the campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. He was the British Delegate to the UNESCO in 1946-47. He was awarded the prestigious Order of Merit in 1977. He died in 1983.

As a journalist, novelist, playwright and essayist, Priestley wrote over one hundred novels, plays and essays. A multifaceted personality he was a man of versatility, a patriot, a cosmopolitan Yorkshireman, a professional amateur, a cultured philistine and a down-to- earth spokesman for the common man.

17.3 THE TEXT : MOTHER'S DAY :

Characters

MRS. ANNIE PEARSON
GEORGE PEARSON
DORIS PEARSON
CYRIL PEARSON
MRS. FITZGERALD

The action takes place in the living - room of the
Pearson's house in a London suburb.
Time : the present.

SCENE - *The living - room of the Pearson family. Afternoon. It is a comfortably furnished, much lived in room in a small suburban semi - detached villa. If necessary only one door need be used, but it is better with two - one up, left leading to the front door and the stairs and the other in the right. wall leading to the Kitchen and the back door. There can be a muslin - covered window in the left. wall and possibly one in the right. wall, too. The fireplace is assumed to be in the fourth wall. There is a settee up right., an armchair down left and one down right. A small table with two chairs either side of it stands in a corner.*

When the CURTAIN rises it is an afternoon in early autumn and the stage can be well lit. MRS PEARSON at right., and MRS FITZGERALD at left., are sitting opposite each other at the small table, on which are two teacups and saucers and the cards with which MRS FITZGERALD has been telling MRS PEARSON'S fortune. MRS PEARSON is a pleasant but worried -

looking woman in her forties. MRS FITZGERALD is older, heavier and a strong and sinister personality. She is smoking. It is very important that these two should have sharply contrasting voices - MRS PEARSON speaking in a light, flurried sort of tone, with a touch of suburban Cockney perhaps, and MRS FITZGERALD with a deep voice, rather Irish perhaps.

MRS. FITZGERALD *[collecting up the cards]* : And that's all I can tell you, Mrs. Pearson, could be a good fortune could be a bad one. All depends on yourself now. Make up your mind - and there it is.

MRS PEARSON : Yes, thank you, Mrs. Fitzgerald. I'm much obliged, I'm sure. It's wonderful having a real fortune - teller living next door. Did you learn that out East, too?

MRS FITZGERALD : I did. Twelve years I had of it, with my old man rising to be Lieutenant Quartermaster. He learnt a lot, and I learnt a lot more. But will you make up your mind now, Mrs. Pearson dear ? Put your foot down, once an for all, an'be the mistress of your own house an' the boss of your own family.

MRS PEARSON : *[smiling apologetically]* : That's easier said than done. Besides I'm so fond of them even if they are so thoughtless and selfish. They don't mean to be .....

MRS FITZGERALD : *[cutting in]* : May be not. But it'ud be better for them if they learnt to treat you properly.

MRS PEARSON : Yes, I suppose it would, in a way.

MRS FITZGERALD : No doubt about it at all. Who's the better for being spoilt - grown man, lad or girl ? Nobody. You think it does'em good when you run after them all the time, take their orders as if you were the servant in the house, stay at home every night while they go out enjoying themselves ? Never in all your life. It's the ruin of them as well as you. Husbands, sons, daughters should be taking notice of wives an'mothers, not giving 'em order an' treating 'em like dirt. An' don't tell me you don't know what I mean, for I know more than you've told me.

MRS PEARSON : *[dubiously]* : I -- keep dropping a hint . . .

MRS FITZGERALD : Hin't ? It's more than hints your family needs, Mrs. Pearson.

MRS PEARSON : *[dubiously]* : I suppose it is. But I do hate any unpleasantness. And it's so hard to know where to start. I keep making up my mind to have it out with them but somehow I don't know how to begin. [She glances at her watch or at a clock] Oh - good gracious! Look at the time. Nothing ready and they'll be home any minute and probably all in a hurry to go out again.

[As she is about to rise, MRS FITZGERALD reaches out across the table and pulls her down.]

MRS FITZGERALD : Let 'em wait or look after themselves for once. This is where your foot goes down. Start now. *[She lights a cigarette from the one she has just finished.]*

MRS PEARSON : *(embarrassed)* : Mrs. Fitzgerald - I know you mean well - in fact, I agree with you - but I just can't - and it's no use you trying to make me. If I promise you I'd really have it out with them, I know I wouldn't be able to keep my promise.

MRS FITZGERALD : Then let me do it.

MRS PEARSON : *[flustered]* : Oh no - thank you very much, Mrs. Fitzgerald - but that wouldn't do at all. It couldn't possibly be somebody else - they'd resent it at once and wouldn't listen - and really

I couldn't blame them. I know I ought to do it - but you see how it is ? *[She looks apologetically across the table, smiling rather miserably.]*

MRS FITZGERALD : *[coolly]* : You haven't got the idea.

MRS PEARSON : *[bewildered]* : Oh - I'm sorry -- I thought you asked me to let you do it.

MRS FITZGERALD : I did, But not as me -- as you.

MRS PEARSON : But -- I don't understand. You couldn't be me.

MRS FITZGERALD : *[coolly]* : We change places. Or - really - bodies. You look like me. I look like you.

MRS PEARSON : But that's impossible.

MRS FITZGERALD : How do you know ? Ever tried it ?

MRS PEARSON : No, of course not . . .

MRS FITZGERALD : *[coolly]* : I have, Not for some time but it still ought to work. Won't last long, but long enough for what we want to do. Learnt it out East, of course, where they're up to all these tricks. [She holds her hand out across the table, keeping the cigarette in her mouth] Gimme your hands, dear.

MRS PEARSON : *[dubiously]* : Well - I don't know - is it right ?

MRS FITZGERALD : It's your only chance. Give me your hands an' keep quiet a minute/ Just don't think about anything. *(Taking her hands)* Now look at me. *[They stare at each other muttering].* Arshtatta dum - arshtatta lam - arshtatta lamdumbona . . . .

[This little scene should be acted very carefully. We are to assume that the personalities change bodies. After the spell has been spoken, both women, still grasping hands, go lax, as if the life were out of them. Then both come to life, but with the personality of the other. Each must try to adopt the voice and mannerisms of the other. So now MRS PERARSON is bold and dominating and MRS FITZGERALD is nervous and fluttering.]

MRS PEARSON : *[now with MRS FITZGERALD'S personality]* : See what I mean, dear ? *[She notices the cigarette]* Here - you don't want that. *[She snatches it and puts it in her own mouth, puffing contentedly.]*

[MRS FITZGERALD, now with MRS PEARSON'S personality looks down at herself and sees that her body has changed and gives a scream of fright.]

MRS FITZGERALD : *[with MRS. PEARSON'S personality]* Oh - it's happened.

MRS PEARSON : *[complacently]* : Of course it's happened. Very neat. Didn't know I had it in me.

MRS FITZGERALD : *[alarmed]* : But whatever shall I do Mrs. Fitzgerald ? George and the children can't see me like this.

MRS PEARSON : *[grimly]* : They aren't going to - that's the point to - that's the point. They'll have me to deal with - only they won't know it.

MRS FITZGERALD : *[still alarmed]* : But what if we can't change back ? It'ud be terrible.

MRS PEARSON : Here -- steady, Mrs Pearson - if you had to live my life it wouldn't be so bad. you'd have more fun as me than you've had as you.

MRS FITZGERALD : Yes - but I don't want to be any body else . . .

MRS PEARSON : Now - stop worrying. It's easier changing back - I can do it any time we want . . . .

MRS FITZGERALD : Well - do it now . . . .

MRS PEARSON : Not likely. I've got to deal with your family first. That's the idea, isn't it ? Didn't know how to begin with 'em, you said, Well, I'll show you.

MRS FITZGERALD : But what am I going to do ?

MRS PEARSON : Go into my house for a bit --- there's nobody there -- then pop back and see how we're doing. You ought to enjoy it. Better get off now before one of 'em comes.

MRS FITZGERALD : *[nervously rising]* : Yes -- I suppose that's best. You're sure it'll be all right ?

MRS PEARSON : *[chuckling]* : It'll be wonderful. Now off you go, dear.

[MRS FITZGERALD crosses and hurries out through the door r. Left to herself, MRS PEARSON smokes away -- lighting another cigarette -- and begins laying out the cards for patience on the table.]

After a few moments Doris Pearson comes bursting in left. She is a pretty girl in her early twenties, who would be pleasant enough if she had not been spoilt.

DORIS *[before she has taken anything in]* : Mum -- you 'll have to iron my yellow silk. I must wear it tonight. *[She now sees what is happening, and is astounded]* What are you doing?

[She moves down left corner.]

[MRS PEARSON now uses her ordinary voice, but her manner is not fluttering and apologetic but cool and incisive.]

MRS PEARSON : *[not even looking up]* : what d'you think I'm doing -- whitewashing the ceiling ?

DORIS : *[still astounded]* : But you're smoking !

MRS PEARSON : That's right, dear. No law against it, is there ?

DORIS : But I thought you didn't smoke.

MRS PEARSON : Then you thought wrong.

DORIS : Are we having tea in the kitchen ?

MRS PEARSON : Have it where you like, dear.

DORIS : *[angrily]* Do you mean it isn't ready ?

MRS PEARSON : Yours isn't I've had all I want. Might go out later and get a square meal at the Claredon.

DORIS : *[hardly believing her ears]* : Who might ?

MRS PEARSON : I might, Who d'you think ?

DORIS : *[staring at her]* : Mum - what's the matter with you ?

MRS PEARSON : Don't be silly.

DORIS : *[indignantly]* : It's not me that's being silly - and I must say it's a bit much when I've been working hard all day and you can't even bother to get my tea ready. Did you hear what I said about my yellow silk ?

MRS PEARSON : No. Don't you like it now ? I never did.

DORIS : *[indignantly]* : Of course I like it. And I'm going to wear it tonight. So I want it ironing.

MRS PEARSON : Want it ironing ? What d'you think it's going to do - iron itself ?

DORIS : No, you're going to iron it for me - you always do.

MRS PEARSON : Well, this time I don't. And don't talk rubbish to me about working hard, I've a good idea how much you do, Doris Pearson. I put in twice the hours you do and get no wages nor

thanks for it. Why are you going to wear your yellow silk? Where are you going ?

DORIS : *[sulkily]* : Out with Charlie Spence.

MRS PEARSON : Why ?

DORIS : *[wildly]* : Why? Why ? What's the matter with you ? Why shouldn't I go out with Charlie Spence if he asks me and I want to? Any objections? Go on - you might as well tell me . . . .

MRS PEARSON : *[severely]* : Can't you find anybody better? I wouldn't be seen dead with Charlie Spence. Buck teeth and half - witted . . . .

DORIS : He isn't. . . .

MRS PEARSON : When I was your age I'd have found somebody better than Charlie Spence - or given myself up as a bad job.

DORIS : *[nearly in tears]* : Oh - shut up !

[Doris runs out left. Mrs. Pearson chuckles and begins putting the cards together. After a moment CYRIL PEARSON enters left. He is the masculine counterpart of Doris.]

CYRIL : *[briskly]* : Hellow - Mum. Tea ready ?

MRS PEARSON : No.

CYRIL : *[moving to the table; annoyed]* : Why not ?

MRS PEARSON : *[coolly]* : I couldn't bother.

CYRIL : Feeling off - colour or something ?

MRS PEARSON : Never felt better in my life.

CYRIL : *[aggressively]* : What's the idea then ?

MRS PEARSON : Just a change.

CYRIL : *(briskly)* : Well, snap out of it, Ma - and get cracking. Haven't too much time.

[CYRIL is about to go when MRS PEARSON'S voice checks him.]

MRS PEARSON : I've plenty of time.

CYRIL : Yes, but I haven't. Got a busy night tonight.

[Moving left. to the door] Did you put my things out ?

MRS PEARSON : *[coolly]* : Can't remember. But I doubt it.

CYRIL : *[moving to the table; Protesting]* : Now - look. When I asked you this morning, you promised. You said you'd have to look through 'em first in case there was any mending.

MRS PEARSON : Yes - well now I've decided I don't like mending.

CYRIL : That's a nice way to talk -- what would happen if we all talked like that ?

MRS PEARSON : You all do talk like that. If there's something a home you don't want to do, you don't do it. If it's something at your work, you get the Union to bar it. Now all that's happened is that I've joined the movement.

CYRIL : *[staggered]* : I don't get this, Mum. What's going on ?

MRS PEARSON : *[Laconic and sinister]* : Changes.

[DORIS enters left. She is in the process of dressing and is now wearing. Wrap. She looks pale and red - eyed].

MRS PEARSON : You look terrible I wouldn't wear that face even for Charlie Spence.

DORIS : *[moving about the table; angrily]* : Oh - shut up about Charlie Spence. And anyhow I'am

not ready yet - just dressing. and if I do look terrible it's your fault -- you made me cry.

CYRIL : *[curious]* : Why - what did she do ?

DORIS : Never you mind.

MRS PEARSON : *[rising and preparing to move to the kitchen]* : Have we any stout left? I can't remember.

CYRIL : Bottle or two. I think. But you don't want stout now.

MRS PEARSON : *[moving left slowly]* I do.

CYRIL : What for ?

MRS PEARSON : *[turning at the door]* : To drink - you clot!

[MRS PEARSON exits right. Instantly CYRIL and DORIS are in a huddle, close together at left corner., rapidly whispering.]

DORIS : Has she been like that with you, too ?

CYRIL : Yes - no tea ready - couldn't care less . . . .

DORIS : Well, I'm glad it's both of us. I though I'd done something wrong.

CYRIL : So, did I. But it's her of course . . . .

DORIS : She was smoking and playing cards when I came in. I couldn't believe my eyes.

CYRIL : I asked her if she was feeling off - colour and she said she wasn't.

DORIS : Well, she's suddenly all different. An'that's what made me cry. It wasn't what she said but the way she said it - an' the way she *looked*.

CYRIL : Haven't noticed that. She looks just the same to me.

DORIS : She doesn't to me. Do you think she could have hit her head or something - y'know an'got - what is it ? -- y'know . . . . .

CYRIL : *[staggered]* : Do you mean she's barmy ?

DORIS : No, you fathead. Y'know -- concussion. She might have.

