

**READING LITERATURE  
IN ENGLISH**

**II Semester**

**COMMON COURSE IN ENGLISH**

**BA/B Sc/B Com**

*(2012 Admission)*



**UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT**

**SCHOOL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION**

Calicut University P.O. Malappuram, Kerala, India 673 635

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# UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT

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STUDY MATERIAL

Common Course in English

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## ***READING LITERATURE IN ENGLISH***

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*Layout:* *Computer Section, SDE*

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## MODULE ONE: PROSE

### CHAPTER- 1

#### DREAM CHILDREN: A REVERIE

By

CHARLES LAMB

**Learning Objectives:** To enable the students to understand

1. The 18<sup>th</sup> Century English essay.
2. Charles Lamb's style.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

CHARLES LAMB (1775-1834)

Charles Lamb, English essayist and critic, was born in London in 1775. He is best known for his *Essays of Elia*. He studied at Christ's Hospital where he formed a lifelong friendship with Samuel Taylor Coleridge. In 1792 Lamb joined as a clerk at East India House (the headquarters of the East India Company) and worked there until retirement in 1825. In 1796 Lamb's sister Mary killed their mother in a fit of madness.

Lamb reacted with courage and loyalty and took up the responsibility of looking after Mary. Lamb started his writing career as a poet and contributed much to the collections by Coleridge (1796) and Charles Lloyd (1798). *A Tale of Rosamund Gray*, a prose romance, appeared in 1798, and in 1802 he published *John Woodvil*, a poetic tragedy. "The Old Familiar Faces" (1789) is known as his best-known poem. However, "On an Infant Dying As Soon As It Was Born" (1828) remains his finest poetic achievement. In 1807 Lamb and his sister published *Tales from Shakespeare which is* a simplified version of the plays for children, and in 1809 they published *Mrs. Leicester's School*, a collection of stories supposedly told by pupils of a school in Hertfordshire. In 1808 Charles published a children's version of the *Odyssey*, called *The Adventures of Ulysses*.

Lamb's *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets Who Lived About the Time of Shakespeare* is a selection of scenes from Elizabethan dramas. It was published in 1808 and had a considerable influence on the style of 19th-century English verse. Lamb also contributed critical papers on Shakespeare and on William Hogarth to Hunt's *Reflector*. We can say that Lamb's greatest achievements were his commendable letters and the essays that he wrote under the pseudonym Elia for *London Magazine*, which was founded in 1820. His style is notable as it is informal and personal. The main function of this essay was to "create" and delineate the persona of Elia. The essays bring out, with humour and sometimes with pathos, old acquaintances of Lamb. They also

recall scenes from childhood and from later life, and they indulge the author's sense of playfulness and fancy. Lamb's first *Elia* essays were published separately in 1823; a second series appeared, as *The Last Essays of Elia*, in 1833.

## MEANING OF DIFFICULT WORDS

They: elders

Traditionary: about whom people have heard only from others.

Grand-dame :Grandmother

Stretch their imagination.....granddame: To imagine about some grand uncle or grandmother who existed long ago.

My little ones: Addressing the children with love. Here he considers the children to be his own.

Field: Sarah Field, Lamb's grandmother.

They and Papa: Lamb and his children are referred to here.

The ballad of the children in the wood: It refers to one of Percy's *Reliques of Ancient Poetry*, in which the story of two children is told. The children inherited a property from their father. They were under the guardianship of their uncle, who wanted to rob them of their property and he entrusted two ruffians to kill them.

Chimney piece: enclosure guarding the fire place.

Robin Red-breast: Bird known as Robin, because its breast is red in colour.

Of modern invention: Modern style.

With no story up on it: The story of the two children was not written on it.

Upbraiding: reproaching, angry.

Alice put on .....upbraiding: When Lamb related the story of the foolish rich person who transferred the story of the children from the wood carving onto the marble piece upon the chimney, Alice put on an angry look, but her angry look resembled her beautiful mother.

Had only charge of it: Lamb's grandmother was merely the house keeper or the care taker of the mansion and not the mistress of it.

The Abbey: West Minister Abbey where the monarchs, poets, etc. are buried.

Tawdry: showy but worthless.

Concourse: Procession.

For many miles around: Over a long distance.

Psaltery: The book of Psalms.

Testament: The two divisions of the Holy Bible.

Spreads her hands: When Lamb mentions about the testament (Bible) Alice spreads her hands as if in prayer.

Involuntary: Unconsciously.

Here Alice's little right foot...movement: When Lamb mentioned about his grandmother having been a great dancer, immediately Alice felt like dancing and her foot moved unconsciously. Children try to be like their ancestors.

Upon my looking grave: when Charles Lamb put on a serious look and looked towards Alice.

It desisted: The movement of the foot stopped.

Bend her good spirit: make her dejected.

They were still upright: her spirits were cheerful in spite of the great pain of cancer.

Apparition: spirit or ghost.

Gliding up and down: floating in the air.

Here John ...look courageous: The moment Lamb said he could not sleep alone because he was afraid of ghosts, John wanted to look more courageous than Lamb by widening his eyes and expanding his eyebrows.

Busts: statues only up to the chest.

The old marble heads: that is the statue of the old emperors.

Fluttering tapestry: Curtains which were waving in the wall.

Gilding: golden colour.

Nectarines with peaches: different kinds of sweet and juicy fruits.

Melancholy looking yew trees: Yew trees are generally planted in graveyards, and that is why they are treated as symbols of sorrow.

Good for nothing but to look at: Not at all good for eating but merely attractive in appearance.

Basking in the orangery: enjoying the sunlight in the orange grove.

Fancy myself ripening too: Think that I was also one of the oranges and becoming ripe.

Lime: fruits like orange.

Graceful warmth: refreshing heat of the sunlight.

Dace: A kind of fish.

Pike: A kind of fish.

Impertinent frisking: The leaping of the dace is considered impertinent perhaps because dace is a small fish, while pike is a bigger fish.

Bust-idle diversions: Appearing to be busy but in reality purposeless.

Diversion: pastime.

Darted to and fro: Moved suddenly and quickly like an arrow.

Common baits for children: Usual temptations for children.

Slyly: stealthily.

Relinquish: Give up.

Irrelevant: Worthless.

Heightened tone: More emotional voice.

Moping about in solitary corners: Sitting in lonely corners.

Mettlesome: spirited.

An imp no bigger than themselves: a small child looking not bigger than other brothers.

Imp: mischievous child.

Pent up: closed up, hidden.

Make allowances enough: allow sufficient consideration.

Haunted me: constantly occupied my mind.

Crossness: peevish temper.

Here they fell crying: Alice and John were moved by the story of Lamb's brother .

Courted: made love.

Coyness: shyness.

What coyness in maidens: The kind of feelings that are indicated by shyness, hesitation and disappointment in love.

Re-presentment: reappearance.

Receding: disappearing.

Two mournful features: two sad faces.

Which without speech.....effected of speech: The two vanishing faces of John and Alice, even without uttering any words, seemed to speak out.

We are not of Alice nor of thee: We are not children born to Alice and yourself, i.e. we are dream children and not real children.

Lethe: One of the rivers in Hades: The water of the Lethe makes them forget all about their past life i.e. their life on earth and that is why; when people are born on earth again they cannot recollect anything of their earlier existence.

Bachelor chair: chair of the bachelor.

We are only what might have been: We would have been your children if you had married Ann Simmons.

Must wait up on the tedious.....and name: The idea in these lines is that before one is born on earth one has to wait for ages in the other world, on the banks of the river Lethe.

## **SUMMARY OF THE TEXT**



Children are always very curious to know about the past of their elders. They want to know how their elders were when they were children. Lamb's children, Alice and John had the curiosity to know about their great grand mother Field who had lived in Norfolk.

They gather around Charles Lamb with this desire and he begins to tell them that their great-grandmother lived in a very spacious house. On a chimney piece in the house the story of the children in the wood was carved in marble. According to this story the children were killed by their uncle as he was greedy and wanted possession of the wealth these children had inherited from their parents. It was believed that the original incident was also connected with the same house. He told the children that their great grandmother did not own the mansion. She was only entrusted the duty of taking care of the mansion. She was very pious and religious minded lady. She was loved and respected by everyone. After her death the house started falling apart and all its ornaments and statues were taken away by the owner to his new house where it looked out of place. When she died, lots of people had come in for her funeral as she was a very popular lady. In her youth she had a tall, graceful and upright figure and used to be good dancer. At this Alice instinctively made a movement with her foot as if to dance. Mrs. Field, their great grandmother could not continue dancing as she was taken ill with cancer. Although it made her body weak it never weakened her spirit.

Charles then goes on to say that as a child he always looked at the twelve statues of Caesar with great interest which were kept as decorations in the room. The house had a good garden where Lamb used to go for walks. There were fruit trees in the garden but he did not pluck any fruit as it was forbidden and Lamb used to be very obedient child. At this John who had quietly taken a bunch of grapes in his hands quickly replaces it.

Mrs Field liked all her grandchildren but she had special affection for John, Lamb's brother because he was handsome and spirited. He was a good rider and hunter. John was very kind to Charles and once when he had hurt his foot, John carried him around on his shoulders. Later on John too became lame footed but Lamb expresses his regret at not having shown sufficient sympathy or consideration. He remembers with great regret that John's death had not moved Lamb in the beginning but it was later on that Lamb began to miss his brother terribly and realized how much he had loved him from within. Here the children feel sad and tell Lamb not to tell them anything more about their uncle but to tell them about their pretty mother who was now dead.

Lamb had wooed his lady love for nearly seven years. He told them about her modesty and coyness. Alice was looking exactly like her mother. Slowly as he stood gazing both the children grew fainter and they disappeared. They were speechless and seemed to say that there were not his children from Alice but children of Alice and Bartrum. The children were creation of his imagination and they need to wait for years to be born after having crossed the river Lethe. Lamb awoke and found that it was all a dream. He had fallen asleep in his bachelor's arm chair.

### **QUESTIONS FOR REVISION:**

I. Answer the following questions in two or three sentences.

1. Why did the children gather around Charles Lamb?

The children gathered around Lamb to listen to the stories from Lamb's childhood. They wanted to know how Lamb lived and it is with this spirit that they gathered around him.

2. What happened to the children in the ballad?

The two children inherited a property from their father. They were under the guardianship of their Uncle, who wanted to rob them of their property who therefore engaged two ruffians for killing them.

3. How does Lamb describe his grandmother?

Lamb presents his grandmother as an ideal grandmother in an imaginary and inflated way before his "dream children"—she was extremely pious, fearless and compassionate person besides being the best dancer of the area in her youth. She was loved and respected by everybody.

4. The title of the essay is significant. Elucidate.

Charles Lamb entitled the essay "Dream Children" because he never married and never became the father of any children. The children he speaks of in the essay were actually the creations of his imagination or fancy.

5. Whom does Lamb refer to as "faithful Bridget" by side?

Lamb had a sister, Mary Lamb, who did not marry since she had attacks of insanity. She has been referred to here as "faithful Bridget" because she never married and was Lamb's only companion in his life. At the sudden breakdown of his reverie, he finds her seated by his side.

6. What is the most striking feature of the essay and why?

The chief characteristic feature of the essay is the author's mingling of pathos and humour. Lamb begins the essay in somewhat deceptive fashion, describing the incidents, full of humour. But gradually he reduces the tone towards the end describing the tragedies of his personal life.

7. "When he died though he had not been...died great while ago". Explain.

Lamb loved his brother John L— very much. But very shortly after his death it seemed to him that death had created such an immeasurable vacuum in his life that it made impossible for him to comprehend the significance of the difference between life and death.

8. "...such a distance there is betwixt life and death"—Explain the significance of the line in light of the context.

The death of his brother John Lamb forced Lamb to feel the difference between life and death. He understood that death created a permanent absence as the dead cannot be restored to life. Again, death is unknowable and Lamb was forced to reflect on his brother's absence in this way.

9. But John L—(or James Elia) was gone forever”—Who was James Elia? Why does the author say this?

At the end of his day-dreaming Lamb comes back to reality, finds his sister (Bridget) Mary Lamb by his side; but he realises and remembers that his brother James Elia or John Lamb had died and would no more be with them. So he laments his loss thus.

II. Answer the following questions in a paragraph not exceeding 100 words.

10. How has Lamb described his grandmother Mrs. Field?

(Refer to the notes given above.)

III. Answer the following in not more than 300 words.

11. Comment critically on the Lamb's essay, *Dream Children*, a reverie.

(Refer to the notes given above.)

## CHAPTER- 2

### GIVE US A ROLE MODEL

By

**A.P.J. ABDUL KALAM**

**Learning Objectives:** To enable the students to understand

1. The qualities of a role model.
2. To inspire and motivate students.
3. To introduce the passage from our former President's book-*Ignited Minds*.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

##### **DR. A. P. J. ABDUL KALAM: (1931- )**

Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, an Indian scientist and administrator has served as the 11<sup>th</sup> President of India. Kalam was born and raised in Rameswaram, Tamil Nadu. He studied Physics at the St. Joseph's College, Tiruchirapalli and Aerospace Engineering at the Madras Institute of Technology (MIT), Chennai. Before becoming the President of India he used to work with Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) and Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO). The given passage, taken from his book, *Ignited Minds* is a motivating book for the young generation and all those interested in understanding the reason for lagging behind in the race of life. He also gives new ideas and suggestions for enabling India to emerge as a developed country.

#### MEANING OF DIFFICULT WORDS:

Existence: living, presence.

Infinitude: immensity, having no limits.

G8: The Group of Eight is a forum for the governments of the world's largest economies:

France, Germany, Italy, Japan, UK, US, Canada, and Russia

mutually exclusive: different from each other

profusion of: large amount of

Sri Aurobindo: (1872-1950) Indian nationalist, freedom fighter, philosopher, yogi, guru and poet. He had his own vision of human progress and spiritual evolution. His philosophy was based on the dynamic application of spirituality to material life and all its activities. He wrote extensively on the Vedas, Upanishads, and the Gita.

cosmic energy: energy of the universe

asceticism: living without physical pleasures

Education and the teacher-student ... business terms: Nowadays people consider education as a business, as a saleable commodity to make profit.

Wings of Fire: The autobiography of Dr A. P. J. Abdul Kalam. First published in English, the book has been translated into 13 languages apart from Braille and Chinese. The Chinese edition is called Huo Yi.

negativity of bureaucracy: negative attitude of government officials

self- centred policies: Policies for ones own good, without caring about what is happening to others.

Indira Gandhi Canal: The Indira Gandhi Canal is a major step in reclaiming the Thar Desert and checking desertification of fertile areas. It starts from the Punjab and flows into Rajasthan. It provides irrigation facilities to the north-western desert region of Rajasthan. The canal has transformed the barren desert into rich fields. Crops of mustard, cotton and wheat now flourish there.

Justice Ranganath Mishra: The 21st Chief Justice of India, eminent jurist, and parliamentarian, who was also the first chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission of India.

Justice Harihar Mahapatra: A renowned lawyer and former judge of Patna High Court; the author of My Life, My Work, Mahapatra was a cultural icon of Orissa.

Alexis Carrel: (1873-1944) He was a French surgeon and biologist who was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 1912 for his pioneering vascular suturing techniques. (Surgical suture is a device used to hold body tissues together after an injury or surgery)

Man the Unknown: (1935) This is the title of Carrel's book which became a bestseller. It discusses the nature of society in the light of the discoveries in biology, physics, and medicine. It contains his social prescriptions, and he advocates that mankind could better itself by following the guidance of an elite group of intellectuals.

Thirukkural: A Tamil classic. It is a collection of 1330 couplets or Kurals, authored by Thiruvalluvar, a poet who lived between 2nd century BC and 5th century AD. The Thirukkural expounds on various aspects of life. It preaches simplicity and truth throughout its verses.

Light from Many Lamps by Lillian Eichler Watson: (1951) A classic work of inspiration edited with commentary by Watson. It is a storehouse of inspiring passages and quotations, along with brief but stimulating biographies. The selections are from great men such as Alfred Tennyson, Robert Browning, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Abraham Lincoln, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Ralph Waldo Emerson, William Shakespeare, Hippocrates, Saint Paul, Confucius and Henry David Thoreau.

This is a capability only four countries in the world have: The four countries referred to are the US, Russia, China and India. Countries such as the UK, France, Israel, North Korea and Iran also possess missile capabilities.

At the dawn of the new millennium: A working draft of the genome was announced in 2000 and a complete one in 2003.

human genome: Man's hereditary information encoded in DNA and RNA. Started in 1989, the Human Genome Project has already identified 25,00030,000 genes in humans. The information is expected to help scientists in many ways, including in their fight against deadly diseases.

decode: to find the meaning of something that has been written in code; decipher.

Vikram Ambalal Sarabhai: (19191971) An Indian physicist who is regarded as the architect of the Indian space programme.

Ae mere vatan ke logo: O people of my country!

Indomitable Spirit: Spirit that is impossible to be suppressed.

Embodiment: impersonation.

## **SUMMARY OF THE TEXT**

This essay is taken from AP J Abdul Kalam's book *Ignited Minds*; he begins the chapter with a quote of Mahatma Gandhi which highlights the importance of having faith in oneself. It is this faith that makes one capable of doing even what one was not used to doing until then. The author then moves on to a few reflections on his thoughts on having role models. He decides to meet students so that he could ask them of their dreams and tell them that it was perfectly alright to lead a good life, an abundant life full of pleasure and work for that golden era. Dr. Abdul Kalam says that whatever work is done, should be done with the heart because then alone will they be able to spread love and joy around them.

In his meeting with the students of Tripura school where he disused his second vision on transforming India into a developed country a series of questions were asked to him. Of these questions he shares two which he finds interesting. When students asked him where and how to get a role model he tells them to take their parents and teacher as a role model till the age of fifteen. According to Dr. Kalam the full development of a child with a value system can only come from these people. It is the teacher who generates creativity in the child.

Education and the teacher-student relationship should not be seen as business but with the nation's growth in mind. However these qualities have to be nurtured by one-self as no law would bring this into force. To a question asked by another student about terrorists and their nationality, Dr. Abdul Kalam answered that they were Indians who were created through political and economic isolation. He then tells them with great effort the story of the epics-Ramayana and

Mahabharata where the battle took place between good and evil. In all such battles it is Dharma or goodness that wins over evil. On his pilgrimage to the various schools in the country he came across a question from a student from St. Mary's School in Dindigul . The student wanted to know why the President had asked everyone to dream in his book *Wings of Fire*. To this he says that it is dreams that are converted into thoughts which are in turn converted into actions. Followed by this question another student asked who would be the real scientist. To this he answered that a real scientist is one who questions reality and that would be none other than a child.

On Dr. Abdul Kalam's visit to Assam he visited Tez pur where he was being honoured with a doctorate degree. Indomitable Spirit was the theme of his address after which he was asked why the water from river Brahmaputra cannot be diverted into Tamil Nadu or Rajasthan where there is water shortage. To this he answered them that in India Vision 2020 there are many rivers being connected cutting across the state. Another student expressed great displeasure at the ministers visiting close by places and avoiding any sort of interaction with them. At Sri Ramakrishna High School, Bokaro he was asked why there was a desert in Rajasthan. To this he gave the same answer that it will be included in the 2020 development programme. The questions were different and very interesting. Upon releasing his autobiography in Oriya, Dr. Abdul Kalam was asked by the students which were his favourite books that influenced him. He mentioned four books which he held very close to his heart which were

1. The first is *Man the Unknown* by Dr Alexis Carrel, a doctor-turned-philosopher who inspires the reader to become doctors.
2. *Tiruvalluvars Thirukkural*, which provides an excellent code of life.
3. *Many Lamps* by Lillian Eichler Watson, which illuminated his life and
4. *The Holy Qur'an* which is a constant companion.