CYRIL : Sounds far - fetched.

DORIS : Well, she's far - fetched, if you ask me *[She suddenly begins to giggle].*

CYRIL : Now then - What is it ?

DORIS : If she's going to be like this when Dad comes home . . . . . *[She giggles again].*

CYRIL : *[beginning to guffaw]* : I'm staying in for that - two front dress circles for the first house.

[MRS PEARSON enters right., carrying a bottle of stout and a half filled glass. CYRIL and DORIS try to stop their guffawing and giggling, but they are not quick enough. MRS PEARSON regards them with contempt.]

MRS PEARSON : *[coldly]* : You two are always talking about being grown up -- why don't you both try for once to be your age *[She moves to the settee and sits.]*

CYRIL : Can;t we laugh now ?

MRS PEARSON : yes, if it's funny. Go on, tell me, Make me laugh, I could do with it.

DORIS : Y'know you never understand our jokes, Mum . . . . .

MRS PEARSON : I was yawning at your jokes before you were born, Doris.

DORIS : *[almost tearful again]* : What's making you talk like this ? What have we done?

MRS PEARSON : *[promptly]* : Nothing but come in, ask for something, go out again, then come

back when there's nowhere else to go.

CYRIL : *[aggressively]* : Look -- if you won't get tea ready, then I'll find something to eat myself.

MRS PEARSON : Why not? Help yourself. *[She takes a sip of stout].*

CYRIL : *[turning on his way to the kitchen]* : Mind you, I think. It's a bit thick. I've been working all day.

DORIS : Same here.

MRS PEARSON : *[calmly]* : Eight hour day !

CYRIL : Yes - eight hour day -- an' don't forget it.

MRS PEARSON : I've done my eight hours.

CYRIL : That's different.

DORIS : Of course it is.

MRS PEARSON : *[calmly]* : It was, Now it isn't Forty - hour week for all now. Just watch it at the week - end when I have my two days off.

[DORIS and CYRIL exchange alarmed glances. Then they stare at MRS PEARSON who returns their look calmly].

CYRIL : Must grab something to eat. Looks as if I'll need to keep my strength up

[CYRIL exits to the kitchen].

DORIS : *[moving to the settee; anxiously]* : Mummie, you don't mean you're not going to do anything on Saturday and Sunday ?

MRS PEARSON : *[airily]* : No, I wouldn't go that far. I might make a bed or two and do a bit of cooking as a favour. Which means, ofcourse I'll have to be asked very nicely and thanked for everything and generally made a fuss of. But any of you forty - hour - a weekers who expects to be waited on hand and foot on Saturday and Sunday, with no thanks for it, are in for a nasty disappointment. Might go off for the week - end perhaps.

DORIS : *[aghast]* : go off for the week - end ?

MRS PEARSON : Why not? I could do with a change. Stuck here day after day, week after week. If I don't need a change, who does ?

DORIS : But where would you go, who would you go with ?

MRS PEARSON : That's my business. You don't ask me where you should go and who you should go with, do you?

DORIS : That's different.

MRS PEARSON : The only difference is that I'm a lot older and better able to look after myself, so it's you who should do the asking.

DORIS : Did you fall or hit yourself with something ?

MRS PEARSON : *[coldly]* : No. But I'll hit you with something, girl, if you don't stop asking silly questions.

[DORIS stares at her open - mouthed, ready to cry.]

DORIS : Oh - this is awful . . . . *[She begins to cry, not passionately.]*

MRS PEARSON : *[coldly]* : Stop blubbering. You're not a baby. If you're old enough to go out with Charlie Spence, you're old enoug to behave properly. Now stop it.

[GEORGE PEARSON enters left. He is about fifty, fundamentally decent but solemn, self-important, pompous. Preferably he should be a heavy, slow - moving type. He notices DORIS'S tears.]

GEORGE : Hello -- what's this ? Can't be anything to cry about.

DORIS : *[through sobs]* : You'll see.

[DORIS runs out left. with a sob or two on the way. GEORGE stares after her a moment, then looks at MRS PEARSON].

GEORGE : Did she say 'You'll see' . . . ?

MRS PEARSON : Yes.

GEORGE : What did she mean ?

MRS PEARSON : Better ask her.

[GEORGE looks slowly again at the door than at MRS PEARSON. Then he notices the stout that she raises for another sip. His eyes almost bulge.]

GEORGE : Stout ?

MRS PEARSON : Yes

GEORGE : *[amazed]* : What are you drinking stout for ?

MRS PEARSON : Because I fancied some.

GEORGE : At this time of day ?

MRS PEARSON : Yes -- what's wrong with it at this time of day ?

GEORGE : *[bewildered]* : Nothing, I suppose, Annie -- but I've never seen you do it before.

MRS PEARSON : Well, you're seeing me now.

GEORGE : *[with heavy distaste]* : Yes, an I don't like it. It doesn't look right. I'm surprised at you.

MRS PEARSON : Well, that ought to be a nice change for you.

GEORGE : What do you mean ?

MRS PEARSON : It myst be some time since you were surprised at me, George.

GEORGE : I don't like surprises - I'am all for a steady going on - you ought to know that by this time. By the way, I for got to tell you this morning I wouldn't want any tea. Special snooker match night at the club tonight - an' a bit of supper going. So no tea.

MRS PEARSON : That's all right. There isn't any.

GEORGE : *[astonished]* : That's all very well, but suppose I'd wanted some ?

MRS PEARSON : My goodness ! Listen to the man ! Annoyed because I don't get a tea for him that he doesn't even want. Ever tried that at the club ?

GEORGE : Tried what at the club ?

MRS PEARSON : Going up to the bar and telling 'em you don't want a glass of beer but you're annoyed because they haven't already poured it out. Try that on them and see what you get.

GEORGE : I don't know what you're talking about.

MRS PEARSON : They'd laugh at you even more than they do now.

GEORGE : *[indignantly]* : Laugh at me ? They don't laught at me.

MRS PEARSON : Of course they do. You ought to have found that out by this time. Anybody eise would have done. You're one of their standing jokes. Famous, They call you Pompy - ompy

Pearson because they think you're so slow and pompous.

GEORGE : *[horrified]* : Never !

MRS PEARSON : It's always beaten me why you should want to spend so much time at a place where they're always laughing at you behind your back and calling you names. Leaving your wife at home, night after night. Instead of going out with her, who doesn't make you look a fool . . . . .

[CYRIL enters right. with a glass of milk on one hand and a thick slice of cake in the other. GEORGE, almost dazed, turns to him appealingly.]

GEORGE : Here, Cyril, you've been with me to the club once or twice. They don't laugh at me and call me Pompy - ompy Pearson, do they ? *[CYRIL, embarrassed hesitates]*

GEORGE : *[Angrily]* Go on -- tell me, Do they ?

CYRIL : *[embarrassed]* : Well -- yes, Dad. I'm afraid they do *[GEORGE slowly look from one to the other, staggered].*

GEORGE : *[slowly]* : Well -- I'll be -- damned !

[GEORGE exits left. Slowly, almost as if somebody had hit him over the head. CYRIL, after watching him go, turns indignantly to MRS PEARSON.]

CYRIL : Now you shouldn't have told him that Mum. That's not fair. You've hurt his feelings. Mine too.

MRS PEARSON : Sometimes it does people good to have their feelings hurt. The truth oughtn't to turn anybody for long. If you father didn't go to the club so oftern, perhaps they'd stop laughing at him.

CYRIL : *[gloomily]* : I doubt it.

MRS PEARSON : *[severely]* : Possible you do, but what I doubt is whether your opinion's worth having. What do you know ? Nothing. You spend too much time and good money at greyhound races and dirt tracks and ice shows . . .

CYRIL : *[sulkily]* : Well, what if I do ? I've got to enjoy myself somehow, haven't I ?

MRS PEARSON : I wouldn't mind so much if you were really enjoying yourself. But are you ? An where's getting you ? *[There is a sharp hurried knocking heard off left.]*

CYRIL : Might be for me. I'll see.

[CYRIL hurries out left. In a moment he re - enters, closing the door behind him,
It's that silly old bag from next doot - Mrs. Fitzgerald.
You don't want her here, do you ?]

MRS PEARSON : *[sharply]* : Certainly I do. Ask her in. And don't call her a silly old bag neither. She's a very nice woman, with a lot more sense than you'll ever have.

[CYRIL exits left. MRS PEARSON finishes her stout, smacking her lips.
CYRIL re - enters left. ushering in MRS FITZGERALD, who hesitates in the doorway.
Come in, come in, Mrs. Fitzgerald.]

MRS FITZGERALD : *[moving to left corner; anxiously]* : I -- just wondered - if everthing's -- all right.

CYRIL : *[sulkily]* : No, it isn't.

MRS PEARSON : [sharply] : Of course it is. You be quiet.

CYRIL : *[indignantly and loudly]* : Why should I be quiet.

MRS PEARSON : *[shouting]* : Because I tell you to - you silly, spoilt, young piecan.

MRS FITZGERALD : *[protesting nervously]* : Oh -- no -- surely . . . .

MRS PEARSON : *[severly]* : Now, Mrs Fitzgerald, just let me manage my family in my own way -- please !

MRS FITZGERALD : Yes -- but Cyril . . . .

CYRIL : *[sulky and glowering]* : Mr. Cyril Pearson to you, please, Mrs Fitzgerald. *[CYRIL stalks off into the kitchen]*

MRS FITZGERALD : *[moving to the settee; whispering]* : Oh -- dear -- what's happening?

MRS PEARSON : *[calmly]* : Nothing much, just putting 'em in their places, that's all. Doing what you ought to have done long since.

MRS FITZGERALD : Is George home ? *[She sits beside MRS PEARSON on the settee.]*

MRS PEARSON : Yes, I've been telling him what they think of him at the club.

MRS FITZGERALD : Well, they think a lot of him, don't they ?

MRS PEARSON : No, they don't. And now he knows it.

MRS FITZGERALD : *[nervously]* : Oh -- dear -- I wish you hadn't Mrs Fitzgerald . . . .

MRS PEARSON : Nonsense ! Doing 'em all a world of good. And they'll be eating out of your hand soon - you'll see . . . .

MRS FITZGERALD : I don't think I want them eating out of my hand . . . .

MRS PEARSON : *[impatiently]* : Well, whatever you want, they'll be doing it -- all three of 'em. Mark my words MRS PEARSON.

[GEORGE enters left. glumly. He is unpleasantly surprised when he sees the visitor. He moves to the armchair left., sits down heavily and glumly lights his pipe. Then he looks from MRS PEARSON to MRS FITZGERALD, who is regarding him anxiously].

GEORGE : Just looked in for a minute, I suppose, Mrs. Fitzgerald ?

MRS FITZGERALD : *[Who doesn't know what she is saying]* Well -- yes -- I suppose so, George.

GEORGE : *[aghast]* : George !

MRS FITZGERALD : *[nervously]* : Oh -- I'm sorry . . . .

MRS PEARSON : *[impatiently]* : What does it matter ? You name's George, isn't it ? Who'd'you think you are -- Duke of Edinburgh ?

GEORGE : *[angrily]* : What's he got to do with it ? Just tell me that. And isn't it bad enough without her calling me George ? No tea. Pompy - ompy Pearson. And poor Doris has been crying her eyes out upstairs - yes, crying her eyes out.

MRS FITZGERALD : *[wailing]* : Oh - dear - I ought to have known . . . .

GEORGE : *[starting at her, annoyed]* : You ought to have known! Why ought you to have known ? Nothing to do with you, Mrs. Fitzgerald. Look -- we're at sixes and sevens here just now -- so perhaps you'll excuse us . . . .

MRS PEARSON : *[before MRS FITZGERALD can reply]* : I won't excuse, you, George Pearson. Next time a friend and neighbour comes to see me, just say something when you see her -- Good evening or How d'you do ? or something -- an'don't just march in an' sit down without a word. It's bad manners . . . .

MRS FITZGERALD : *[nervously]* : No -- it's all right . . . .

MRS PEARSON : No, it isn't all right. We'll have some decent manners in this house -- or I'll know the reason why. *[Glaring at GEORGE]*: Well ?

GEORGE : *[intimidated]* : Well, what !

MRS PEARSON : *[taunting him]* : Why don't you get off to your club ? Special night tonight, isn't it ? They'll be waiting for you -- wanting to have a good laugh. Go on then. Don't disappoint 'em.

GEORGE : *[bitterly]* : That's right. Make me look silly in front of her now! Go on - don't mind me. Sixes and sevens ! Poor Doris been crying her eyes out ! Getting the neighbours in to see the fun ! *[Suddenly losing his temper, glaring at MRS PEARSON, and something.]* All right - let her hear it. What's the matter with you ? Have you gone barmy or what ?

MRS PEARSON : *[jumping up savagely]* : If you shout at me again like that, George Pearson, I'll slap your big fat silly face . . . .

MRS FITZGERALD : *[moaning]* : Oh - no - no - no - please, Mrs Fitzgerald . . . . *[MRS PEARSON sits. .]*

GEORGE : *[starting at her, bewildered]* : Either I'm off my chump or you two are. How d'you mean - No - no, please, Mrs. Fitzgerald' ? Look - you're Mrs. Fitzgerald. So why are you telling yourself to stop when you're not doing any thing ? Tell her to stop - then there'd some sense in it. *[Staring at Mrs. Pearson]* I think you must be tiddly.

MRS PEARSON : *[Starting up; savagely]* : Say that again, George Pearson.

GEORGE : *[intimidated]* : all right -- all right -- all right . . . .

[DORIS enters L. slowly, looking miserable, She is still wearing the wrap.] MRS PEARSON sits on the settee.]

MRS FITZGERALD : Hello -- Doris dear !

DORIS : *[annoyed]* : What's that to do with you ?

MRS PEARSON : *[severely]* : It isn't all right. I won't have a daughter of mine talking to anybody like that. Now answer Mrs. Fitzgerald properly, Doris -- or go upstairs again . . . *[DORIS looks wonderingly at her father.]*

GEORGE : *[in despair]* : Don't look at me. I give it up. I just give it up.

MRS PEARSON : *[fiercely]* : Well ? Answer her.

DORIS : *[sulkily]* : I was going out with Charlie Spence tonight -- but now I've called it off . . . .

MRS FITZGERALD : Oh -- what a pity, dear ! Why have you ?

DORIS : *[with a flash of temper]* : Because -- if you must know -- my mother's been going on at me making me feel miserable -- an'saying he's got buck -- teeth and is half witted . .

MRS FITZGERALD : *[rathere bolder; to MRS PEARSON]* : Oh -- you shouldn't have said that

MRS PEARSON : *[sharply]* : Mrs. Fitzgerald, I'll manage my family -- you manage yours.

GEORGE : *[grimly]* : Ticking her off now, are you, Annie ?

MRS PEARSON : *[even more grimly]* : They're waiting for you at the club, George, don't forget. And don't forget. and don't you start crying again, Doris . . .

MRS FITZGERALD : *[getting up; with sudden decision]* : That's enough -- quite enough.

[GEORGE and DORIS stare at her bewildered].

[TO GEORGE and DORIS] : Now listen, you two. I want to have private little talk with Mrs. Fitz -- *[she corrects herself hastily]* with Mrs. Pearson, so I'll be obliged if you'll leave us alone for a few minutes. I'll let you know when we've finished. Go on, please. I promise you that you won't regret it. There's something here that only I can deal with.

GEORGE : *[raising]* : I'm glad somebody can --'cos I can't Come on, Doris.

[GEORGE and DORIS exit left. As they go MRS. FITZGERALD moves to the left. of the small table and sits. She eagerly beckons MRS PEARSON to do the same thing.]

MRS FITZGERALD : Mrs. Fitzgerald, we must change back now -- we really must . . . .

MRS PEARSON : *[rising]* : Why ?

MRS FITZGERALD : Because this has gone far enough. I can see they're all miserable -- and I can't bear it . . . .

MRS PEARSON : A bit more of the same would do 'em good. Making a great difference already . . . . . .

MRS FITZGERALD : No, I can't stand any more of it ---- I really can't. We must change back. Hurry up, please Mrs. Fitzgerald.

MRS PEARSON : Well -- if you insist . . . .

MRS FITZGERALD : Yes --- I do --- please --- please.

[She stretches her hands across the table eagerly. MRS PEARSON takes them.]

MRS PEARSON : Quiet now. Relax.]

[MRS PEARSON and MRS FITZGERALD stare at each other, Muttering; exactly as before. Arshatatta dum - arshtatta lam - arshtatta lamdumbona . . .]

[They carry out the same action as before, going lax and then coming to life. But this time, of course, they become their proper personalities.]

MRS FITZGERALD : Ah well -- I enjoyed that.

MRS PEARSON : I didn't.

MRS FITZGERALD : Well, you ought to have done. Now listen, Mrs. Pearson. Don't go soft on 'em again, else it'll all have been wasted . . . .

MRS PEARSON : I'll try not to Mrs. Fitzgerald.

MRS FITZGERALD : They've not had as long as I'd like to have given 'em -- another hour to two's rough treatment might have made it certain . . .

MRS PEARSON : I'm sure they'll do better now -- though I don't know how I'm going to explain.

MRS FITZGERALD : *[severely]* : Don't you start any explaining or apologizing - or you're done for.

MRS PEARSON : *[with spirit]* : It's all right for you, Mrs. Fitzgerald. After all, they aren't your husband and children. . . .

MRS FITZGERALD : *[impressively]* : Now you listen to me. You admitted yourself you were spoiling 'em -- and they didn't appreciate you. Any apologies -- any explanations -- an'you'll be straight back where you were. I'm warning you, dear. Just give 'em a look - a tone of voice -- now an'again, to suggest you might to tough with'em if you wanted to be -- an'it ought to work. Anyhow, we can test it.

MRS PEARSON : How ?

MRS FITZGERALD : Well, what is it you'd like 'em to do that they don't do? Stop at home for once ?

MRS PEARSON : Yes -- and give me a hand with supper . . . . '

MRS FITZGERALD : Anything you'd like 'em to do -- that you enjoy whether they do or not.

MRS PEARSON : *[hesitating]* : Well -- yes. I -- like a nice game or rummy -- but, of course, I hardly ever have one except at Christmas . . .

MRS FITZGERALD : *[getting up]* : That'll do then [She moves towards the door left. then turns] But remember -- keep firm -- or you've had it. [She opens the door. calling] Holy! You can come in now. *[Coming away from the door, and moving. right. Slightly. Quietly]* But remember - remember - a firm hand.

[GEORGE, DORIS and CYRIL file in through the doorway, looking apprehensively at MRS PEARSON].

I'm just off. To let you enjoy yourself.

[The family look anxiously at MRS PEARSON, who smiles, much relieved, they smile back at her.]

DORIS : *[anxiously]* : Yes, Mother ?

MRS PEARSON : *[smiling]* : Seeing that you don't want to go out, I tell you what I thought we'd do.

MRS FITZGERALD : *[giving a final warning]* : Remember !

MRS PEARSON : *[nodding, then looking sharply at the family]* : No objections, I hope ?

GEORGE : *[humbly]* : No, Mother -- Whatever you say . . . .

MRS PEARSON : *[smiling]* : I thought we'd have a nice family game of rummy - and then you children could get the supper ready while I have a talk with your father . . . .

GEORGE : *[firmly]* : Suits me. *[He looks challengingly at the children]* What about you two ?

CYRIL : *[hastily]* : Yes -- that's all right.

DORIS : *[hesitating]* : Well -- I . . .

MRS PEARSON : *[sharply]* : What ? Speak up !

DORIS : Oh - I think it would be lovely . . . .

MRS PEARSON : *[smiling]* : Good - bye, Mrs. Fitzgerald. Come again soon.

MRS FITZGERALD : Yes, dear, 'Night all -- have a anice time.

[MRS FITZGERALD exits left. and the family cluster round the Mother as -- the CURTAIN falls.]

17.4. Glossary :

Fortune teller	:	One who professes to foretell future events
have it out (phrase)	:	to settle score, to confront
Cool	:	self-assured, unperturbed
mannerism	:	a particular habit or way of speaking or behaving
complacent	:	a feeling of satisfaction with oneself or with a situation

chuckle	:	to laugh quietly
Buck teeth	:	protruding teeth
half-witted {adj)	:	stupid
snap out of (phrase)	:	to come out of a state of unhappiness
get cracking (phrase)	:	to move quickly
laconic	:	limited in words
sinister (adj)	:	seeming evil, dangerous
stout	:	strong beer made with Malt or Barley
clot	:	a stupid person
staggered	:	taken by surprise, shocked
sulk	:	upset, bad-tempered
glower	:	an angry look
fat head	:	a slow-witted person, fool
giggle	:	to laugh in a silly way when embarrassed or nervous
guffaw	:	to laugh loudly or noisily
blubber	:	to cry like a baby
snooker	:	a Billiards game
Pompy - Ompy	:	vain, conceited, snobbish
old bag	:	a conceited old woman
smack	:	to make a noisy sound with the lips while eating
stalk off (phrase)	:	to walk away angrily or in a huff
glum	:	sad, quiet and unhappy
intimidate	:	provoke, threater
taunt	:	to make fun of
chump	:	a stupid person
tiddly	:	slightly drunk, tipsy
rummy	:	a card game
barmy	:	crazy
piecan	:	impudent, ill-mannered

17.5. Character:

One of the important elements of Drama is Character. The persons in a literary work such as a play are called characters and the art of portraying the characters of persons is called characterization.

According to W.H. Abrams characters are “Persons in a dramatic or narrative work endowed with moral and dispositional qualities that are expressed in what they say (dialogue) and what they do (action). Characters express themselves in their dialogues.

Characters respond or act according to situations that confront them which is called action. A character’s emotional nature (temperament) and moral nature which is the basis for his speech and action is called motivation.

A character may remain unchanged in her or his outlook and dispositions from the beginning to the end of the play or may undergo a radical change which can be gradual or sudden as a result of an extreme crisis. However 'consistency' (coherence) in a character is of utmost importance. For instance, characters like Mrs. Anne Pearson in her role as 'the mother' is stable and consistent in her love and concern for her family. Her neighbour Mrs. Fitzgerald is consistent in her resourcefulness and spirit of indomitability. She succeeds in teaching a lesson to the Pearson family.

Characters are of two kinds. E.M. Forster calls them Flat characters and Round characters. A Flat Character is also called a type or two-dimensional. Forster says that a Flat character is built around "a single idea or quality". Flat characters are secondary characters. They are presented in outline without much detail. For example, George, Doris and Cyril are Flat Characters as they are inconsistent. They appear to be self-confident but are staggered by the turn of events.

A Round character according to Abrams is "complex in temperament and motivation and is represented with subtle particularity". It is three-dimensional and therefore hard to comprehend. A good example is Mrs. Fitzgerald as Mrs. Pearson. Her peculiar behaviour shocks George, Doris and Cyril. Her unpredictable behaviour bewilders them, leaving them in the lurch.

17.6. Art of Characterisation :

The art of drawing the character of a person in a play is called characterization. Generally two methods namely Showing and Telling are used in characterizing the person in a narrative. The method of 'Showing' is also known as "the dramatic method", wherein the author expects the reader to find out the hidden motives and dispositions through the character's dialogue (what he says) and action (what he does). When using the method of 'Telling' the author himself evaluates the motive and dispositional qualities of a character. For instance Priestley used the method of "Showing" in his play "Mother's Day".

17.7. Brief Summary of the Text :

J.B. Priestley's "Mother Day" is a play about Mrs. Anne Pearson, a loving wife and doting mother, who though hurt by her family's indifference towards her, is too meek to assert her rightful status in the household. Mrs. Pearson is harrassed by her family. She patiently attends to all the domestic chores and lovingly complies with the frivolous demands of her children and husband. Her selfless love had spoilt her son and daughter. Mrs. Pearson is confined to taking orders as if she were the servant in the family.

The scene of action is the living room of the Pearsons. Mrs. Pearson's neighbour Mrs. Fitzgerald pays her a visit and Mrs. Pearson apprises her of her woes. Irked by the domineering attitude of Mrs. Pearson's husband George and her two children Cyril and Doris, her formidable and resourceful neighbour Mrs. Fitzgerald offers to help her out. A fortune-teller with magical powers, which she had acquired in the East she persuades Mrs. Pearson to exchange bodies with her, for as Mrs. Pearson she intended to teach the spoilt family of Mrs. Pearson a lesson.

Though apprehensive, Mrs. Pearson accepts her proposal. They exchange bodies and Mrs. Fitzgerald now as Mrs. Pearson, commences to behave aggressively towards Mrs. Pearson's husband and children. Used to ignoring her and ordering her about, George, Doris and Cyril get the surprise of their lives when they find her in a defiant mood smoking, playing cards and drinking stout, and refusing to comply with their frivolous demands like ironing Doris's silk wrap and preparing tea for Cyril and her husband George. She severely reprimands them for their irresponsible behaviour. She scolds Doris for going out with Charlie Spence whom she considers half-witted. She rebukes Cyril for wasting his time and money on greyhound races, dirt tracks and ice shows. She ridicules George for his snobbery and reminds him that he is considered as a standing joke at the club he often frequented. She chides him for leaving her at home night after night instead of going out with her even though she did not make him look like a fool. She also declares her intention to go away and enjoy the weekend all by herself.

Thoroughly chastened by the turn of events they realise their duty towards the 'mother' who kept slogging for them all day long. They realise that they ought to give her due respect and treat her as an equal member of the family and not like a maidservant whose only job is to cater to their needs, whims and fancy. Unable to bear their misery Mrs. Pearson decides to take matters into her own hands. She changes bodies with Mrs. Fitzgerald and to her pleasant surprise she finds her family more than willing to carry out her wishes.

Thus the play ends with the flustered and harried mother having her 'day'.

17.8. CONCLUSION :

This lesson has dealt with the 'character', and features namely dialogue, action and motivation and the art of characterisation with reference to J.B. Priestley's play "Mother's Day". We have identified round and flat characters in the present play "Mother's Day". We have observed that Priestley's art of characterisation is clear and simple and that his characters are realistic. We have learnt that 'consistency' in a character is of utmost importance. We have seen how the playwright uses the method of 'Showing' while characterising the persons in the play. We have also seen how Priestley incorporates the element of the supernatural in the play to heighten the dramatic effect.

17.9. Critical Evaluation :

Priestley's "Mother Day" is a one-act play in the tradition of the modern English living room comedy bordering on the Farce similar to Eliot's "The Cocktail Party". Full of sarcasm, irony, fun and humour, it is highly entertaining. However it is reformist in theme as it deals with a serious social issue, the emancipation of the woman within the household, particularly traditional women like Mrs. Anne Pearson who is treated like a maidservant by her family instead of being respected and appreciated for being a loving wife and doting mother. On the contrary, Mrs. Fitzgerald, her neighbour in the form of Mrs. Pearson, is presented as an aggressively self-confident and formidable 'mother' in the household. In order to bring about this transformation in Mrs. Pearson's character the playwright incorporates the element of the supernatural i.e., Mrs. Fitzgerald's magical ability to

exchange bodies with Mrs. Pearson.

Priestley's art of characterization is marked by clarity and precision. His characters are realistic and reveal his keen powers of observations, of people, manners and conflicting situations. His fine sense of humour and fun is exhibited in the way he portrays his characters and in the way they interact with each other.

17.10. Passages for Comprehension :

Comprehension Passage - I :

Mrs. Pearson : Well, this time I don't! and don't talk rubbish to me about working hard. I've a good idea how much you do, Doris Pearson. I put in twice the hours you do, and get no wages, no thanks for it. Why are you going to wear your yellow silk ? Where are you going ?

Doris : *[sulkily]* : Out with Charlie Spence.

Mrs. Pearson : Why ?

Doris : *[wildly]* : Why ? Why ? What's the matter with you ? Why shouldn't I go out with Charlie Spence if he asks me and I want to ? Any objections ? Go on - you might as well tell me.

Mrs. Pearson : *[severely]* : Can't you find anything better ? I wouldn't be seen dead with Charlie Spence. Buck teeth and half witted. . . . .