On another trip to meet the school children in Anand, Gujarat' he was asked a very intelligent question by a clever boy. The boy wanted to know who our enemy was. The answer too came from the same boy. He said it was 'poverty'. It is to this boy the author dedicated this book. However the last question was whether Pakistani weapons were stronger than Indian. It was answered that India can design, develop and produce any type of missile and any type of nuclear weapon. This is a capability only four countries in the world have. The most important question was whether we give our children a role model? According to Kalam, role models can help us focus on what is correct for us as individuals as groups and, of course, as a nation. He gives the example of Dr Vikram Sarabhai whose vision succeeded over three decades through sustained and coordinated achievement at work. He says that role models play a guiding role in our lives. The power of Vikram Sarabhai was such that others took up his vision and completed it long after he was no more. Role models can lead to great success with the inspiration they instil in children.

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**QUESTIONS FOR REVISION:**

I. Answer the following questions in a paragraph not exceeding 100 words.

1. Why did Dr Kalam decide to interact with young students?

Dr Kalam decided to meet students so that he could ask them of their dreams and tell them that it was perfectly alright to lead a good life, an abundant life full of pleasure and work for that golden era.

2. Why does he ask the students to dream?

He asks the students to dream because it is dreams that are converted into thoughts which are in turn converted into actions.

3. What position did Dr. Kalam give to the terrorists?

According to him terrorists are Indians and are created through political and economic isolation. He then tells them with great effort the story of the epics-Ramayana and Mahabharata where the battle took place between good and evil. In all such battles it is Dharma or goodness that wins over evil.

4. What kind of a role model is Vikram Sarabhai?

Dr. Vikram Sarabhai is the best example for a role model given by Dr. Kalam whose vision succeeded over three decades through sustained and coordinated achievement at work. He says that role models play a guiding role in our lives. The power of Vikram Sarabhai was such that others took up his vision and completed it even after his death.

5. What is the role of role models in our life?

It is the role models who inspire the youth and set an example before them. Role models can help us focus on what is correct for us as individuals, as groups and as a nation.

II. Answer the following questions in a paragraph not exceeding 100 words.

6. Who can be set as the best role model in childhood?

(Refer to the notes given above).

7. What is the importance of dreaming in life, according to Kalam?

(Refer to the notes given above).

8. What are the four books that shaped Dr Kalam's life, and how?

(Refer to the notes given above).

III. Answer the following in not more than 300 words.

9. Children should have good role models. How does Dr. Kalam justify this statement in the chapter 'Give us a Role Model'?

(Refer to the notes given above).



## CHAPTER-3

### TRAVEL BY TRAIN

By

**J.B. PRIESTLEY**

**Learning Objectives:** To enable the students to understand

1. The informal style of Priestley.
2. The humorous description of the different kinds of commuters in a train.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

##### **J.B .PRIESTLEY: (1894-1984)**

John Boynton Priestley, the British novelist and playwright has written a number of essays. Established as a prose stylist, J.B. Priestley's works are noted for the person warmth and literary informality. *Apes and Angels*, *Journey Down a Rainbow* and *Papers from Lilliput* are collections of his essays. The speciality of Priestley's works is the relaxed light hearted tone and the friendly atmosphere in which communication becomes easier. His ideas support the egalitarian ideology of mutual respect and tolerance. He does not estrange the reader from the idea being discussed in his essays with stiffness and formality in the usage of English language.

#### MEANING OF DIFFICULT WORDS:

**An English man:** Priestley's picture of the English as a self-cantered nation, but willing to laugh at its own eccentricities.

**Hearth:** the area around the fireplace, which serves as centre for the family life.

**Corporal :** of the body.

**Creature:** a person of a special kind.

**Furies:** outbreaks of anger.

**Roaring:** to a very great degree.

**Churning:** moving about violently.

**Black murder:** very strong and hostile feelings.

**"...bitter business..." :** a very frightening sight. Quoted from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

**Quake:** shake or tremble violently because of fear.

Rouse: make more active, interested.

Rasping: grating, having a rough annoying effect.

Face of brass: unashamed and self confident look.

Bustling: busily active, often with much noise.

Prostrate: having lost all strength, courage and ability to act( as a result of harassment).

Maddening: extremely annoying.

Defiantly: boldly, aggressively.

unfortunate: a victim of his own sense of decency ( because he vacated his seat for her).

Whining: forced into a narrow or limited space.

Simmering: in a state of subdued excitement or anger.

Chattels: movable articles of personal property.

Disdaining: refusing to do something because of pride.

Eccentrics: people who differ in behaviour from what is usual or socially accepted, in a way that is strange and amusing.

Cast about: search or look for in all directions.

Tattered: old and torn.

Mournful: sad looking.

Pastry: small sweet cake.

Fastidious: very careful, fussy; difficult to please.

Daubing: covering with something soft and sticky.

Cranks: persons with very unusual and strongly-held ideas, often concerning food and health.

Bleakest: extremely cold and cheerless.

Sultriest: very hot, airless, uncomfortable.

Draughts: currents of cold air flowing through a room.

Fathom: get at the true meaning.

Hurtled: moved or rushed with great speed.

Shot: moved very quickly or suddenly.

Seven of Ephesus: Seven noble Christians of Ephesus about whom there is a legend. They refused to offer sacrifices to idols, were condemned to death, hid themselves in a cave, fell asleep for 187 years with the help of Divine Providence, but woke up when they were eventually discovered.

Lethe: Oblivion( Greek), is the name of a mythological river supposed to cause forgetfulness in souls of the dead before being reincarnated.

Compose: make oneself calm and quiet.

Gorgeous: extremely enjoyable.

Blankly: in an empty or expressionless manner, without interest or understanding.

Counting our fingers: looking at our hands when there is nothing else to do.

Ready for pipe: willing to join a smoking session.

Crack: a clever quick joke or remark.

Confidential stranger: stranger who is willing to share his secrets with anyone.

Continent: Europe, without the British isles.

Dull dog: a person who is very dull.

Rides some wretched old hobbyhorse to death: talks interminably of things interesting only to himself.

Tobacco- stained: with the discoloured teeth of habitual smokers.

Hunter: a watch with a metal cover on its front.

Carriage: a railway passenger vehicle.

Ancient Mariner: a sailor in Coleridge's poem of that name, who has a glittering eye and tells a bewitching tale.

## **SUMMARY OF THE TEXT**

'On Travel by Train' begins with a rather humorous but critical sketch of the English eccentricities. He has carefully chosen the words to stress on the element of comedy in the traditional assumptions and the meaningless pretensions of self-righteousness put on by the general public. As we read we come across the hearth and home, corporal life, roaring passions, frozen exterior, neighbourly fellow, black murder, mere sight and devils of wrath. In the first paragraph

itself, the author humorously describes the various expressions usually seen on the face of the commuters in a train journey. They work up a resoundingly hollow ring. Conventional affectations, including our own, are subjected to ridicule. Self-mockery is an effective technique of reducing the sharpness of the satire. It nullifies the offense which would have otherwise hurt many of us who are unflatteringly portrayed: the large middle-aged woman, people who bring too much luggage, the ill mannered consumers of food and drink, the noisy and untidy children, the fussy ones with obsessions of the window, the innocents travelling on wrong trains, the sleepers who know where to wake up, the commentators on punctuality of trains. Amidst all these descriptions we recognize ourselves and even enjoy being stigmatized in this way. However to write like this, it is necessary to have an extensive vocabulary and a precise understanding of nuances and connotations of words. To strive for such control over the finer aspects of English usage is a worthwhile aim for anyone aspiring to improve communicative skills.

### **QUESTIONS FOR REVISION:**

I. Answer the following questions in two or three sentences.

1. Explain, the Englishman away from hearth and home.

The English man when away from the comfort zone of his house is a different being. He is a person who is short tempered and is likely to react suddenly to any provocation that comes his way.

2. Who was the offensive woman traveller? What was peculiar about her?

The most offensive traveller according to the author is the middle aged woman who has a rough voice and a disgustingly self confident look. She would enter the smoking compartment with the porter. She would be shouting and attracting the attention of others. Then with a dog not any better than her she would manage to get seat making the journey horrible for the rest of the travellers.

3. Describe the children and cranks as travelling companions.

Children do not make good travelling companions as they whimper or howl through out the journey. They otherwise spend time covering their face with chocolate or try to climb out of the window. Cranks on the other hand would not allow anyone to touch the window on a very hot and humid day for fear of drought and demand for the windows to be opened on the bleakest day.

4. Explain the travellers on the wrong train.

The author finds the travellers on the wrong train more interesting as they are the innocent ones who do not bother to check the time –table or take the advice of any official, instead they would get into the first train that comes on the plat form and trust their luck.

5. What does the essayist say about sleeping in railway carriages?

The author envies the travellers who sleep in railway carriages as they are oblivious of the boring journey.