1. Who is Doris ?

A. Doris is Mrs. Pearson's daughter.

2. Who is not paid wages or thanked for her hard work ?

A. Mrs. Pearson is not paid wages nor thanked for her hard work.

3. Who wanted to wear the yellow silk ?

A. Doris wanted to wear the yellow silk.

4. Who was she going out with ?

A. She was going out with Charlie Spence.

5. What did Mrs. Pearson think of Charlie Spence ?

A. Mrs. Pearson thought that Charlie Spence was half - witted.

6. Who has buck teeth ?

A. Charlie Spence had buck teeth.

Comprehension Passage - II :

Doris : Has she been like that with you, too ?

Cyril : Yes - no tea ready - wouldn't care less . . .

Doris : Well I'm glad its both of us. I thought I'd done something wrong.

Cyril : So did I. But it's her of course . . . .

Doris : She was smoking and playing cards when I came in. I couldn't believe my eyes.

Cyril : I asked her if she was feeling off - colour and she wasn't.

Doris : Well, she's suddenly all different. an, that's what made me cry. It wasn't what she said but the way she said it - an' the way she looked.

1. Who had been like that with whom ?
A. Mrs. Pearson had been like that with Cyril.
2. Who is Cyril ?
A. Cyril is Doris' brother.
3. Who didn't care for keeping tea ready ?
A. Mrs. Pearson did not care for keeping tea ready.
4. Who saw Mrs. Pearson smoking and playing cards ?
A. Doris saw Mrs. Pearson smoking and playing cards.
5. What does off - colour mean ?
A. Off colour means to be ill or depressed.
6. What made Doris cry ?
A. The sudden difference in her mother's behaviour made Doris cry.
7. What was the difference that Doris found in her mother ?
A. Doris found a sudden difference in the way her mother talked and looked.

Unworked Passage - I :

George [indignantly] : Laugh at me ? They don't laught at me.

Mrs. Pearson : Of course they do. You ought to have found that out by this time. You're one of their standing jokes. Famous. They call you Pompy - Ompy Pearson. Because they think you are slow and pompous.

George : [horrified] : Never !

Mrs. Pearson : It's always beaten me why you should want to spend so much time at a place where they're always laughing at you behind your back and calling you names - leaving your wife at home, night after night. Instead of going out with her, who doesn't make you look like a fool . . . .

1. Who does Mrs. Pearson say laugh at George ?
2. Who is one of their standing jokes ?
3. What did they call George behind their back ?
4. Who left his wife at home and went out night after night ?
5. Who doesn't make George look like a fool ?

Answers :

1. Mrs. Pearson says that the club members laugh at George.
2. George was one of their standing jokes.
3. They called George Pompy - Ompy Pearson behind his back.
4. George left his wife at home night after night.
5. Mrs. Pearson did not make George look like a fool.

Unworked Passage - II :

Cyril : Now you shouldn't have told him that, Mum. That's not fair. You've have hurt his feelings.

Mine too.

Mrs. Pearson : Sometimes it does people good to have their feelings hurt. The truth oughtn't to turn anybody for long. If your father didn't go to the club so often, perhaps they'd stop laughing at him.

Cyril : *[gloomily]* : I doubt it.

Mrs. Pearson *[severely]* : Possible you do, but what I doubt is whether your opinion's worth having. What do you know ? Nothing. You spend too much time and good money at grey hound races and dirt tracks and ice shows . . . .

1. Whose feelings did Cyril think that his mother had hurt ?
2. What according to Mrs. Pearson does people good sometimes ?
3. Where did Cyril's father go after ?
4. Whose opinion does Mrs. Pearson think not worth having ?
5. On what did Cyril spend too much time and money ?

Answers :

1. Cyril thought that his mother had hurt his father's feelings and his feelings too.
2. According to Mrs. Pearson sometimes it does people good to have their feelings hurt.
3. Cyril's father went to the club often.
4. Mrs. Pearson thinks that Cyril's opinion is not worth having.
5. Cyril spent too much time and money on greyhound races, dirt tracks and ice shows.

Unworked Passage - III :

Cyril : It's that silly old bag from next door - Mrs. Fitzgerald. You don't want her here do you ?

Mrs. Pearson : *[sharply]* : Certainly I do. Ask her in. And don't call her a silly old bag neither. She is a very nice woman, with a lot more sense than you'll ever have.

Mrs. Fitzgerald : I - just wondered - if every thing's - all right.

Cyril : *[sulkily]* : No, it isn't.

Mrs. Pearson : *[sharply]* : Of course it is. You be quiet.

Cyril *[indignantly and loudly]* : Why should I be quiet ?

Mrs. Pearson *[shouting]* : Because I tell you to - you silly, spoilt, young piecan.

Mrs. Fitzgerald *[protesting nervously]* : Oh - no - surely . . . .

Mrs. Pearson *[severely]* : Now Mrs. Fitzgerald, just let me manage my family in my own way - please !

1. Whom does Cyril consider a silly old bag ?
2. Who is more sensible than Cyril ?
3. What does Mrs. Fitzgerald wonder about ?
4. What does Mrs. Pearson think of Cyril ?
5. What is meaning of the word Piecan ?

Answers :

1. Cyril considers Mrs. Fitzgerald a silly old bag.
2. Mrs. Fitzgerald is more sensible than Cyril.
3. Mrs. Fitzgerald wonders if everything's all right at the Pearson's home.
4. Mrs.Pearson thinks that Cyril is a silly, spoilt, young piecan.
5. Piecan means impudent or ill-mannered.

17.11. Sample Questions :

1. Write are essay on the characterization of J.B. Priestley with special reference to "Mother's Day".
2. Explain the significance of the title "Mother's Day".
3. Sketch the character of Mrs. Anne Pearson.
4. Attempt a character sketch of Mrs. Fitzgerald.

17.12. Suggested Reading :

1. J.L. Styan : The Elements of Drama
2. Ronald Peacock : The Art of Drama

- Mr. N. SURESH CHANDRA RAO

LESSON NO. 18

O' HENRY : *GIFT OF THE MAGI*

Structure

18.1 Objectives :

To study the elements of short story like style and the narrative technique used by O'Henry

18.2 Introduction :

The greatness of a short story does not depend on the story only. It also depends on the handling of the subject. In estimating the greatness of fiction, we must bear in mind two things : one, is the story worth telling? and two, is it artistically told?

To narrate a story, the writer has a choice among the three methods - the direct or epic, the autobiographical, and the documentary.

The direct or epic or plain narrative is the most common method employed by the writers. In the use of this technique the role of the writer is that of one who is omniscient and omnipresent.

In the second method, the writer writes in the first person, identifying himself with one of his characters and then produces an imaginary autobiography.

Sometimes the writer chooses to tell his story through a series of letters diaries and documents. Stories written in this form are called 'epistolary stories'.

There is another method known as 'stream of consciousness". This technique is used to depict the multitudinous thoughts and feelings which pass through the mind.

O'Henry used direct or epic method of narration in the story 'The Gift of Magi'.

18.3 O'Henry : His life and works :

O'Henry's real name was William Sydney Porter. He was born in 1862 at Greensboro a little town of North Carolina, where his first twenty years were spent. His aunt who kept a

small school influenced his childhood tastes. He worked on a Texas Ranch where he had the opportunity of coming into contact with the life of the cow boy. He worked for a while as a clerk, reporter and a joke-writer. He tried his hand at the editing of a humorous paper. O'Henry's name was associated with some fraud in the bank of Austin. Though there was much evidence against him he lacked the courage to face the charges and fled to Honduras. When he returned he was declared guilty and sentenced to the penitentiary at Columbus. On being discharged he went to New York where in six years he brought forward the bulk of his literary works. He died in 1910, having achieved world - wide fame.

O'Henry's first collection of stories entitled "Cabbages and Kings" consisted of tales of the Central American Republics where adventurers thronged seeking for opportunities. Next he wrote a handful of short stories dealing with Latin America and Texas. Many of his most famous stories record the diverse daily lives of New Yorkers. In his famous collection of stories "The Four Million", O'Henry has described aspects of New York which previous writers had missed. "The Gift of the Magi", "The Furnished Room", "The Last Leaf", are some of the most well known stories of O'Henry.

18.4 ORIGINAL TEXT – " The Gift of the Magi"

One dollar and eighty-seven cents. That was all. And sixty cents of it was in pennies. Pennies saved one and two at a time by bulldozing the grocer and the vegetable man and the butcher until one's cheek burned with the silent imputation of parsimony that such close dealing implied. Three times Della counted it. One dollar and eighty-seven cents. And the next day would be Christmas.

There was clearly nothing left to do but flop down on the shabby little couch and howl. So Della did it. Which instigates the moral reflection that life is made up of sobs, sniffles, and smiles with sniffles predominating.

While the mistress of the home is gradually subsiding from the first stage to the second, take a look at the home. A furnished flat at $8 per week. It did not exactly beggar description, but it certainly had that word on the look-out for the mendicancy squad.

In the vestibule below was a letter box into which no letter would go, and an electric button from which no mortal finger could coax a ring. Also appertaining thereunto was a card bearing the name "Mr.James Dillingham Young".

The "Dillingham" had been flung to the breeze during a former period of prosperity when its possessor was being paid $30 per week. Now, when the income was shrunk to $20, the letters of "Dillingham" looked blurred, as though they were thinking seriously of contracting to a modest and unassuming D. But whenever Mr.James Dillingham Young came home and reached his flat above he was called "Jim" and greatly hugged by Mrs.James Dillingham Young, already introduced to you as Della. Which is all very good.

Della finished her cry and attended to her cheeks with the powder rag. She stood by the window and looked out dully at a grey cat walking a grey fence in a grey backyard. Tomorrow would be Christmas Day, and she had only $1.87 with which to buy Jim a present. She had been saving every penny she could for months, with this result. Twenty dollars a week doesn't go far. Expenses had been greater than she had calculated. They always are. Only $1.87 to buy a present for Jim. Her Jim. Many a happy hour she had spent planning for something nice for him. Something fine

and rare and sterling-something just a little bit near to being worthy of the honor of being owned by Jim.

There was a pier-glass between the windows of the room. Perhaps you have seen a pier-glass in an $8 flat. A very thin and very agile person may, by observing his reflection in a rapid sequence of longitudinal strips, obtain a fairly accurate conception of his looks. Della, being slender, had mastered the art.

Suddenly she whirled from the window and stood before the glass. Her eyes were shining brilliantly, but her face had lost its color within twenty seconds. Rapidly she pulled down her hair and let it fall to its full length.

Now, there were two possessions of the James Dillingham Young in which they both took a mighty pride. One was Jim's gold watch that had been his father's and his grandfather's. The other was Della's hair. Had the Queen of Sheba lived in the flat across the airshaft, Della would have let her hair hang out the window some day to dry just to depreciate Her Majesty's jewels and gifts. Had King Solomon been the janitor, with all his treasures piled up in the basement, Jim would have pulled out his watch every time he passed, just to see him pluck at his beard from envy.

So now Della's beautiful hair fell about her, rippling and shining like a cascade of brown waters. It reached below her knee and made itself almost a garment for her. And then she did it up again nervously and quickly. Once she faltered for a minute and stood still while a tear or two splashed on the worn red carpet.

On went her old brown jacket; on went her old brown hat. With a whirl of skirts and with the brilliant sparkle still in her eyes, she fluttered out of the door and down the stairs to the street.

Where she stopped the sign read: "Me. Sofronie. Hair Goods of All Kinds". One flight up Della ran, and collected herself, panting. Madame, large, too white, chilly, hardly looked the "Sofronie".

"Will you buy my hair? asked Della.

"I buy hair", said Madame. "Take yer hat off and let's have a sight at the looks of it".

Down rippled the brown cascade.

"Twenty dollars", said Madame, lifting the mass with a practised hand.

"Give it to me quick" said Della.

Oh, and the next two hours tripped by on rosy wings. Forget the hashed metaphor. She was ransacking the stores for Jim's present.

She found it at last. It surely had been made for Jim and no one else. There was no other like it in any of the stores, and she had turned all of them inside out. It was a platinum fob chain simple and chaste in design, properly proclaiming its value by substance alone and not by meretricious ornamentation - as all good things should do. It was even worthy of The Watch. As soon as she saw it she knew that it must be Jim's. It was like him. Quietness and value-the description applied to both. Twenty one dollars they took from her for it, and she hurried home with the 87 cents. With that chain on his watch Jim might be properly anxious about the time in any company. Grand as the watch was, he sometimes looked at it on the sly on account of the old leather strap that he used in place of a chain.

When Della reached home her intoxication gave way a little to prudence and reason. She got out her curling irons and lighted the gas and went to work repairing the ravages made by generosity added to love. Which is always a tremendous task, dear friends - a mammoth task.

Within forty minutes her head was covered with tiny, close-lying curls that made her look wonderfully like a truant schoolboy. She looked at her reflection in the mirror long, carefully, and critically.

"If Jim doesn't kill me" She said to herself, "before he takes a second look at me, he'll say I look like a Coney Island chorus girl. But what could I do - oh! what could I do with a dollar and eighty-seven cents?"

At seven o'clock the coffee was made and the frying-pan was on the back of the stove, hot and ready to cook the chops.

Jim was never late. Della doubled the fob chain in her hand and sat on the corner of the table near the door that he always entered. Then she heard his step on the stair away down on the first flight, and she turned white for just a moment. She had a habit of saying little silent prayers about the simplest everyday things, and now she whispered : "Please God, make him think I am still pretty".

The door opened and Jim stepped in and closed it. He looked thin and very serious. Poor fellow, he was only twenty-two-and to be burdened with a family! He needed a new overcoat and he was without gloves.

Jim stepped inside the door, as immovable as a setter at the scent of quail. His eyes were fixed upon Della, and there was an expression in them that she could not read, and it terrified her. It was not anger, nor surprise, nor disapproval, nor horror, nor any of the sentiments that she had been prepared for. He simply stared at her fixedly with that peculiar expression on his face.

Della wriggled off the table and went for him.

"Jim, darling", she cried, "don't look at me that way. I had my hair cut off and sold it because I couldn't have lived through Christmas without giving you a present. It'll grow out again-you won't mind, will you? I just had to do it. My hair grows awfully fast. Say "Merry Christmas!' Jim, and let's be happy. You don't know what a nice-what a beautiful, nice gift I've got for you".