II. Answer the following questions in a paragraph not exceeding 100 words.

6. Queer shaped packages and food consumption on trains.  
(Refer to the notes given above).

III. Answer the following in not more than 300 words.

7. Write an essay on the type of travellers criticized by Priestley.(Refer to the notes given above).

## CHAPTER-4

### KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM

By

**BERTRAND RUSSELL**

**Learning Objectives:** To enable the students to understand

1. The difference between knowledge and wisdom according to Russell.
2. Russell's style of presenting ideas.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

##### **BERTRAND RUSSELL: (1872-1970)**

Bertrand Arthur William Russell was born at Trelleck on 18th May, 1872. He was a British [philosopher](#), [logician](#), [mathematician](#), [historian](#), and [social critic](#). He was born in [Monmouthshire](#), into one of the most prominent aristocratic families in Britain. His parents were Viscount Amberley and Katherine, daughter of 2nd Baron Stanley of Alderley. Instead of being sent to school he was taught at home by governesses and tutors, and thus he acquired a good knowledge of French and German. In 1890 he got enrolled at Trinity College, Cambridge. After obtaining a First Class with distinction in philosophy, he was elected a Fellow of his college in 1895.

In 1903 he wrote his first important book, *The Principles of Mathematics*, and with his friend Dr. Alfred Whitehead proceeded to develop and extend the mathematical logic of Peano and Frege. From time to time he abandoned philosophy for politics. In 1910 he was appointed lecturer at Trinity College. Russell was elected a fellow of the Royal Society in 1908, and re-elected a fellow of Trinity College in 1944. He was awarded the Sylvester medal of the Royal Society, 1934, the de Morgan medal of the London Mathematical Society in the same year, the Nobel Prize for Literature, 1950.

#### MEANING OF DIFFICULT WORDS:

Surpass: go beyond

Correlative: comparable

Its due weight: the importance it deserves

Unintended: not meant

Spectacular: impressive

Disinterested: having no selfish motives

Powerful lunatics: powerful rulers who are mad enough to use atomic weapons. Russel regards anyone willing to use these weapons as lunatic or mad

Pursuit of knowledge: search for knowledge

Comprehensive: all inclusive

Destroying medium of passions: personal emotions which made it impossible for them to see facts properly

Include: instil

Standard bearer: flag bearer

Ends: goals

Emancipation: freedom

Attainable: which can be attained or achieved

Inherently: by its own nature

Philosopher's stone: an imaginary stone which was supposed to have the power of turning all other metals to gold.

Elixir of life: an imaginary liquid capable of prolonging life indefinitely and transmuting metals.

Conferred upon: given to

Provided with persuasive capacity: capable to persuade or convince.

Tyranny of the here and now: the hold of the immediate circumstances

Egoism: self-interest

Exhorted: urged

Precept: principle

Exemplified: illustrated

The Samaritan: the man who helps the wounded traveller in the story of the good Samaritan in the Holy Bible. The world has come to refer anyone who is kind and generous to the needy

Parable: a little story with a moral lesson

Induce: persuade

Abandon: give up

Bondage: slavery

Compatible with: in keeping with

Bear out: support

Beneficent: helpful

Customary: habitual

Supplemented: added

Augments: increases

## **SUMMARY OF THE TEXT:**

*Knowledge and Wisdom* defines the various ways of achieving Wisdom. He laments that though vast knowledge has been acquired; there has been no corresponding increase in wisdom. Russell defines wisdom by telling us about things which contribute to wisdom. The first is a sense of proportion. It is the capacity to consider all important factors in a problem carefully. Specialization makes it difficult. For example scientists discover new medicines but they do not know what impact these medicines will have on the life of the people. The medicines may reduce the infant death rate. But it may lead to increased population. In poor countries it may lead to shortage of food. If there are more people, it may lower the standard of life. The knowledge of the composition of the atom could be misused by a lunatic to destroy the world. Knowledge without wisdom can be harmful. It should be combined with the total needs of mankind. Even complete knowledge is not enough. It should be related with certain knowledge of the purpose of life. The study of history can illustrate it. For example Hegel wrote with great knowledge about history, but made the Germans believe that they were a master race. It led to war. It is necessary therefore to combine knowledge with feelings. Men who have knowledge and have no feelings lack wisdom. We need wisdom both in public and private life. We need wisdom to decide the goal of our life. We need it to free ourselves from personal prejudices. We may pursue even a novel thing unwisely if it is too big to achieve. People have wasted their lives in search of the 'philosopher's stone' or the 'elixir for life'. They were not pragmatic. They were looking for simple solutions to the complex problems of mankind. Man may attempt to achieve the impossible, he may do harm to himself in the process.

In personal life, says Russell, wisdom is needed to avoid dislike for one another. Two persons may remain enemies because of their prejudice. One may dislike the other for imaginary faults. If they can be told that we all have flaws then they may become friends. Russell believes in thought reasonable persuasion. We can avoid hatred if we are wise. Wisdom lies in freeing ourselves from the control of our sense organs. Our ego develops through our senses. We cannot be free from the sense of sight, sound and touch. We know the world primarily through our senses. As we grow we discover that there are other things also. We start recognizing them. Thus we give up thinking of ourselves alone. We start thinking of other people and grow wiser. We give up on our ego. It is difficult to completely get rid of selfishness, but we can think of things beyond our immediate surroundings. Wisdom comes when we start loving others. Russell feels that wisdom can be taught as a goal of education. The message in the parable of the Good Samaritan is that we should love our neighbour whether friend or foe. Many a time we miss the message in this parable because we fail to love those who cause harm to the society. The only way out is through understanding and not hatred. In brief Russell tells us not to hate anybody. The author draws out examples from the history of Queen Elizabeth I, Henry IV and Abraham Lincoln, who were free from the errors committed by other eminent people in the past.

The danger of hatred and narrow-mindedness can be pointed out in the course of giving knowledge. Russell feels knowledge and wisdom can be combined in the scheme of education. People should be educated to see things in relation to other things of the world. They should be encouraged to think of themselves as world citizens.



**QUESTIONS FOR REVISION:**

IV. Answer the following questions in two or three sentences.

1. What does Russell comment about the increase in Knowledge and wisdom in our age?

The increase in knowledge in our age has been unprecedented but this has not taken place in proportion with the increase in wisdom.

2. According to Russell which is the first of the many factors that contribute to Wisdom?

According to Russell it is the sense of proportion or comprehensiveness of outlook. When we deal with a problem we must consider all the possible aspects of it and give each of them the importance it deserves.

3. Why is a sense of proportion particularly different in our time?

Every issue has become highly complex because of the rapid growth of specialized knowledge. It is almost impossible to anticipate the results of an issue.

4. What is the unintended result of the success of researches in scientific medicine?

It is the researches in scientific medicine that enabled us to control child mortality. This led to unintended result of raising the population and lowering the living standards in many parts of the world.

V. Answer the following questions in a paragraph not exceeding 100 words.

5. How does Russell differentiate knowledge and wisdom?

(Refer to the notes given above)

VI. Answer the following in not more than 300 words.

6. Why does Russell say that the world needs wisdom like it has never needed it before?

(Refer to the notes given above)

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## MODULE TWO: POETRY

### CHAPTER-5

### TRUE LOVE

By

**WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE**

**Learning Objectives:** To introduce to the students

1. The Sonnet form.
2. Shakespearean sonnets ,their style, theme and structure

#### ABOUT THE POET

William Shakespeare (1564-1616), the greatest poet and playwright in English, was born in Stratford-upon-Avon in England. He has to his credit 36 plays, 154 sonnets and four long poems. He began writing in 1589 at the age of 25 but most of his plays were published seven years after his death. His poems and plays still enjoy universal appeal. Ben Jonson, his contemporary, has rightly said that, Shakespeare, the Bard of Avon, was "not of an age, but for all ages." His poems and works are of universal appeal. The major themes of his sonnets are love, beauty, morality and time.

The sonnets of Shakespeare are very popular, and a few of them, such as Sonnet 18 ('Shall I compare thee to a summer's day'), Sonnet 116 (let me not to the marriage of true minds'), and Sonnet 73 ('That time of year thou mayst in me behold'), are among the most widely-read poems in all of English literature. Majority of the sonnets (1-126) are addressed to 'a fair youth', with whom the speaker of the poem is emotionally bound. The final sonnets (127-154) are addressed to 'the dark lady', a raven-haired temptress.

#### MEANING OF DIFFICULT WORDS

Impediments: a hindrance obstruction or obstacle.

Let me not ... impediments: Here the poet says that he does not find any reason why two true lovers should not be joined together in marriage.

true minds: Two hearts that love each other and are constant and sincere in their love.

Love is not love...find.: True love is that which does not change with the changing circumstances.

Alters: changes

Bends: moves from a spot, deviates.

the remover to remove: when a lover turns unfaithful, insincere.

O no! it is an ever-fixed mark: Oh No, it does not change. It is like an ever fixed mark, a lighthouse.

looks on tempests: sees tempests, with stands hard times.

the star: like the North Pole star that directs the ship.

wandering bark: A ship lost without knowing its direction in the sea.

Worths: value

Tempest: a violent windstorm

Bark: a ship.

height be taken: its altitude be measured.

Love's not Times fool: Love is not at the mercy of time.

rosy lips and cheeks: beauty is not something that remains constant. It dies with time.

bending sickles compass come: beauty comes within the compass of time's sickle.

Doom: death or ruin

Compass: range.

Love alters ... edge of doom: Love does not change with time and stays alive in all seasons.

bears it: carries it

upon me proved: If I am proved wrong, or what I said is proved wrong.

never writ: Then I am ready to take back all that I have written.

nor no man ever loved: and that no man has ever truly loved.

Writ: wrote.

## **SUMMARY OF THE POEM**

Shakespeare's sonnet 116 was first published in 1609. Its structure and form are a typical example of the Shakespearean sonnet. A Shakespearean sonnet unlike a traditional sonnet is divided into three quatrains that mean a stanza containing four lines and a concluding couplet that means a small stanza of two lines. The poet begins by stating he should not stand in the way of true love. Love cannot be true if it changes for any reason. Love is supposed to be constant, through any difficulties. In the sixth line, a nautical reference is made, alluding that love is much like the North Star to sailors. Love should also not fade with time; instead, true love lasts forever.