"You've cut off your hair?" asked Jim, laboriously, as if he had not arrived at that patent fact yet even after the hardest mental labour.

"Cut it off and sold it" said Della. "Don't you like me just as well, any how? I'm me without my hair, ain't I?' Jim looked about the room curiously.

" You say your hair is gone?" He said with an air almost of idiocy.

"You needn't look for it, "said Della. "It's sold, I tell you - sold and gone, too. It's Christmas Eve, boy. Be good to me, for it went for you. Maybe the hairs of my head were numbered", she went on with a sudden serious sweetness, "but nobody could ever count my love for you. Shall I put the chops on, Jim?"

Out of his trance Jim seemed quickly to wake. He enfolded his Della. For ten seconds let us regard with discreet scrutiny some inconsequential object in the other direction. Eight dollars a

week or a million a year - what is the difference? A mathematician or a wit would give you the wrong answer. The Magi brought valuable gifts, but that was not among them. This dark assertion will be illuminated later on.

Jim drew a package from his overcoat pocket and threw it upon the table.

“Don’t make any mistake, Dell,” he said, “about me. I don’t think there’s anything in the way of a haircut or a shave or a shampoo that could make me like my girl any less. But, if you’ll unwrap that package, you may see why you had me going awhile at first.”

White fingers and nimble tore at the string and paper. And then an ecstatic scream of joy; and then, alas! quick feminine change to hysterical tears and wails, necessitating the immediate employment of all the comforting powers of the lord of the flat.

For there lay The Combs - the set of combs, side and back, that Della had worshipped for long in a Broad-way window. Beautiful combs, pure tortoise-shell, with jewelled rims-just the shade to wear in the beautiful vanished hair. They were expensive combs, she knew, and her heart had simply craved and yearned over them without the least hope of possession. And now they were hers, but the tresses that should have adorned the coveted adornments were gone.

But she hugged them to her bosom, and at length she was able to look up with dim eyes and a smile and say :

“My hair grows so fast, Jim”, And then Della leaped up like a little singed cat and cried, “Oh, oh!”.

Jim had not yet seen his beautiful present. She held it out to him eagerly upon her open palm. The dull precious metal seemed to flash with a reflection of her bright and ardent spirit.

“Isn’t it a dandy, Jim? I hunted all over town to find it. You’ll have to look at the time hundred times a day now. Give me your watch. I want to see how it looks on it”.

Instead of obeying, Jim tumbled down on the couch and put his hands under the back of his head and smiled.

“Dell, “said he, “let’s put our Christmas presents away and keep ‘em awhile. They’ re too nice to use just at present. I sold the watch to get the money to buy your combs. And now suppose you put the chops on”.

The Magi, as you know, were wise men - wonderfully wise men - who brought gifts to the Babe in the manger. They invented the art of giving Christmas presents. Being wise, their gifts were no doubt wise ones, possibly bearing the privilege of exchange in case of duplication. And here I have lamely related to you the uneventful chronicle of two foolish children in a flat who most unwisely sacrificed for each other the greatest treasures of their house. But in a last word to the wise of these days let it be said that of all who give and receive gifts, such as they are wisest. Every where they are wisest. They are the Magi.

18.5 Glossary

Bulldozing - Force somebody to do something especially by frightening him

Grocer - Shopkeeper who sells general small house hold goods

Imputation	-	accusation
Parsimony	-	excessive carefulness in spending money
Flop down	-	fall loosely
Instigates	-	cause something to happen
Sniffles	-	sound of breath of air
Mendicancy squad	-	Persons getting a living by begging
Vestibule	-	entrance hall
Appertaining	-	belong to somebody as a right
Hugged	-	put the arms round somebody to show love
Depreciate	-	become less valuable
Janitor	-	care taker
Faltered	-	move or act hesitantly
Fluttered	-	move about in a quick irregular way
Ransacking	-	search a place thoroughly
Meretricious	-	apparently attractive but in fact valueless
Prudence	-	showing care and foresight
Wriggled	-	make quick, short, twisting and turning movements
Discreet scrutiny	-	showing good judgement
Inconsequential	-	not important
Assertion	-	action of stating forcefully
Ecstatic	-	showing great joy
Tresses	-	long hair
Coveted	-	want very much to possess
Chronicle	-	record of historical events in the order in which they happened

18.6 Analysis of the Text

"The Gift of the Magi" tells the story of a young, poor, innocent New York couple who sacrifice what is dearest to each for the sake of getting a Christmas gift for the other.

Mr.James Dillingham Young and Della were a young couple living in a flat at eight dollars per week. Formerly Young was paid 30 dollars per week. But his income was shrunk to 20 dollars. Even though they were living with a meagre income they loved each other very greatly and lived happily. Whenever Young reached home, Della, his wife, used to call him "Jim" and hugged him.

The next day would be Christmas. Della wanted to give her husband a good present. But she had only one dollar and eighty seven cents. She saved those pennies by forcing the grocer, the vegetable man and the butcher. With that amount she could not buy a good present for her husband. There was nothing left for her to do but flop down and cry.

Della finished her cry and attended to her cheeks with powder. She had been planning for long to buy a nice present for her Jim. Suddenly she stood before a mirror. There was a change in her face. She pulled down her hair and let it fall to its full length.

There were two possessions in their home in which they took pride. One was Jim's gold watch that had been his father's and grandfather's. The other was Della's hair. Her hair reached below her knee and it was almost like a garment for her. An idea entered her mind. She quickly ran on to the street.

She reached a shop where hair goods of all kinds were sold and bought. The owner of the shop was prepared to give her 20 dollars for her hair. Della sold her hair and for the next two hours she ransacked the stores for Jim's present. At last she bought a Platinum fob chain for his Gold watch for 21 dollars. With the remaining 87 cents she hurried home. She feared whether Jim would not like her without her long hair.

Jim came home looking very serious. She informed him that she had her hair cut to buy a present for him. She also assured him that her hair would grow awfully fast. He enfolded his Della. He drew a package from his over coat pocket and threw it up on the table. When she tore at the string and paper there was a set of combs, which Della worshipped for long in a Broadway window. She made a scream of joy. She hugged them to her bosom. She showed Jim his present. She asked him to give her his watch. Instead of obeying, Jim informed her that he had sold his watch to get the money to buy her combs. He asked her to put their Christmas presents away as they were of no use for them for the present.

The Magi were wise men who invented the art of giving Christmas presents. But the couple unwisely sacrificed for each other the greatest treasures of their house.

18.7 Critical Evaluation

A study of O'Henry's stories reveals the fact that he was an entertainer "par excellence". He wrote for the purpose of amusing the reader for the moment. The stories of O'Henry are not great literature. They are interesting chiefly because of their ingenuity of plot. O'Henry's stories are famous for their surprise endings, the final twist he gives to them. He relies heavily on coincidence and accident but the charm of the stories is so great that these defects seem slight. In spite of their realistic descriptions of the poverty of New York, the stories of O'Henry provide an emphatic assertion of the goodness of humanity, its inherent nobility and its tremendous capacity for self-sacrifice. In O'Henry's stories there is an abundant use of humour, irony and satire. Irony serves a useful purpose in O'Henry's stories with their surprise endings, and satire elevates them to a greater importance than that of mere entertainment provided for the moment.

The unique appeal of O'Henry's stories owes much to his style. His style is characterized by the use of colloquialism and of slang. The reader of his stories feels a sense of anticipation as to the end of the story, but with a sentence or two O'Henry turns the action in a totally unsuspected way. He was merely a story teller who threw light on life in New York city and that section which he chose to depict, he depicted with great talent. He observed people. He was concerned for the poor and he was moved to tender pity by their sufferings. O'Henry is remembered as one who enriched American short story by virtue of both quality and quantity.

18.8 To sum up

Thus we have studied a beautiful love story in which the couple sacrifice their dearest things for the sake of others. We have also understood how the writers of short stories employ narrative techniques and how O'Henry used the direct method of narration, where the writer takes the role of an omniscient and omnipresent narrator.

18.9 Comprehension

1) Read the following passage and answer the questions given below :

In the vestibule below was a letter box into which no letter would go, and an electric button from which no mortal finger could coax a ring. Also appertaining thereunto was a card bearing the name "Mr.James Dillingham Young".

The "Dillingham" had been flung to the breeze during a former period of prosperity when its possessor was being paid $30 per week. Now, when the income was shrunk to $20, the letters of "Dillingham" looked blurred, as though they were thinking seriously of contracting to a modest and unassuming D. But whenever Mr.James Dillingham Young came home and reached his flat above he was called "Jim" and greatly hugged by Mrs.James Dillingham Young, already introduced to you as Della. Which is all very good.

1) What was below the vestibule?

2) When was the card with the name 'Dellingham" flung?

3) Why were the letters of 'Dellingham' looking blurred?

4) By whom was James called 'Jim'?

5) What was the previous salary of James Dillingham Young?

2) Read the following passage and answer the questions given below :

Della finished her cry and attended to her cheeks with the powder rag. She stood by the window and looked out dully at a grey cat walking a grey fence in a grey backyard. Tomorrow would be Christmas Day, and she had only $1.87 with which to buy Jim a present. She had been saving every penny she could for months, with this result. Twenty dollars a week doesn't go far. Expenses had been greater than she had calculated. They always are. Only $1.87 to buy a present for Jim. Her Jim. Many a happy hour she had spent planning for something nice for him. Something fine and rare and sterling-something just a little bit near to being worthy of the honour of being owned by Jim.

1. Why was Della crying?

2. What did she want to do with the money she had?

3. How did she save the money?

4. What was their income?

5. What type of present did she want to give her husband?

3) Read the following passage and answer the questions given below :

Suddenly she whirled from the window and stood before the glass. Her eyes were shining brilliantly, but her face had lost its color within twenty seconds. Rapidly she pulled down her hair and let it fall to its full length.

Now, there were two possessions of the James Dillingham Young in which they both took a mighty pride. One was Jim's gold watch that had been his father's and his grandfather's. The other was Della's hair. Had the Queen of Sheba lived in the flat across the airshaft, Della would have let

her hair hang out the window some day to dry just to depreciate Her Majesty's jewels and gifts. Had King Solomon been the janitor, with all his treasures piled up in the basement, Jim would have pulled out his watch every time he passed, just to see him pluck at his beard from envy.

So now Della's beautiful hair fell about her, rippling and shining like a cascade of brown waters. It reached below her knee and made itself almost a garment for her. And then she did it up again nervously and quickly. Once she faltered for a minute and stood still while a tear or two splashed on the worn red carpet.

1. Why did her face lose its colour?
2. What were the two possessions of the James Dillingham Youngs?
3. How great was Della's hair?
4. What would King Solomon do on seeing Jim's watch?
5. How long was Della's hair?

4) Read the following passage and answer the questions given below :

"Twenty dollars", said Madame, lifting the mass with a practised hand

"Give it to me quick" said Della

Oh, and the next two hours tripped by on rosy wings. Forget the hashed metaphor. She was ransacking the stores for Jim's present.

She found it at last. It surely had been made for Jim and no one else. There was no other like it in any of the stores, and she had turned all of them inside out. It was a platinum fob chain simple and chaste in design, properly proclaiming its value by substance alone and not by meretricious ornamentation - as all good things should do. It was even worthy of The Watch. As soon as she saw it she knew that it must be Jim's. It was like him. Quietness and value - the description applied to both. Twenty one dollars they took from her for it, and she hurried home with the 87 cents. With that chain on his watch Jim might be properly anxious about the time in any company. Grand as the watch was, he sometimes looked at it on the sly on account of the old leather strap that he used in place of a chain.

1. "Lifting the mass" what does 'mass' here mean?
2. For what was she ransacking the stores?
3. What was the present selected by Della for Jim?
4. "The description applied to both" - what does 'both' here refer to?
5. How much money remained with Della?

5) Read the following passage and answer the questions given below :

"You needn't look for it, "said Della. "It's sold, I tell you - sold and gone, too. It's Christmas Eve, boy. Be good to me, for it went for you. Maybe the hairs of my head were numbered", she went

on with a sudden serious sweetness, "but nobody could ever count my love for you. Shall I put the chops on, Jim?"

Out of his trance Jim seemed quickly to wake. He enfolded his Della. For ten seconds let us regard with discreet scrutiny some inconsequential object in the other direction. Eight dollars a week or a million a year - what is the difference? A mathematician or a wit would give you the wrong answer. The Magi brought valuable gifts, but that was not among them. This dark assertion will be illuminated later on.

1. What does 'it' in the first line mean?
2. Why did she sell her hair?
3. What did Jim do on hearing her words?
4. What does 'Magi' mean'?
5. What did the Magi bring?

6) Read the following passage and answer the questions given below the :

But she hugged them to her bosom, and at length she was able to look up with dim eyes and a smile and say :

"My hair grows so fast, Jim", And then Della leaped up like a little singed cat and cried, "Oh, oh!".

Jim had not yet seen his beautiful present. She held it out to him eagerly upon her open palm. The dull precious metal seemed to flash with a reflection of her bright and ardent spirit.

"Isn't it a dandy, Jim? I hunted all over town to find it. You'll have to look at the time hundred times a day now. Give me your watch. I want to see how it looks on it".

Instead of obeying, Jim tumbled down on the couch and put his hands under the back of his head and smiled.

"Dell, "Said he, "let's put our Christmas presents away and keep 'em awhile. They' re too nice to use just at present. I sold the watch to get the money to buy your combs. And now suppose you put the chops on".

1) What does 'them' refer to?
2) What did Della bring for Jim?
3) Why did Jim say that their presents were too nice to use at present?
4) What did Jim do with his watch?
5) What do you think about their sacrifices? Whether are they wise or unwise?