A Sonnet is a fourteen line verse form usually having one of the several conventional rhyme schemes. It was introduced by an Italian poet named Petrarch in the fourteenth century. A Petrarchian Sonnet has two important parts. The first part is called Octave which consists of eight lines. The second part Sestet contains six lines. The Shakespearean sonnet is slightly different from this pattern. It contains three quatrains (four lines) and a concluding couplet (two lines). The concluding couplet plays a significant role in reaffirming the message of the poem and establishing its tone.

Sonnet 116 is about love in its most ideal form. It is praising the glories of lovers who have come to each other freely, and enter into a relationship based on trust and understanding. The first four lines reveal the poet's pleasure in love that is constant and strong, and will not "alter when it alteration finds." The following lines proclaim that true love is indeed an "ever-fix'd mark" which will survive any crisis. In lines 7-8, the poet claims that we may be able to measure love to some degree, but this does not mean we fully understand it. Love's actual worth cannot be known – it remains a mystery. The remaining lines of the third quatrain (9-12), reaffirm the perfect nature of love that is unshakeable throughout time and remains so "even to the edge of doom", or death.

In the final couplet, the poet declares that, if he is mistaken about the constant, unmovable nature of perfect love, then he must take back all his writings on love, truth, and faith. Moreover, he adds that, if he has in fact judged love inappropriately, no man has ever really loved, in the ideal sense that the poet professes. The details of Sonnet 116 are best described by Tucker Brooke in his acclaimed edition of Shakespeare's poems.

### **QUESTIONS FOR REVISION:**

I. Answer the following questions in two or three sentences.

1. What is the principle theme of the poem true love?

The principal theme of Sonnet 116 is that love is constant despite the destructive power of Time and chance.

2. "Let me not to the marriage of true minds/ admit impediments". Explain.

The phrase "true minds" suggests an elevated rather than physical love. With a love of this kind, no obstacles will be able to create a gap between the lovers or to reduce the depth of their commitment.

3. What does the poet mean by the lines "If this be error and upon me proved, I never writ, nor no man ever loved"?

The poet here means that if he is proved wrong about his thoughts about the stability of love, then he is ready to take back all he has written and no man has ever truly loved.

4. Explain the line "It is the star to every wandering bark, whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken"?

The Poet here means that love is the guiding North Star to every lost ship, whose value cannot be calculated, although its altitude can be measured.

II. Answer the following questions in a paragraph not exceeding 100 words.

5. What is a Sonnet and how do the Shakespearean sonnets differ from the petrarchan sonnets?

A Sonnet is a fourteen line verse form usually having one of several conventional rhyme schemes. It was introduced by an Italian poet called Petrarch in the fourteenth century. A Petrarchian Sonnet has two important parts. The first part is called Octave which consists of eight lines. The second part Sestet contains six lines. The Shakespearean sonnet is slightly different from this pattern. It contains three quatrains and a concluding couplet. The concluding couplet plays a significant role in reaffirming the message of the poem and establishing its tone.

6. Elucidate different aspects of love that Shakespeare deals with in his poem “True love”?

Shakespeare in his Sonnet 114 highlights the importance of true love. In order to do this, he compares it with mundane love which will disappear in the course of time and will be short lived. Love cannot be true if it changes for any reason. Love is supposed to be constant, through any difficulties. In the sixth line, a nautical reference is made, alluding that love is much like the North Star to sailors. Love should also not fade with time; instead, true love lasts forever. The poem is about love in its most ideal form. It is praising the glories of lovers who have come to each other freely, and enter into a relationship based on trust and understanding. In the initial part of the poem, the poet stresses the compelling quality of the emotional union of "true minds. Love is defined in vague terms in the first quatrain.

- III. Answer the following in not more than 300 words.

7. Prepare an appreciation for the poem True Love.

(Refer to the notes given above.)

## CHAPTER-6

### A POISON TREE

By

WILLIAM BLAKE

**Learning Objectives:** To introduce to the students

1. The mystic poet, William Blake
2. Human nature as presented in “A Poison tree”.

#### ABOUT THE POET

##### WILLIAM BLAKE: (1757-1827)

A great poet, painter and engraver William Blake has written poems that has earned him the title ‘Prophetic poet’. His works were mostly philosophical in nature. Blake was greatly influenced by the Bible and it is reflected in his works as well. Blake was born in Soho, London. He had left school at the age of ten and attended Henry Pars Drawing Academy for five years. As a child he was greatly influenced by the works of Raphael, Michelangelo, Giulio, Romano and Dürer. His famous works include ‘Europe’, ‘America’, ‘Visions of the Daughters of Albion’ and ‘The Book of Urizen’. He was aware of the social injustices of his time which drove him to write Songs of Experience in 1794. Before this he had written songs of Innocence in which he view at the world from the perspective of a child who finds joy in the beauty of nature. His poems had the recurring theme of good and evil, heaven and hell, Knowledge and innocence which was of great inspiration for the romantic poets. Blake voiced strongly against the conventions of his time and believed in sexual and racial equality.

#### MEANING OF DIFFICULT WORDS

Poison tree: a metaphor for anger.

Foe: enemy.

Wrath: anger.

Watered in fears: let the anger grow in fear of the enemy.

Sunned: exposed to sunlight so that the poison tree can grow.

Sunned it with smiles: Let anger grow with fake smiles, pretending to be good.

Bore: carrying it within one self.

Night and morning with my tears: Thinking day and night about the wrongs done by the enemy to oneself and spending night and day in self pity, crying over it.

Apple: the fruit on the poison tree that looks bright from the outside but is full of poison inside.

Wiles: tricks

veiled: covered

deceitful: false, fraudulent

deceitful wiles: plotting against the enemy with tricks.

Pole: north Pole star.

outstretched: lying.

Beheld: see, observe.

When the night had veil'd the pole: here the poet means to keep the enemy unaware of his plans to cheat him.

### **SUMMARY OF THE POEM**

A Poison Tree is taken from the collection of Blake's poem titled *Songs of Experience* which was published in the year 1793. His works focus on the theme of human nature. In his *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience* he tries to bring a contrast between the innocence seen in a child and how this change as the child matures and learns the ways of the world which brings with it the harsh reality known as experience. It is a very simple poem that speaks volumes on human nature, the habit of keeping anger in one's mind and behaving in a good manner externally. The poem consists of four sets of rhyming couplets.

Blake can be called as a mystic poet. He reveals in his poetry his soul's relationship with God. He thinks deeply of man's purpose on this earth. He tries to answer the question of why and from where has man's soul originated. His mysticism was a realisation of the present. 'The kingdom of Heaven is with you' such a realization is the object of Blake's mysticism. This is the practical side of his mysticism.

The poem highlights the need for letting lose suffocating emotions like anger which if kept inside your mind keeps growing everyday. The poem starts with the poet telling us about how he expressed the anger to his friend and got rid of it. But when it came to his enemy he kept it within himself and it grew inside him to such an extent that he later had no control over it. Here he has used the metaphor of a tree to show how he watered his 'wrath' with 'fears' and 'sunned it with smiles' and 'soft deceitful wiles' letting it grow into a 'poison tree' as he calls it which bears a fruit as well. This shiny fruit when consumed by the greedy enemy leads to his death. However we can see that there is irony in the poem because although he says not to nurture the wrath for your enemy in the mind he seems to be glad in the end to see the death of his enemy.

Lines 1-8

The original title of the poem was "Christian Forbearance". This title hints that the poem is against self-restraint. Blake believes that it is wrong to resist the natural impulses of man because restraint produces the apple of hate which destroys friendship and leads to a strained relationship.

The speaker was able to end his hatred for his friend as he had given an outlet to his emotions. But when he had a problem with his enemy he did not express it and as a result it

accumulated. Here too it would not have such intensity if he had expressed it to his enemy. Instead the speaker caressed and nursed his emotions. He kept imagining that his enemy would do him harm and he lived in suffering. This increased his agony and watered his emotions of anger against his enemy. He then put on a mask of friendship towards his enemy. He pretended to be good to him and smiled at him whenever he saw him. He was a hypocrite and gave his enemy the impression that he was a friend. But in real he was actually nurturing the feeling of hatred inside.

Lines 9-16

Blake, through this poem tries to bring out his idea of free expression of emotions. Blake was against suppression of feelings and bringing about a control of one's behaviour which is necessary in our society. As part of the hypocrisy which is promoted in our society people refuse to freely express their feelings to a friend even when it is unpleasant. Hypocrisy teaches us to put up a smile on our face and to go on nurturing anger inside. According to Blake this kind of falsehood, hypocrisy and selfishness replace sincerity, frankness and truthfulness in experience.

The speaker's feeling of anger and enmity went on growing inwardly but outwardly he put up a pleasant face. His anger finally bore a fruit in the form of a bright apple. His enemy was greatly attracted to this apple and tried to steal this fruit from the speaker because he too had inwardly remained hostile to the speaker. The enemy slowly entered into the garden of the speaker and stole the apple. He ate it without realizing the consequences. The apple being poisonous leads to the death of the enemy. In the morning the speaker was happy to see the enemy lying dead under the tree. He had succeeded in his intention. The speaker's fake friendship had tricked the enemy into believing that he was true at heart and had cheated the enemy. Feeling safe the enemy had tried to cheat the speaker but he fell for the speaker's trap and met with a disastrous end.

### QUESTIONS FOR REVISION:

I. Answer the following questions in two or three sentences.

1. How did the poet make the poison tree grow?

The speaker caressed and nursed his emotions towards his enemy. He kept imagining that his enemy would do him harm and he lived in suffering. This increased his agony and watered his emotions of anger against his enemy. He then put on a mask of friendship towards his enemy. He pretended to be good to him and smiled at him whenever he saw him.

2. What happens when the enemy steals into the poet's garden?

The enemy slowly entered into the garden of the speaker and stole the apple. He ate it without realizing the consequences. The apple being poisonous leads to the death of the enemy. In the morning the speaker was happy to see the enemy lying dead under the tree.

3. What is the poison tree?



According to the poet the poison tree is the hatred and grudge nurtured inside one's mind towards the enemy. It remains there and grows in size to bear the poisonous fruit that is harmful for the enemy and can even lead to their death.

II. Answer the following questions in a paragraph not exceeding 100 words.

4. How does the poet react to his friend? How is it different from the emotions he has for his enemy?

The speaker was able to end his hatred for his friend as he had given an outlet to his emotions. But when he had a problem with his enemy he did not express it and as a result it accumulated. Here too it would not have such intensity if he had expressed it to his enemy. Instead the speaker caressed and nursed his emotions. He kept imagining that his enemy would do him harm and he lived in suffering. This increased his agony and watered his emotions of anger against his enemy. He then put on a mask of friendship towards his enemy. He pretended to be good to him and smiled at him whenever he saw him. He was a hypocrite and gave his enemy the impression that he was a friend. But he was actually nurturing the feeling of hatred inside.

III. Answer the following in not more than 300 words.

5. Do you think it is good to nurture anger for your enemy? What moral does the poem teach? How is it relevant in today's world?

(Refer to the notes given above.)

6. Attempt a critical appreciation of the poem 'A Poison Tree'.

(Refer to the notes given above.)

## CHAPTER 7

### LUCY GRAY

By

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

**Learning Objectives:** To introduce to the students

1. Wordsworth's romantic poetry.
2. The lyrical quality of romantic poems.

#### ABOUT THE POET

##### WILLIAM WORDSWORTH: (1770 –1850)

Wordsworth, popularly known as the poet of nature was born in the Lake District in northwest England. He was the major English romantic poet who launched the Romantic age in English Literature in 1798 with the publication of the *Lyrical Ballads* which is a joint work of Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Wordsworth wrote many of his greatest poems while he stayed with his sister Dorothy close to Coleridge. According to Wordsworth, poetry is philosophical of all writings. He was given the civil list pension by the government in 1842. He was honoured with title of poet laureate in 1843 which he held till his death in 1850. *The Prelude* is considered as his masterpiece which was published posthumously. His other famous works are [\*Lines written a few miles above Tintern Abbey\*](#), [\*Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood\*](#) and [\*Poems in Two Volumes\*](#).

#### MEANING OF DIFFICULT WORDS

Solitary: alone.

Dwelt: lived.

Moor: moorlands, it is an extensive uncultivated land, a heath.

Fawn: a young deer in its first year.

Tis scarcely afternoon: It is hardly afternoon.

Yonder: over there.

Lantern: lamp.

Blither: happy.

Roe: deer.

With many a wanton stroke: fast footsteps, walking hastily. The girl's movement is referred to the quick movement of a happy deer.

Mother spied: mother looked, inspected.

Hawthorn- hedge: a fence of thorny bushes, a barrier made of small trees of thorns growing close to each other.

O'er rough and smooth: Over the rough and smooth path along the mountains.

The Wretched parents: The worried parents, the worried expression on the parent's face.

Thence: as a consequence, therefore.

Furlong: an eighth of a mile.

Plank: a long rectangular piece of wood.

### **SUMMARY OF THE POEM**

Lucy Gray is a poem published in the second edition of the *Lyrical Ballads*. This poem is written in blank verse imitating the 18<sup>th</sup> century ballad form. It is not one of the Lucy poems written by Wordsworth. It relates the incident of a little girl who went out one evening into the snow storm and never returned. This poem was written based on a real life incident heard from his sister Dorothy. The poem, according to Mary Moorman is "the most haunting of all his ballads of childhood". The poet has portrayed Lucy Gray as a child of nature. The poem is written lyrically and brings the picture of the valley and the countryside into our mind as we read. Through the poem the poet tries to convey the message that man's intervention in nature kills it. The line that says 'The footmarks ... were none' not only implies the death of Lucy Gray but the symbolic death of nature by man's encroachment on it. The tragic tone of the poem leaves a lasting impression in the mind of the reader.

In this poem the poet depicts the life of a lonely girl who lived in a house in a valley with her father and mother. As she did not have friends she spent most of her time playing alone or helping her parents. It is interesting to read in the poem that one may be able to see a fawn or a rabbit while passing through the valley but cannot catch a glance of Lucy Gray. The poem then progresses by narrating the sad incident of Lucy Gray's death. Lucy Gray was with her father at home. Her mother had gone to town. Her father asks her to take the lantern and bring home her mother safely before evening as there were signs of an impending storm. She leaves for town but gets caught in the storm and loses her way. However, her mother reaches home alone and the worried parents search the entire valley for Lucy till night but she is not found. The next morning they search near a bridge which is not very far away from their house and finally see the small foot prints of their daughter. They trace the trail of Lucy's footsteps which lead them to the middle of a little bridge after which the foot prints disappear and they conclude that she must have fallen in the

crevice and died. But it is believed that a solitary song is heard in the winds which echo from the mountains. While some think that she died on the day of the storm others say that she lives as part of nature. Towards the end of the poem he tells us that Lucy exists not in the family but in the arms of nature and sings a solitary song which whistles in the wind.

### **QUESTIONS FOR REVISION:**

I. Answer the following questions in two or three sentences

1. What did Lucy's father ask her to do?

Lucy's father asked her to go and fetch her mother from work because a heavy storm was approaching.

2. And thence they saw the Bridge of wood,

A furlong from their door. Explain .

After her mother returned home from work both her parents goes out in the snow to look for Lucy and traces her foot steps to a bridge which is not far away from home.

3. Did Lucy Gray have any friends to play with? How do you know? Which lines of the poem tells you this?

He following tell us about Lucy's friends. The solitary Child.

No Mate, no comrade Lucy knew

4. Why does the poet call Lucy Gray as 'solitary child'?

The poet calls Lucy the 'solitary Child' because she is always seen playing alone in the company of nature.

5. Why was it believed that Lucy Gray continues to live?

Towards the end of the poem, Wordsworth tells us that Lucy continues to exist not in the family but in the arms of nature and sings a solitary song which whistles in the wind.

II. Answer the following questions in a paragraph not exceeding 100 words.

6. The poem is very picturesque. Which are the words that give the poem this quality?

( Refer to the notes given above.)

7. Lucy Gray is a poem that appeals to the senses. Explain.

( Refer to the notes given above.)

III. Answer the following in not more than 300 words.

8. Write a critical appreciation of the poem.

( Refer to the notes given above.)

## CHAPTER -8

### THE ROAD NOT TAKEN

By

ROBERT FROST

#### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. To make students familiar with poems of philosophical kind.
2. To introduce modern American poetry to the students.
3. To make them familiar with Robert Frost and his complex world of poetry.

#### ABOUT THE POET

ROBERT FROST: (1874 – 1963)

Robert Lee Frost is a well known American poet who has earned the attention of readers worldwide with his philosophical and realistic depiction of rural life. He was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for poetry four times in 1924, 1931, 1937 and 1943. His first book of poetry was published in England in 1913. No American publisher had accepted it. He writes about familiar, ordinary things in a very simple yet thought provoking manner. Frost's poems actually talk about ideas and thoughts that are deep, not ordinary. The poems talk about truth; they teach you wisdom. Frost is a poet whose style is as fine as a goldsmith's skill. His poems are delightful to read. Frost himself has said, that for him, a poem "begins in delight and ends in wisdom."

#### MEANING OF DIFFICULT WORDS

Diverged: went into different directions.

one less travelled: The road not which has not been travelled by many people.

wood: forest

And sorry I could not travel both: Here the poet means to say that he could not travel both the roads and that he has to chose one.

Yellow wood: The forest looked golden in the morning light.

Wear: to reduce the quality through overuse.

Black: implies that the leaves on the road are black on account of the footsteps of the people who used the road before him.

Yet knowing how way leads on to way: One way lead to another and yet another and keeps progressing.

I shall be telling this with a sigh: The poet is telling that some day he would talk about the decision he had made of choosing to go along the way not many people have gone.

Undergrowth: low growing plants or shrubs.

I doubted ... come back: he has doubts of whether he would be able to come back once he has gone far ahead.

And that has made all the difference: The decision that he took has made a big change in his life. The poet could be referring to the decision he has taken in his own life. When he found that his poems were not well received and appreciated in America he had decided to shift to England where his poems became famous. This line is very philosophical as it tells about the crucial decisions one has to make in life.

### **SUMMARY OF THE POEM**

The poem was first published in the August 1915 issue of the *Atlantic Monthly*. *The Road Not Taken* talks about a problem that many of us face while taking a decision be it about life or that of choosing a career. Frost's poem uses the image of two roads that separate, so that the traveller has to choose between one and the other. Which road would be better? Nobody can tell until the end of the road is reached. The end of the road is of course, the consequence of the decision. Was the choice wise? Is there any regret? These are the questions that the poem asks. These are also the questions that you may one day ask yourself. Your answer too will depend on the road you chose in life. The poem is made up of four stanzas of five lines each with a rhyme scheme of ABAAB.

The Road not taken is a lyric which contains the characteristic features of Frost's poetry. The poet has made use of simple language to describe a very common sight on the country side. However when we read the poem closely we can see that the poet tries to hint at the choices one has to make in life be it in their career or their life. There are several occasions where the choices we make are not clear and we regret having chosen a particular road in life.