18.10 Answers to Comprehension questions

Passage I

1. a letter box
2. during a former period of prosperity
3. when the income was shrunk to 20 dollars
4. by Mrs.James Dellingham Young
5. 30 dollars per week

Passage 2

1. Because she hadn't sufficient money to buy a good present for her Jim for Christmas
2. she wanted to buy a good present for her husband
3. she had been saving every penny she could for months
4. 20 dollars a week
5. Something fine and rare and sterling

Passage 3

1. a great idea came into her mind
2. Jim's gold watch and Della's hair
3. her hair would depreciate her Majesty's jewels and gifts
4. he would pluck at his beard from envy
5. it reached below her knee

Passage 4

1. Della's hair
2. for Jim's present
3. a platinum fob chain for Jim's gold watch
4. Jim and the chain
5. 87 cents

Passage 5

1. Della's hair
2. to buy a good present for Jim
3. he enfolded his Della
4. wise people
5. valuable gifts

Passage 6

1. a set of combs
2. a platinum chain for his gold watch
3. because she sold her hair and he sold his gold watch
4. he sold his watch to buy a set of combs for Della
5. they are unwise

18.11 Sample Questions

1. Write an essay on the elements of novel or short story
2. Describe the narrative technique employed by O'Henry in his story" The Gift of the Magi".
3. Write an essay on the style or narrative techniques in a short story.

Mr. P.J. Vardhan Rao

LESSON NO.19

Kushwant Singh : *The Interview*

Structure

19.1 Objectives

To study the elements of a short story like point of view and how the point of view is employed by Khshwant Singh in this story

19.2 Introduction

The novel or the short story is an effective medium of criticism of life. Fiction is concerned with life, thoughts, feelings, passions and motives of men and women. Every novel or short story is said to rest upon a certain view of the world. It presents a general philosophy of life.

The writer's primary concern is with the concrete facts of life. We can regard the works of any great writer as bodies of "Creative Observations".

The philosophy of life may be given in the fiction in two ways. In the first place, the writer interprets life by mere representation of it. Or he can interpret life by direct personal commentary and explanation.

In estimating the philosophy of life contained in any fiction, we have to test it from two points of view - that of its truth and that of its morality. The truth of the literature is fidelity to the great impulses, passions and principles which shape the lives of men and women and which do not change with passage of time. The books which have this supreme element of truth remain for ever.

The elthical element too has to be interpreted broadly and emphasized to the full. The ethics must be brought into the texture of the story but the writer must not become a preacher. As the artist deals with life, he must deal with the moral facts and issues everywhere involved in life.

19.3 Khshwant Singh : His life and works

Khshwant Singh (1915-) is a famous journalist, novelist, historian and short story writer in English in India. He was educated in Delhi and took his Barrister's degree from the Inner Temple,

London. He was for a while in the Indian Foreign Service before he took to writing. He was the editor of *the Illustrated Weekly of India* for sometime. He has two novels to his credit "Train to Pakistan "and "I shall not hear the Nightingale" and a collection of short stories, "The Mark of Vishnu and other stories". His "Train to Pakistan" is a realistic and moving depiction of the troubles of Partition in 1947. He has also written some authoritative books on the Sikh History and Religion of which " The History of the Sikhs" is well-known. He has lectured at many Europian and American Universities. His well-known column " With Malice towards One and All" is keenly read. Khshwant Singh is noted for his lucid, humorous and forceful style.

19.4 Original Text (THE INTERVIEW)

There was a knock on the door. Before I could say 'Come in' the receptionist tip toed in shutting the door behind her.

'A Mr.Towers to see you", she whispered

'Has he an appointment?'

'No. He won't say what he wants either. He just said he wanted to see you. Shall I say you are busy?

The door opened again - without a knock - and in walked a hulking man in shirt sleeves. He was followed by a blonde in her fading forties and a little girl.

'Hello there! I see you are going to have your morning coffee and I thought I'd join you. Towers is the name, Stan Towers. And this is my wife Margery and little Pam. Say hello, Pam".

Pam said hello and collapsed into the leather chair sucking a lollipop. I shook hands with Margery, who produced a weary smile. She sat down on the arm of Pam's chair and stared at the wallpaper, looking utterly bored.

'Cream and sugar for me and the wife' said Mr.Towers, dismissing the receptionist. 'Pam'll stick to her lollipop, won't you, Pam".

Pam sat up, pulled out a dribbling lollipop to say a slow motion 'Yeah', and collapsed into the chair again.

Towers sat down on my desk and pulled out his packet of cigarettes. He pulled one half an inch out of the pack and held it out to me. I shook my head 'No, thanks, I ...."

Towers lit it for himself and calmly surveyed the room, charging it with smoke and expectancy.

"We were passing through and didn't know what to do. We've seen the sights and Marge doesn't care for them anyhow. So I say to Marge I'll tell you what we'll do. We'll go and see the American Ambassador and Indian High Commissioner. But you don't know them, she says to me, and I said that's how we'll get to know them. And so we did. We saw both of them. I said then, let's see the Public Relations Officer. That's his job. So here we are. You don't mind, do you? Of course you don't ".

Of course. Of course

I looked at Marge. A smile faded in and it faded out. She didn't seem to mind anything.

'We come from Chicago - you know Chicago ?"

"I'm afraid I have never been to Chicago".

"Not Shikago, Shik ahgo, Shik ahgo".

'Shikahgo'.

'That's right, Shikahgo, I am a numismatist. Do you know numismatism? Of course you do. Silly of me to ask a Public Relations man".

I smiled nervously. Of course. Of course.

'If I may say so, I am one of the world's nine leading numismatists. My articles have appeared in the best numismatical journals, including your own annual number of *the Calcutta Numismatical Journal*. Do you know the Calcutta Numismatical Society?"

'Oh yes. It's very well known'.

'I thought you would. Germany had many famous numismatists. One doesn't know what's happened to them now."

"May be the Russians have taken them over, like they took over Krupp's works' said I, throwing a feeler.

"Krupp's was only armaments, you know", he added a little uneasily. 'They must be dead. That just leaves Professor Char bonneau of France and your own Dr. Banerjee. Doesn't it, Marge?"

Marge smiled back to life and smiled out of it.

Numismatics, Numismatics. The word went round and round eluding recognition. Not krupp's. Not ballistics. Numismatics. Banerjee. Banerjee.

'You know Banerjee? Silly of me to ask. You must have heard of him'

There was no way out. "No, I haven't had the opportunity of meeting him personally. But of course one hears about him all the time".

"I thought you would know about him. You must meet him when you get back. Tell him I asked you to. We've been carrying on a very interesting controversy in *The Numismatist* about age of a treasure unearthed near Tutankhamen's tomb".

'I haven't had the pleasure of reading that. But I have seen Dr.Banerjee's book on the excavations at Mohenjodaro. It was Dr.Banerjee, wasn't?" I queried dubiously.

"I don't know about this one. Didn't know he was an archaeologist as well".

The door opened. The girl brought in coffee and biscuits. I felt like a boxer saved by the bell on the count of nine.

"Oh, Miss Forbes, will you give this chit to Miss Merriman?" I scribbled a small note and slipped it in her hand. While she handed round the coffee I quickly opened a conversation with Marge.

"And what do you think of India, Mrs.Towers?"

'Oh, fine"

'Wouldn't you like to go there?"

'Yeah, very much."

"Oh yes, you would like it very much. So different. The people and the country. I am sure you would like it."

'Sure'.

I turned to Pam. She had finished sucking her lollipop and was placidly picking her nose. "Wouldn't you like to go to India Pam?"

Pam blushed with guilt. Her parents glowered at her. Marge gave her a handkerchief.

Towers returned to the assault.

'I am very interested about this book of Banerjee's you talk about. Did you say it was about Mohenjodaro?"

'May be I am mixing him up with someone else'

"No, no I am sure you are not. There were things in Mohenjodaro which would be of enormous interest to a numismatist. Banerjee must have written about these.'

Numismatics. Numismatics

"Oh yes, he must have. It was such a long time ago that I saw the book. I don't really remember what he was mainly interested in."

Numismatics. Numismatics

The door opened once more. Miss Merriman came in holding an open book. Her glasses were balanced on the tip of her nose. She just smiled at the Towers and mumbled.

'Numismatics. Numismatics. Here we are - from the Latin word numisma; pertaining or relating to...."

"Miss Merriman, you haven't met Mr.Towers. He is one of the world's greatest numismatists. Mr.Towers, this is Miss Merriman, my secretary. She is very interested in numismatics."

With triumphant relief I relieved Miss Merriman of the dictionary and the tell-tale chit.

"Oh, are you now?" beamed Mr.Towers, gripping the hand of his new victim and shaking it vigorously. 'It is a pleasure to meet someone interested in numismatics. As I was saying people do not realize the contribution that numismatics has made in reconstructing ancient history."

"Dont' they?" queried the baffled Miss Merriman.

"No, indeed they do not," emphasized Mr.Towers, warming to the subject. 'Numismatics is the one science which has helped to fix the chronology of all historical excavations. We would have

known nothing about the Indo-Greeks, Indo-Scythian, or even the Indo-Parthian periods but for numismatists. Why, Dr.Banerjee has even been able to trace the entire genealogy of the Kings of Kathiawar and Western Kshatrapas."

'Yes, indeed', commented Miss Merriman dubiously.

"I was telling you about Mohenjodaro," I burst in quickly, pretending to read out of the dictionary. "Mohenjodaro has yielded valuable material to the numismatician."

'Aha," exclaimed Mr.Towres, "I said so, didn't I? Let's see - is that Banerjee's Book.?"

Before I could do anything, Mr.Towres had the dictionary out of my hand.

19.5 Glossary

Tip – toed	-	walked quietly on the tip of toes
Hulking man	-	man who looked awkward
Blonde	-	woman having fair complexion and light coloured hair
numismatics	-	tudy of coins and medals
Krupp's	-	family of German armament manufacturers started by Frederich Krupp (1787- 1826)
eluding recognition	-	not coming to mind immediately
Tutankhamen	-	Kings of ancient Egypt who flourished about 1350 B.C
queried dubiously	-	inquired doubtfully
Mahenjadaro	-	Archaelogical site in north west Sind, Pakistan
Archaelogist	-	one who studies remains of pre-historic times, for example buried cities, tombs etc.
glowered at	-	looked in an angry or threatening way
chronology	-	order of events with dates.
Geneology	-	record and study of family history and Ancestry
Baffled	-	puzzled

19.6 Analysis of the text

It was the office of a Public Relations Officer. The receptionist entered the PRO's room and informed him that a Mr. Towers came to see him. She added that Towers just wanted to see him. Meanwhile Mr. Towers, his wife and his daughter entered the room. He introduced himself as Stan Towers, his wife Margery and daughter Pam. His daughter was sucking a lollipop and Margery looked utterly bored. It was coffee time and Towers ordered cream and sugar for him and for his wife.

Towers informed the PRO that they were just passing through and did not know what to do. So he wanted to meet the American Ambassador and Indian High Commissioner. Then he came to

the PRO's Office to meet him. He told the PRO that he came from Chicaga and he was a numismatist. He added that he was one of the world's nine numismatists and his articles appeared in the best numismatical journals including the *Calcutta Numismatical Journal.*

The PRO was in an embarrassing situation. He did not know the meaning of the word "numismatist". When Towers said that Germany once had many famous numismatists and nobody knew what had happened to them, the PRO said that the Russians might have taken them over.

Towers also informed the PRO that he had been carrying an interesting controversy with Dr. Banerjee about the age of a treasure unearthed near Tutankhamen's tomb. The PRO informed Towers that he had only seen Dr. Banerjee's book on the excavations at Mahenjodaro.

The attendant brought coffee and biscuits. The PRO felt like a boxer saved by the bell on the count of nine. He scribbled a small note and asked the attendant to give it to his secretary Miss. Merriman. The PRO diverted his conversation to Marge and Pam. Towers continued his attack on the PRO about the book of Dr. Banerjee.

Miss. Merriman entered the room with an open book. It was a dictionary and the PRO looked the word up in it. Then he had a triumphant relief. Mr.Towers continued his conversation with Miss. Merriman. Later Mr. Towers thought that the book in the PRO's hands was a book of Dr.Banerjee and took it from his hand.

19.7 Critical Evaluation

Khushwant Singh, though the author of the novel " Train to Pakistan" and some other stories, is mainly known as a journalist and editor of the *Illustrated Weekly of India.* His writings are full of humour and satire. His column " With Malice to One and All" made him famous.

19.8 To Sum up

"The Interview" exhibits Khushwant Singh's creative observation of the life and manners of the people. The Point of View employed by Khushwant Singh in this story is the criticism of life. In this short story he satirizes the hypocritical officialdom, which wants to pass Mr. Know – all without knowing the a b c of the subject in question. Khushwant Singh, in this story, criticizes two types of men. One, Mr. Towers, who bores every body with his numismatics with out taking the other's interest in the subject in to consideration. Two, the PRO, who lacks in worldly wisdom but who hides ignorance by pretending to be well versed in everything in the world. This story can be described as the story of character.

19.9 Comprehension

1) Read the following passage and answer the questions given below :

The door opened again - without a knock - and in walked a hulking man in shirt sleeves. He was followed by a blonde in her fading forties and a little girl.

'Hello there! I see you are going to have your morning coffee and I thought I'd join you. Towers is the name, Stan Towers. And this is my wife Margery and little Pam. Say hello, Pam."

Pam said hello and collapsed into the leather chair sucking a lollipop. I shook hands with Margery, who produced a weary smile. She sat down on the arm of Pam's chair and stared at the wallpaper, looking utterly bored.

1. Who walked in to the room ?
2. How old is the blonde ?
3. What did he think ?
4. What was Pam doing ?
5. How did Margery appear ?

2) Read the following passage and answer the questions given below :

Towers sat down on my desk and pulled out his packet of cigarettes. He pulled one half an inch out of the pack and held it out to me. I shook my head 'No, thanks, I ...."

Towers lit it for himself and calmly surveyed the room, charging it with smoke and expectancy.

"We were passing through and didn't know what to do. We've seen the sights and Marge doesn't care for them anyhow. So I say to Marge I'll tell you what we'll do. We'll go and see the American Ambassador and Indian High Commissioner. "But you don't know them," she says to me, and I said "that's how we'll get to know them." And so we did. We saw both of them. I said then, "let's see the Public Relations Officer. That's his job. So here we are. You don't mind, do you? Of course you don't."

1. What does 'my' in the first line refer to?
2. What did Towers offer to the PRO ?
3. Whom did Towers meet first ?
4. Why did Towers come there?
5. Did Towers know the American Ambassador and the Indian High Commissioner ?

3) Read the following passage and answer the questions given below :

'If I may say so, I am one of the world's nine leading numismatists. My articles have appeared in the best numismatical journals, including your own annual number of the *Calcutta Numismatical* Journal. Do you know the Calcutta Numismatical Society?"