The poet presents a situation where he has to choose between two paths of which he has no knowledge at all. The 'Yellow wood' shows that it is the season of autumn. One of the paths in the wood curved into bushes where as the other looks like fewer people have used it. Which one should the traveller choose? He finally chooses the one that looks less used. The traveller's choice, however, is not easy. Both paths look equally attractive. On that particular morning, nobody had gone by on either road so the leaves that have fallen are still yellow and uncrushed. The poet suggests that it is in such a situation that decision making becomes difficult. The traveller has made his choice but he wishes to travel by the other road to the road not taken. He realises that it is not possible. The suggestion here is that once a certain direction is chosen, there is no turning back. One road leads to another and it is difficult to change tracks. Here, the poet thinks about the future when he will understand the consequences of his decision. It is only the future that will tell us whether a particular choice was the right one or not. The poet chose the road 'less travelled by' and that has made the difference. There is a hint of regret here that may be because the road 'less travelled by' is also a lonely road.

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**QUESTIONS FOR REVISION:**

I. Answer the following questions in two or three sentences.

1. What does the poet mean when he says,  
.... And sorry I could not travel both  
And be one traveller?

The poet regrets because having travelled along only one road, he would not be able to know what it would be like to travel along the other.

2. The title of the poem is very significant. Explain

The title of the poem is significant because it hints at the choices the poet did not take. Here the poet tells us of the road or the choice he would have made and how his life would probably have changed based on the decision taken.

3. Why did the poet decide to choose the other road?

The poet decided to choose the other road because it was not used by many people.

4. How does the poet describe both the roads in the morning?

According to the poet both the roads lay equally worn in the morning.

5. "Oh I kept the first road for another day." Explain.

Here the poet means to say that he kept the first choice for another time in future when he would come back and find out.

II. Answer the following questions in a paragraph not exceeding 100 words.

6. Why is the poem titled 'The Road not Taken'?

In the poem *The Road not taken* the poet tells us about the choices we have to make in life. Although the poem appears to be a simple description of a countryside scene at the deeper level it is about the choices we make in life. A person may choose a career for life and may or may not regret it later on in life. Here the poet has chosen a less conventional path but later on realises that it also is quite conventional. However the poem ends in ambiguity as he does not clearly tell us whether there has been any difference as a result of the choice he has made.

7. Road not taken as a philosophical poem.

Robert Frost in his famous poem *Road not taken* presents a very complicated situation that most of us come across using the metaphor of two roads that a traveller has to encounter. He is equally attracted by both the roads. But being a traveller he can select

only one road. In a very simple look we feel that this is a poem on two roads. But when we go deeper, we understand that it has many complicated nuances in it. The roads can stand for multiple options that people frequently come across in their life. They will have to make a decision to go ahead and to solve the situation. Once they select one path, they will be continuing in the same path. It will not be possible for them to come back. By the time they think about their choice and analyse it, it will be very late. Thus irrespective of its simple analogy *The Road not taken* is a very complex poem connecting many complicated philosophical thoughts.

III. Answer the following in not more than 300 words.

8. Write an appreciation of the poem *The Road not taken*?

(Refer to the notes given above.)



## CHAPTER- 9

### THERE'S A CERTAIN SLANT OF LIGHT

By

EMILY DICKINSON

**Learning Objectives:** To introduce to the students

1. One of the famous women poets of America.
2. The style of Emily Dickinson's poems.

#### ABOUT THE POET

##### EMILY DICKINSON: (1830-1886)

Emily Dickinson was born into a financially sound family where she had a privileged and comfortable life. She closed herself up from publicity and led an isolated life. Emily Dickinson attended both Amherst Academy and Mount Holyoke Female Seminary. However, she wrote pretty well and her early writing were mostly letters of which very few got published during her lifetime. Her poetry was known for its unconventional style. She used slant rhymes, unconventional punctuation, capitalization, short lines and some lacked titles as well. Her poems mostly centred on her struggles with her faith, morality, her father and the challenges she had to face as a woman. She has emerged as a major American woman poet. The two major themes of her poem are death and immortality. The first and complete collection of her poetry was published in 1955, *The Poems of Emily Dickinson* by scholar Thomas H. Johnson.

#### MEANING OF DIFFICULT WORDS

Slant of light: The light that is in a slope.

T'is the seal of despair: It is sealed with gloom or sorrow.

Imperial affliction: a royal disease that is afflicted or caused.

Landscape listens: Personification, landscape has been personified.

Shadows hold their breath: here the poet has used personification.

On the look of death: the expression on a dead man's face, here death is personified.

Despair: a feeling that nothing will improve , sad feeling.

Heavenly hurt: hurt from heaven, punishment from God.

Oppresses, like the weight of cathedral tunes: here the poet has used simile to describe the heavy feeling of the heart that one feels when one listens to the church songs or funeral songs at the church.

### **SUMMARY OF THE POEM**

In this poem too Emily Dickinson has brought out the theme of death along with the themes of disease and religion. The poem has a rhyme scheme ABAB, CDCD, EFEF, GHGH. The poet has made use of two figures of speech namely personification and simile. The poet stresses on the weakening light seen in the late afternoons of winter that weakens the spirit of the observer who feels a certain heavy feeling in the heart, a feeling similar to that when one listens to the funeral songs at the church. It reminds man of the transient nature of life. She uses compact, forceful language with aphoristic style which were peculiar to the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

**Personification:** It is a figure of speech in which human traits like qualities, feeling or characteristics are given to non-living objects. E.g.: The stars danced playfully in the moonlit sky.

**Simile:** It is a figure of speech in which two unlike things are compared in a phrase using the words 'like' or 'as'. E.g.: My love is like a red red rose, as white as snow.

In this poem the poet notices a certain kind of light which is seen only in the winter afternoons. This light gives its observer a heavy feeling which is felt when we hear the church music or the funeral song. Here the poet discusses of the slant light which is usually seen in the twilight hours and there is less light as it is winter. Winter yet again is a metaphor of death. The light brings a heavenly hurt which is caused by the twilight hour, the light that slowly diminishes and leads to darkness. It is like a punishment sent to earth from heaven by God. The slant of light gives a heavenly hurt which shows no visible injury to the observer but instead causes an internal change, a mental change or a spiritual change. This change has to be experienced and cannot be explained through teaching. This despair is like a royal affliction sent to us through the air, a plague, a royal disease that spreads through the air. Its presence is felt even by nature such that upon its arrival nature stands still and when it leaves it makes the observer have an extraordinary understanding of death. It has a vacant look, the expression seen on a dead man's face.

### **QUESTIONS FOR REVISION:**

I. Answer the following questions in two or three sentences.

1. How does the poet describe the slant of light?

The poet describes the light as giving its observer a heavy feeling which is felt when we hear the church music or the funeral song. She compares the oppressiveness of the slanting winter rays of the sun to the tunes of the cathedral that are oppressive.

2. Why is the hurt called as heavenly?

The slant of light gives a heavenly hurt which shows no visible injury to the observer but instead causes an internal change, a mental change or a spiritual change.

3. What does the poet mean by 'Royal affliction'?

A disease that affects only the royal gentry.

4. What sort of a change does the light bring about in the observer?

The light makes the observer have an extraordinary understanding of death. The poet says that the nature causes hurt not to the body but to the soul.

5. Why is the light a Seal, Despair?

The light is a seal, despair because their arrival heralds death and when they leave the landscape is still desolate.

II. Answer the following questions in a paragraph not exceeding 100 words.

6. What are the different techniques used in the poem by the poet?

(Refer to the notes given above).

7. The poem is commenting on the death of faith in man. Discuss.

(Refer to the notes given above).

III. Answer the following in not more than 300 words.

8. The poem is a reflection of the old age of man. Discuss.

(Refer to the notes given above).

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## CHAPTER -10

### THE HEAVEN OF FREEDOM (WHERE THE MIND IS WITHOUT FEAR)

By

**RABINDRANATH TAGORE**

**Learning Objectives:** To introduce to the students

1. The legendary poet who was the first Nobel Laureate of Asia in Literature.
2. The mystic quality of Tagore's poetry.

#### ABOUT THE POET

#### **RABINDRANATH TAGORE: (1861- 1941)**

Rabindranath Tagore was the youngest of Debendranath Tagore's children. He was the first Asian to win the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913. An ardent believer of the Upanishads he tried to revive the monistic basis of Hinduism through the Brahma Samaj, a new religious sect of the nineteenth century which was led by Him. He was successful in all the literary genres. Rabindranath Tagore is to India what Shakespeare is to English. He was the exponent of the Bengal renaissance and was also a social reformer who protested against the British rule in India. He composed the national anthem of our country. He founded the Visva –Bharati University in 1921. His best known works are *Gitanjali (Song Offerings)*, *Gora (Fair-Faced)*, and *Ghare-Baire (The Home and the World)*. Although he was knighted in the year 1915 by the British King George V he gave up the Knighthood as a protest against the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre in 1919. His "elegant prose and magical poetry" remain largely unknown outside Bengal. His mastery as a mystic poet can be seen here in this poem.

#### MEANING OF DIFFICULT WORDS

Fragments: pieces

Head is held high: self respect

Domestic: pertaining to family, home

Striving: try hard.

Tireless: without getting tired

Stream: river

Dreary: dull

Reason: intellect

Dead habit: old customs

Desert: dry area of land

Awake: to get up from sleep

Narrow domestic walls: differences made in the name of religion, caste and creed.

### **SUMMARY OF THE POEM**

Heaven of Freedom is taken from *Gitanjali* (Song Offerings), a collection of 103 English poems of Tagore translated by himself from Bengali. It contained translations of 53 poems from the original [Bengali](#) *Gitanjali*, as well as 50 other poems which were from his drama *Achalayatan* and eight other books of poetry - mainly *Gitimalya* (17 poems), *Naivedya* (15 poems) and *Kheya* (11 poems). This poem is more like a prayer. It was written towards the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when the struggle for political Independence was going on in India. Through this poem he expresses his vision of India as a heaven where there is freedom of thought, spirit, faith, speech which will lead to the inner perfection of the self.