'Oh yes. It's very well known'.

'I thought you would. Germany had many famous numismatists. One doesn't know what's happened to them now."

"May be the Russians have taken them over, like they took over Krupp's works' said I, throwing a feeler.

"Krupp's was only armaments, you know, he added a little uneasily. 'They must be dead. That just leaves Professor Char bonneau of France and your own Dr. Banerjee. Doesn't it, Marge?"

1) Whom does 'I' in the first line refer to ?
2) What is the meaning of "Numismatist"?
3) In which Indian journal did Towers' articles appear ?
4) Who are Prof. Char bonneau and Dr. Banerjee ?
5) Between whom did the conversation take place?

4) Read the following passage and answer the questions given below :

"I thought you would know about him. You must meet him when you get back. Tell him I asked you to. We've been carrying on a very interesting controversy in The Numismatist about age of a treasure unearthed near Tutankhamen's tomb."

'I haven't had the pleasure of reading that. But I have seen Dr.Banerjee's book on the excavations at Mohenjodaro. It was Dr.Banerjee, wasn't?" I queried dubiously.

"I don't know about this one. Didn't know he was an archaeologist as well."

The door opened. The girl brought in coffee and biscuits. I felt like a boxer saved by the bell on the count of nine.

"Oh, Miss Forbes, will you give this chit to Miss Merriman?" I scribbled a small note and slipped it in her hand. While she handed round the coffee I quickly opened a conversation with Marge.

1) Whom does 'him' refer to?
2) What was the controversy about?
3) How did the PRO feel when the girl brought in coffee and biscuits?
4) Who is Miss Merriman?
5) What did the PRO give to Miss Forbes?

5) Read the following passage and answer the questions given below :

Towers returned to the assault.

'I am very interested about this book of Banerjee's you talk about. Did you say it was about Mohenjodaro?"

'May be I am mixing him up with someone else'.

"No, no I am sure you are not. There were things in Mohenjodaro which would be of enormous interest to a numismatist. Banerjee must have written about these.'

Numismatics. Numismatics

"Oh yes, he must have. It was such a long time ago that I saw the book. I don't really remember what he was mainly interested in.

1. Towers returned to the assault - what was the “assault”?
2. What was Banerjee’s book about?
3. Why did a numismatist get interested in Mohenjodaro?
4. “Oh yes, he must have” - whom does ‘he’ here refer to?
5. What part of speech is “ enormous” ?

6) Read the following passage and answer the questions given below :

“Oh, are you now?” beamed Mr.Towers, gripping the hand of his new victim and shaking it vigorously. ‘It is a pleasure to meet someone interested in numismatics. As I was saying people do not realize the contribution that numismatics has made in reconstructing ancient history.”

“Don’t they?” queried the baffled Miss Merriman.

“No, indeed they do not, emphasized Mr.Towers, warming to the subject. ‘Numismatics is the one science which has helped to fix the chronology of all historical excavations. We would have known nothing about the Indo-Greek, Indo-Scythian, or even the Indo-Parthian periods but for numismaticians. Why, Dr.Banerjee has even been able to trace the entire genealogy of the Kings of Kathiawar and Western Kshatrapas.

1) Who is Towers’ new victim ?

2) What does numismatics do ?

3) What has been traced by Dr. Banerjee?

4) What do the people not realize ?

5) What is the meaning of “Chronology” ?

19.10 Answers to the comprehension questions

1)

1. a hulking man
2. she was in her fading forties
3. he thought of joining the PRO to have morning coffee
4. sucking a lollipop
5. utterly bored

2)

1. the PRO
2. a cigarette
3. the American Ambassador and the Indian High Commissioner
4. to meet the PRO
5. No. He did not know

3)

1. Mr. Towers
2. one who studies coins and medals
3. Calcutta Numismatical Journal
4. factitious numismatists
5. the PRO and Mr. Towers

4)

1. Dr.Banerjee
2. about the age of a treasure unearthed near Tutankhamen's tomb.
3. like a boxer saved by the bell on the count of nine.
4. The PRO's secretary
5. a small note asking his secretary to get a dictionary

5)

1. discussion about Dr.Banerjee
2. Mohenjodaro
3. There were many things in Mohenjodaro
4. Dr. Banerjee
5. adjective

6)

1. Miss. Merriman
2. Numismatics is the one science which has helped to fix the chronology of all historical excavations
3. the entire genealogy of the kings of Kathiawar and western Khatrapas.
4. the contribution that numismatics has made in reconstructing ancient society
5. science of giving times and dates to events

19.11 Sample Questions

1. What is the point of view in Khushwant Singh's story "The Interview"?
2. The interview is an amusing story aiming at ridiculing gently the hypocrisy of officialdom - Explain
3. How does the Public Relations Officer try to cope with the miserable situation he is in with Mr.Towers?
4. What are the chief elements of a short story?

P.J. Vardhan Rao

LESSON NO.20

EDGAR ALLAN POE : *THE TELL - TALE HEART*

Structure

20.1 Objectives

To study the chief elements of 'setting' and atmosphere in a short story

To study how Poe employed 'setting' in his short story 'The Tell - tale Heart'.

20.2 Introduction

Setting in fiction is what we call its time and place of action. In this term we include the manners, customs and ways of life which enter the story's composition and its natural background. We may, therefore, distinguish two kinds of setting : the social and the material.

One marked feature of modern fiction is its specialization. Though some novelists tried to bring out the life of people in general, many used to treat life in sections. Thus we have novels of the sea and of military life, of the upper classes, the middle classes, the lower classes and so on.

The attractiveness and literary values of many novels are the result of the skilful portrayal of the life and manners of special classes, social groups or places. In the case of historical novels, they should not only adhere to truth but also faithfully represent the manners and the temper of the age they deal with.

Some writers pay little attention to material setting. But some specially delight in minute description of streets, homes and interiors. While examining the writer's use of nature, our concern

will be with his power as land painter. The writer may use nature for picturesque purpose only. Or he may associate it with his drama either through contrast or sympathy. In the sympathetic use of natural background, nature often becomes almost symbolical.

20.3 Edgar Allan Poe : His Life and Works

Poe was born at Boston in 1809, and left an orphan while still in his infancy. He was adopted by a tobacco merchant and taken to Virginia. As a child he was sent to England for his early education In 1820, he returned to Richmand. He attended the University of Virginia but was forced to leave because of his weakness for drink and gambling. He engaged in editorial work for sometime, wrote verses, criticism, and short stories. His "Poems" appeared in 1831 and revealed unmistakable talent in such pieces "To Helen", "Israfel", and "The City in the Sea". "Tales of Grotesque and Arabesque" appeared in 1840 and in 1845 "The Raven and other Poems". In 1836 Poe married his cousin Virginia Clemm. She died in 1847 leaving him in utter loneliness. He survived his wife by two years. This was a period filled with poetry, intoxication, illness and degradation that made Poe write "There are moments when, even to the sober eye of Reason, the world of our own sad humanity must assume the aspect of hell". "Eureka written by Poe at the end of his life, is a prose work which he insists is a poem and which he comments to posterity as his crowning achievement. The stories of Poe are justly regarded as among the world's very finest examples of the form. He influenced nearly every writer, especially the Europeans, since his day. He brought the short story to a point of technical perfection which has never been surpassed.

20.4 Original Text

THE TELL-TALE HEART :

True - nervous - very, very dreadfully nervous I had been and am! but why will you say that I am mad? The disease had sharpened my sense - not destroyed - not dulled them. Above all was the sense of hearing acute. I heard all things in the heaven and in the earth. I heard many things in hell. How, then, am I mad? Hearken! and observe how healthily - how calmly I can tell you the whole story.

It is impossible to tell how first the idea entered my brain; but once conceived, it haunted me day and night. Object there was none. Passion there was none. I loved the old man. He had never wronged me. He had never given me insult. For his gold I had no desire. I think it was his eye! Yes, it was this! One of his eyes resembled that of a vulture - a pale blue eye, with a film over it. Whenever it fell upon me, my blood ran cold; and so by degrees - very gradually - I made up my mind to take the life of the old man, and thus rid myself of the eye forever.

Now this is the point. You fancy me mad. Madmen know nothing. But you should have seen me. You should have seen how wisely I proceeded - with what caution - with what foresight - with what dissimulation I went to work!

I was never kinder to the old man than during the whole week before I killed him. And every night, about midnight, I turned the latch of his door and opened it - oh, so gently! And then, when I had made an opening sufficient for my head, I put in a dark lantern, all closed, closed, so that no light shone out, and then I thrust in my head. Oh, you would have laughed to see how cunningly I thrust it in. I moved it slowly- very, very slowly, so that I might not disturb the old man's sleep. It took me an hour to place my whole head within the opening so far that I could see him as he lay upon his bed. Ha! - would a madman have been so wise as this. And then, when my head was well in the room, I

undid the lantern cautiously - oh, so cautiously - cautiously (for the hinges creaked) - I undid it just so much that a single thin ray fell upon the vulture eye. And this I did for seven long nights - every night just at midnight - but I found the eye always closed; and so it was impossible to do the work; for it was not the old man who vexed me, but his Evil Eye. And every morning, when the day broke, I went boldly into the chamber, and spoke courageously to him, calling him by name in a hearty tone, and inquiring how he had passed the night. So you see he would have been a very profound old man, indeed, to suspect that every night, just at twelve, I looked in upon him while he slept.

Upon the eighth night I was more than usually cautious in opening the door. A watch's minute hand moves more quickly than did mine. Never before that night had I felt the extent of my own powers - of my sagacity. I could scarcely contain my feelings of triumph. To think that there I was, opening the door, little by little, and he not even to dream of my secret deeds or thoughts. I fairly chuckled at the idea; and perhaps he heard me; for he moved on the bed suddenly, as if startled. Now you may think that I drew back – but no. His room was as black as pitch with the thick darkness (for the shutters were close fastened, through fear of robbers), and so I knew that he could not see the opening of the door, and I kept pushing it on steadily, steadily.

I had my head in, and was about to open the lantern, when my thumb slipped upon the tin fastening, and the old man sprang up in bed, crying out "Who's there?"

I kept quite still and said nothing. For a whole hour I did not move a muscle, and in the meantime I did not hear him lie down. He was still sitting up in the bed listening; - just as I have done, night after night, hearkening to the death watches in the wall.

Presently I heard a slight groan, and I knew it was the groan of total terror. It was not a groan of pain or grief - oh no! - it was the low stifled sound that arises from the bottom of the soul when overcharged with awe. I knew the sound well. Many a night, just at midnight, when all the world slept, it has welled up from my own bosom, deepening, with its dreadful echo, the terrors that distracted me. I say I knew it well. I knew what the old man felt, and pitied him, although I chuckled at heart. I knew that he had been lying awake ever since the first slight noise, when he had turned in the bed. His fears had been ever since growing upon him. He had been trying to fancy them causeless, but could not. He had been saying to himself : "it is nothing but the wind in the chimney - it is only a mouse crossing the floor," or "it is merely a cricket which has made a single chirp". Yes, he has been trying to comfort himself with these suppositions; but he had stalked with his black shadow before him, and enveloped the victim. And it was the mournful influence of the unperceived shadow that caused him to feel - although he neither saw nor heard - to feel the presence of my head within the room.

When I had waited a long time, very patiently, without hearing him lie down, I resolved to open a little - a very, very little crevice in the lantern. So I opened it - you cannot imagine how stealthily, stealthily - until, at length, a single dim ray, like the thread of the spider, shot from out the crevice and fell upon the vulture eye.

It was open-wide, wide open - and I grew furious as I gazed upon it. I saw it with perfect distinctness - all a dull blue, with a hideous veil over it that chilled the very marrow in my bones; but I could see nothing else of the old man's face or person: for I had directed the ray, as if by instinct, precisely upon the damned spot.

And now - have I not told you that what you mistake for madness is but over-acuteness of the senses? - now, I say, there came to my ears a low, dull, quick sound, such as a watch makes when

enveloped in cotton. I knew that sound well too. It was the beating of the old man's heart. It increased my fury, as the beating of a drum stimulates the soldier into courage.

But even yet I refrained and kept still. I scarcely breathed. I held the lantern motionless. I tried how steadily I could maintain the ray upon the eye. Meantime the hellish tattoo of the heart increased. It grew quicker and quicker, and louder and louder every instant. The old man's terror must have been extreme! It grew louder, I say, louder every moment! - do you mark me well? I have told you that I am nervous: so I am. And now at the dead hour of night, amid the dreadful silence of that old house, so strange a noise as this excited me to uncontrollable terror. yet, for some minutes longer I refrained and stood still. But the beating grew louder, louder! I thought the heart must burst. And now a new anxiety seized me - the sound would be heard by a neighbor! The old man's hour had come! With a loud yell, I threw open the lantern and leaped into the room. He shrieked once - once only. In an instant I dragged him to the floor, and pulled the heavy bed over him. I then smiled gaily, to find the deed so far done. But, for many minutes, the heart beat on with a muffled sound. This, however, did not vex me; it would not be heard through the wall. At length it ceased. The old man was dead. I removed the bed and examined the corpse. Yes, he was stone, stone dead. I placed my hand upon the heart and held it there many minutes. There was no pulsation. He was stone dead. His eye would trouble me no more.

If still you think me mad, you will think so no longer when I describe the wise precautions I took for the concealment of the body. The night waned, and I worked hastily, but in silence. First of all I dismembered the corpse. I cut off the head and the arms and the legs.

I then took up three planks from the flooring of the chamber, and deposited all between the scantlings. I then replaced the boards so cleverly, so cunningly, that no human eye-not even his-could have detected anything wrong. There was nothing to wash out no stain of any kind - no blood - spot whatever. I had been too wary for that. A tub had caught all - ha! ha!

When I had made an end of these labors, it was four o'clock - still dark as midnight. As the bell sounded the hour, there came a knocking at the street door. I went down to open it with a light heart - for what had I now to fear? There entered three men, who introduced themselves, with perfect suavity, as officers of the police. A shriek had been heard by a neighbor during the night : suspicion of foul play had been aroused; information had been lodged at the police office, and they (the officers) had been deputed to search the premises.

I smiled-for what had I to fear? I bade the gentlemen welcome. The shriek, I said, was my own in a dream. The old man, I mentioned, was absent in the country. I took my visitors all over the house. I bade them search - search well. I led them, at length, to his chamber. I showed them his treasures, secure, undisturbed. In the enthusiasm of my confidence, I brought chairs into the room, and desired them here to rest from their fatigues, while I myself, in the wild audacity of my perfect triumph, placed my own seat upon the very spot beneath which reposed the corpse of the victim.

The officers were satisfied. My *manner* had convinced them. I was singularly at ease. They sat, and while I answered cheerily, they chatted familiar things. But, ere long, I felt myself getting pale and wished them gone. My head ached, and I fancied a ringing in my ears: but still they sat and still chatted. The ringing became more distinct : - it continued and became more distinct : I talked more freely to get rid of the feeling : but it continued and gained definitiveness - until, at length, I found that the noise was not within my ears.

No doubt I now grew very pale; - but I talked more fluently, and with a heightened voice. Yet the sound increased - and what could I do? It was a low, dull, quick sound -much a sound as a watch

makes when enveloped in cotton. I gasped for breath - and yet the officers heard it not. I talked more quickly - more vehemently; but the noise steadily increased. Why would they not be gone? I paced the floor to and fro with heavy strides, as if excited to fury by the observation of the men - but the noise steadily increased. Oh, God; what could I do? I foamed - I raved - I swore! I swung the chair upon which I had been sitting, and grated it upon the boards, but the noise arose over all and continually increased. It grew louder - louder - louder! And still the men chatted pleasantly, and smiled. Was it possible they heard not? Almighty God! - no, no! They heard! - they suspected ! - they *knew*! - they were making a *mockery* of my horror! - this I thought, and this I think. But anything was better than this agony! Anything was more tolerable than this derision! I could bear those hypocritical smiles no longer! I felt that I must scream or die! - and now - again! hark louder! louder! louder! louder! -

"Villains!" I shrieked, "dissemble no more! I admit the deed - tear up the planks! - here! - it is the beating of his hideous heart!"

20.5 Glossary

acute	-	very severe
hearken	-	listen
conceived	-	to think of a new plan or idea
vulture	-	a large bird that eats dead animals
fancy	-	like or want something
dissimulation	-	hiding true intentions
vexed	-	worried
profound	-	showing a great knowledge and understanding
sagacity	-	wisdom
chuckled	-	laugh quietly
startled	-	become suddenly surprised
groan	-	a long deep sound of pain
stifled	-	to stop some one from breathing
awe	-	a feeling of great respect
distracted	-	anxious and unable to think clearly
stalked	-	to follow a person quietly in order to kill him
crevice	-	a narrow crack
hideous	-	ugly
muffled	-	to make a sound less loud and clear
dismembered	-	to cut a body into pieces
fatigues	-	uniform
audacity	-	recklessly bold
reposed	-	rested
foamed	-	very angry
raved	-	talk furiously
derision	-	ridicule or mockery
dissemble	-	hide or disguise one's true feelings

20.6 Analysis of the Text

At the time of the narration of the story, the narrator was very nervous. He does not accept that he is mad. The idea of killing an old man entered his brain. It haunted him day and night. There was no object or passion in killing the old man. The old man never wronged him. The old man had never insulted him. He had no desire for the old man's gold. Yet he decided to kill the old man. The reason was one of the eyes of the old man. It resembled that of a vulture – a pale blue eye, with a film over it. When ever the eye fell upon him, his blood ran cold. Thus he made up his mind to take the life of the old man and rid himself of the eye for ever.

He was never kinder to the old man than during the whole week before he killed him. Every night, at about midnight he turned the latch of the door and opened the door sufficient for his head. Then he put in a dark lantern all closed so that no light shown. He moved so slowly that he would not disturb the old man. When his head was well in the room, he undid the lantern cautiously as to make a single ray fell upon the vulture eye. He did it for seven long nights but he found the eye always closed. So it was impossible for him to kill the old man. And every morning he went into the old man's chamber and spoke courageously in hearty tone, and enquired how he had passed the night.

On the 8th night as he was opening the door little by little, perhaps he heard him move on the bed. As he was about to open the lantern, his finger slipped upon the tin and the old man sprang up in bed crying out "Who's there?"

He kept quiet and for a whole hour he did not move. The old man was still sitting up in the bed. He heard a slight groan which arose from the bottom of the soul when overcharged with awe. The old man had been trying to comfort himself with the suppositions that it was nothing but wind, or only a mouse crossing the floor or it was merely a cricket which had made a single chirp.

After waiting for a long time he opened a little crevice in the lantern. And a single dim ray fell upon the vulture eye. It was wide open and he grew furious as he gazed upon it. Then he heard a low, dull, quick sound. It was the beating of the old man's heart. It increased his anger as the beating of a drum stimulates the soldier into courage.

He stood still and scarcely breathed. He held the lantern motionless. Meanwhile the sound of the old man's heart grew quicker and louder. This strange noise excited him to uncontrollable terror. He feared that the sound must be heard by a neighbour. He then leaped into the room, dragged the old man to the floor, and pulled the heavy bed over him. He removed the bed and examined the corpse. The old man was stone dead. There was no pulsation of the heart. He felt that the eye would trouble him no more.

He then cut the head, the arms and the legs of the old man. He took up three planks from the flooring of the chamber and deposited all between the scantlings. There were no stains of blood and nobody can detect anything wrong.

It was 4'o clock when he finished everything. Then came a knocking at the street door. When he opened the door 3 policemen entered the house on a complaint given by a neighbour. He took them into the house, showed them that everything was intact and told them that the old man was absent in the country. He led them into the chamber and brought them chairs. He sat where he deposited the parts of the corpse. The officers were satisfied and they began chatting familiar things. Meanwhile he felt himself getting pale. His head ached, and he fancied a ringing in his ears. The sound increased. He felt they were gone. He suspected that the sound was heard by the

policemen also. He could not tolerate the agony and hypocritical smiles of the officers. In an emotional out burst he admitted his deed.

20.7 Critical Evaluation

When Edgar Allan Poe appeared on the literary scene the Puritan prejudice against fiction had gone. Washington Irving and others had already written delightful stories. But for writing stories Poe brought qualities which were distinctly his own. He considered the short story as a great literary form. He emphasized the idea that story should aim at a single and unique effect.

Poe's stories can be divided into several divisions. There are analytical stories such as "The Gold Bug" or "Murders in the Rue Morgue", the tales of mystery and horror and death as "Ligeia" and "The Fall of the House of Usher", Tales of adventure like "The Descent into the Maelstorm" and stories which are humorous such as "The Devil in the Belfry".

Poe was the first among American writers who formalized the technique of the short story. He recognized the short story as a superb art form, the aim of which was to create a total effect. It was Poe who invented the story of detection. Hence he is the ancestor of Sherlock Holmes and his many successors. Poe was the first also to develop a new fiction of psychological analysis.

Edgar Allan Poe was the first American Literary critic to express the aesthetic tradition in art Poe believed that the tale should have unity of effect and that everything else should be subordinated to this unity.

Many of Poe's stories are set in strange places – a ruined abbey, a castle on the Rhine – with an elaborate and dimly or luridly lit decors. Often events happen at night or unlit interiors. In his stories we find great deal of intelligence and systematic planning of detail.

His stories, as Baudelaire said, "show absurdity installing" itself in the intellect, and governing it with a crushing logic." As Marcus Cunlife points out "Though the ghastliness is occasionally over done, it is made all the more night – marish by the measure deliberation with which it is unfolded." In spite of this deliberation and their appeal to the intellect, Poe's stories are strong in emotional appeal as well. Each story begins to appealing to the mind, as it ends by taking hold of the soul.

20.8 To sum up

Edgar Allan Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart" is a Psycho-analytical story where the narrator explains the way he has committed the murder and consequences thereafter. The narrative technique used by Poe is a first person narration. The story is written as if the narrator was narrating it to a silent listener.

Just as in many stories of Poe, the action takes place in a building where the victim resides lonely. The time of the action is also midnight when everybody is in sleep. Poe uses the material setting as the background for his story. The midnight darkness coincides with the darkness in the old man's bed room. The narrator is very careful in handling the lantern. The setting is congenial to the young man to take the life of the old man. But in his nervousness, he feels that he hears the sound of the heart beat of the old man. The sound lingers in his ears and makes him worried. In his horror he admits his crime.

20.9 Comprehension

1) Read the following passage and answer the questions given below:

True - nervous - very, very dreadfully nervous I had been and am! but why will you say that I am mad? The disease had sharpened my sense - not destroyed - not dulled them. Above all was the sense of hearing acute. I heard all things in the heaven and in the earth. I heard many things in hell. How, then, am I mad? Hearken! and observe how healthily - how calmly I can tell you the whole story.

It is impossible to tell how first the idea entered my brain; but once conceived, it haunted me day and night. Object there was none. Passion there was none. I loved the old man. He had never wronged me. He had never given me insult. For his gold I had no desire. I think it was his eye! Yes, it was this! One of his eyes resembled that of a vulture - a pale blue eye, with a film over it. Whenever it fell upon me, my blood ran cold; and so by degrees - very gradually - I made up my mind to take the life of the old man, and thus rid myself of the eye forever.

1) How was the narrator?
2) What did his disease do to him?
3) Did the old man ever wrong him?
4) What did one of the eyes of the old man resemble?
5) Why did he want to take the life of the old man?

2) Read the following passage and answer the questions given below:

I was never kinder to the old man than during the whole week before I killed him. And every night, about midnight, I turned the latch of his door and opened it - oh, so gently! And then, when I had made an opening sufficient for my head, I put in a dark lantern, all closed, closed, so that no light shone out, and then I thrust in my head. Oh, you would have laughed to see how cunningly I thrust it in. I moved it slowly- very, very slowly, so that I might not disturb the old man's sleep. It took me an hour to place my whole head within the opening so far that I could see him as he lay upon his bed. Ha! - would a madman have been so wise as this

1) When was the narrator kinder to the old man?
2) At what time did the narrator enter the old man's bed-room?
3) What did he thrust in?
4) How much time did he take to place his whole head?
5) What part of speech is 'dark'?

3) Read the following passage and answer the questions given below:

Presently I heard a slight groan, and I knew it was the groan of total terror. It was not a groan of pain or grief - oh no! - it was the low stifled sound that arises from the bottom of the soul when overcharged with awe. I knew the sound well. Many a night, just at midnight, when all the world slept, it has welled up from my own bosom, deepening, with its dreadful echo, the terrors that distracted me. I say I knew it well. I knew what the old man felt, and pitied him, although I chuckled at heart. I knew that he had been lying awake ever since the first slight noise, when he had turned in the bed.

1. What did he hear ?
2. Where did the sound arise?
3. When did he hear the sound?
4. Where did the sound come from?
5. How long had the old man been awake?

4) Read the following passage and answer the questions given below:

But even yet I refrained and kept still. I scarcely breathed. I held the lantern motionless. I tried how steadily I could maintain the ray upon the eye. Meantime the hellish tattoo of the heart increased. It grew quicker and quicker, and louder and louder every instant. The old man's terror must have been extreme! It grew louder, I say, louder very moment! - do you mark me well? I have told you that I am nervous: so I am. And now at the dead hour of night, amid the dreadful silence of that old house, so strange a noise as this excited me to uncontrollable terror. yet, for some minutes longer I refrained and stood still. But the beating grew louder, louder! I thought the heart must burst. And now a new anxiety seized me - the sound would be heard by a neighbor!

1) How did he hold the 'Lantern'?
2) 'It grew louder' – what does 'it' mean?
3) What did the strange noise do?
4) What anxiety did seize him?
5) What part of speech is 'scarcely'?

5. Read the following passage and answer the questions given below:

I then took up three planks from the flooring of the chamber, and deposited all between the scantlings. I then replaced the boards so cleverly, so cunningly, that no human eye-not even his-could have detected anything wrong. There was nothing to wash out no stain of any kind - no blood - spot whatever. I had been too wary for that. A tub had caught all - ha! ha!

When I had made an end of these labors, it was four o'clock - still dark as midnight. As the bell sounded the hour, there came a knocking at the street door. I went down to open it with a light heart - for what had I now to fear? There entered three men, who introduced themselves, with perfect suavity, as officers of the police.

1. Where did he take up three planks?
2. What did he do after depositing the parts of the old man's body?
3. Why was there nothing to wash?
4. At what time did he end his labour?
5. Who were they that entered the house?

6) Read the following passage and answer the above questions

No doubt I know grew very pale; - buit I talked more fluently, and with a heightened voice. Yet the sound increased - and what could I do? It was a low, dull, quick sound -much a sound as a watch makes when enveloped in cotton. I gasped for breath - and yet the officers heard it not. I talked more quickly - more vehemently; but the noise steadily increased. Why would they not be gone? I paced the floor to and fro with heavy strides, as if excited to fury by the observation of the men - but the noise steadily increased. Oh, God; what could I do? I foamed - I raved - I swore!

1) Why did he become pale?
2) How was the sound described?
3) Were the policemen distrubed by the sound?
4) What did he feel while looking at the policemen?
5) What part of speech is 'raved'?

20.10 Answers to Comprehension questions

1)
1. He was dreadfully nervous
2. Sharpened his senses
3. He had never wronged him
4. One of his eyes resembled that of a vulture
5. To rid himself of the eye for ever

2)
1) The whole week before he killed him
2) At about midnight
3) His head
4) An hour
5) Adjective

3)
1) a slight groan
2) from the bottom of the soul
3) at midnight
4) from his own bossom
5) ever since the first slight noise

4)
1) motionless
2) the hellish tattoo of the heart
3) excited him to uncontrollable terror
4) that the sound would be heard by a neighbour
5) Adverb

5)
1) from the flooring of the chamber
2) he replaced the boards carefully
3) a tub had caught all
4) at 4o' clock
5) three police officers

6)
1) he heard the sound of the heart beat of the old man
2) a sound as a watch makes when enveloped in cotton
3) the officers did not hear it
4) he wished they were gone
5) verb

20.11 Sample Questions

1. How does Poe employ "setting" in his short story "The Tell-Tale Heart"?
2. Write an essay on the importance of "setting" in a short story
3. What are the chief elements of a short story?

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