This is one of Tagore's simple poems in which the poet draws the picture of a free nation with out any boundaries. It can be seen as an idealistic vision of India. This poem is like an offering to God, a prayer where the poet prays for a country which is a heaven of freedom. He prays for an atmosphere of fearlessness, a place where people can walk without the fear of being arrested. In India people had lost their freedom in all spheres under the British rule. They had no self respect and they were divided on the basis of religion so that the British colonisers could rule over Indians for a longer period of time. The poet is referring to a nation where the people can hold their head high and will have dignity and self respect.

According to him knowledge should be free to all. There should be no division among the people on the basis of caste or creed and no monopoly in providing education. Earlier only the high caste people had the privilege of being educated where as in the heaven of freedom imagined by Rabindranath Tagore people belonging to any section of the society will have free access to education. He wants the people to work with their hearts which is possible only if their minds are free. Further he goes on to pray for a world which is not fragmented or broken in the name of religious, cultural, economic or political issues. Being an internationalist, Tagore advocated for a world government where different cultures co- existed simultaneously. He longs for an undivided world where there is tolerance among the people, a world where people have the courage to speak truth and hold truth at any cost. He addresses God as the Father of the Universe and humbly requests him to awaken our country to such a heaven of freedom where thought is not limited by the age old customs and superstitious beliefs.

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**QUESTIONS FOR REVISION:**

I. Answer the following questions in two or three sentences

1. What is the theme of the poem?

The poem reflects on Tagore's thoughts of attaining a free nation where all are treated equally and no one is discriminated on the basis of caste or creed and where there is no monopoly in providing education.

2. Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection. Explain.

Tagore envisages a free country where people put in their efforts and work tirelessly in order to attain perfection.

3. What does the poet mean when he say 'Where words come out from the depth of truth'?

He longs for an undivided world where there is tolerance among the people, a world where people have the courage to speak truth and will up hold truth at any cost.

4. What is the 'dreary desert sand of dead habits' mentioned here?

The dead habits mentioned here is of dividing people on the basis of caste, creed or religion. Such a nation will not cater to the needs of its people.

II. Answer the following questions in a paragraph not exceeding 100 words

5. What kind of a nation does Tagore want? Discuss.

The poet is referring to a nation where the people can hold their head high and will have dignity and self respect.

(Refer to notes given above.)

III. Answer the following in not more than 300 words.

6. 'Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.' Discuss keeping in mind the current situation of India. (Hint: mention how different present India is from Tagore's India, the social evils, the atrocities faced by women, current affairs, what can be done by us Indians as citizens.)

## CHAPTER-11

### MIDDLE AGE

By

KAMALA DAS

**Learning Objectives:** To introduce to the students

1. 20<sup>th</sup> century Indian English woman writer.
2. The style of Kamala Das's poetry.

#### ABOUT THE POET

##### KAMALA DAS: (1934-2009)

Kamala Surrayya, formerly known as Kamala Das is a prominent Indian English writer. She wrote as Madhavi Kutty. Born into a conservative Hindu Nair family Kamala Das was exposed to the world of literature at a very young age. Influenced by her uncle she took to writing at very early in life. She has to her credit a number of poems and short stories which are widely read across the world. Her poems are mostly confessional in nature and her choice of themes from the life of women, especially middle class women has earned her readers world wide. Her autobiography *My Story*, initially written in Malayalam was a controversial book. She wrote chiefly about love betrayal and the anguish that follows. Her major works are *My Story* (1976), *A Doll for the Child Prostitute*, *The Old Playhouse and Other Poems* (1973), *The Annamalai Poems* (1985), and *Only the Soul knows How to Sing* (1996). Through her poetry she tries to capture the little nuances of life.

#### ABOUT THE POEM

*Middle Age* is a poem where Kamala Das has tried to give expression to the deep emotions of a mother who is left alone in her middle age by her son. Here we do not find a mother who is glorified or praised but neglected and sidelined and treated as a slave who is needed by the son only to press his clothes and serve him tea. The mother portrayed here is lamenting the loss of her son's love and attention and the feeling of being left alone in her middle age when her son has grown up to be a critic and not a friend. The poem is written in free verse and the poet adapts a conversational style to present her thoughts. It is written as a single line separated by commas and ellipsis which represents pauses in the mother's thoughts possibly to weep over the loss of the child's youth where she was loved and cared for.

#### MEANING OF DIFFICULT WORDS

like pupae they burst their cocoons : Children break the protective cover of their mother's love and try to state that they are grown ups. They no longer need their mother's care and affection.

severe with their tongue: speak harshly with arrogance, anger. It can also be as severe which means to cut off or break. Here it can mean to break the mother's heart.

stern of face: A serious face.

harsh adult glory: Children claim their freedom to do what they like since they have reached their adulthood and would not like to be questioned about anything.

Weep a little secretly... : Cry secretly in their absence without their knowledge lamenting the good old days when she was loved and cared for by her children.

but you need them all the same: Children are emotionally dependent on their mothers in their childhood but they detach themselves when they grow up and forget that their mothers need their company more in her middle age.

Once upon a time: the stories told by the mother to amuse them.

You are no longer so young you know. : Children remind their mother of her age and indirectly try to mention that they are old enough to be let alone.

### **SUMMARY OF THE POEM**

Middle Age is a poem where Kamala Das has tried to give expression to the deep emotions of a mother who is left alone in her middle age by her son. Here we do not find a mother who is glorified or praised but neglected and sidelined and treated as a slave who is needed by the son only to press his clothes and serve him tea. The mother portrayed here is lamenting the loss of her son's love and attention and the feeling of being left alone in her middle age when her son has grown up to be a critic and not a friend. The poem is written in free verse and the poet adapts a conversational style to present her thoughts. It is written as a single line separated by commas and ellipsis which represents pauses in the mother's thoughts possibly to weep over the loss of the child's youth where she was loved and cared for.

The poem is narrating the feelings of a middle aged mother who feels left out in her middle age. The poet has beautifully used the imagery of the butterfly cocoon to present the child's evolution from infancy to adulthood where they transform into critics of the mother who has helped them emerge into the harsh adult glory. The role of mother changes from nurturing to that of a servant who is wanted only to press the clothes and serve tea. The child no longer enjoys the moments shared by the mother about the stories she said and the fantasy world she created in order to amuse the child. All that disgusts the child who would not like to look back at childhood but celebrate the glory of adulthood where they try to put on a serious look to establish that they are grown up and no longer need to be treated as a child. This change in the attitude of the children leaves the mother shocked and depressed in their middle age where they require the company of their children the most.



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**QUESTIONS FOR REVISION:**

I. Answer the following questions in two or three sentences.

1. What does the poet mean when she says 'severe with their tongues'?

The poet means to say that the children are harsh with their words. Their words are sharp and it hurts the parents.

2. Why is adulthood described as 'harsh adult glory'?

Children in the glory of their adulthood forget about the parents and their contribution in what they are. They become critics of their parents instead of being their support.

3. Why do children wear a stern face?

Children wear a stern face in order to show that they are mature and serious. They no longer enjoy the fantasy world their mother created in order to amuse them as a child.

4. 'but you need them all the same'. Explain.

Even though children hurt their parents with their behaviour and words the parents need their support and company in their old age. But these children prefer to move away from their parents and live a detached life creating an estranged world of their own.

II. Answer the following questions in a paragraph not exceeding 100 words.

5. As children reach adulthood their attitude towards their mother changes. This is very well expressed in the lines :

you have lived

In a dream world all your life, its time to

wake up, Mother,

Comment on this.

[Hint: Children despise their mother for the affection and care and prefer to be taken seriously. When the mother reminds the child of their youth and the little games they enjoyed as a child the child gets angry. The mother is scolded and reminded that they are no longer kids and that their mother is in a dream world.]

III. Answer the following in not more than 300 words.

6. What are the problems of a middle aged mother as told by Kamala Das in the poem 'Middle Age'?

(Refer to the notes given above.)

## MODULE THREE: SHORT STORY

### CHAPTER -12

#### THE ASTROLOGER'S DAY

By

R.K.NARAYAN

**Learning Objectives:** To introduce to the students

1. The story of a famous Indian English writer who is read world wide.
2. R. K Narayanan's style of narrating stories.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

##### R.K.NARAYAN: (1906-2001)

Rasipuram Krishnaswamy Narayan is one of the famous Indian English writers who is from South India. He was born in Madras and did his graduation from Maharaja's College Mysore. He established himself as a short story writer and a novelist. His famous work *The Guide* was awarded the Sahitya Academy Award in 1958. Some of his great works are *Swami and friends*, *The Financial Expert*, *Mr. Sampat*, *The Man-Eater of Malgudi*, *Waiting for Mahatma*, *Bachelor of Arts*, *The Dark Room* and *The English Teacher*. *My Days-A Memoir* tells the story of his life. Almost all his works deal with the theme of school, home, money and politics. He upholds the Indian culture through his works and gives us a glimpse of the stark realities of life.

In his writing career that spanned over sixty years, Narayan received many awards and honours. These include the [AC Benson Medal](#) from the Royal Society of Literature and the [Padma Vibhushan](#), India's second-highest civilian award. He was also nominated to the [Rajya Sabha](#), the upper house of the [Indian parliament](#).

#### ABOUT THE STORY

R.K.Narayan's Short story begins abruptly and ends the same way. The story tells us the life an astrologer who practices his trade amongst many others and his encounter with a man whom he never wants to meet again. This interesting story is one that can be enjoyed thoroughly as it a criticism on the hypocritical attitude of the Indians. Through the character of the astrologer the author tries to bring out the Psyche of the Indian workers.

## MEANING OF DIFFICULT WORDS

cowrie shells: small shells of sea snails usually used by astrologers.

vermilion: bright red.

to crown the effect: to add to the effect, to make the effect better.

Flanked: to be at the side of someone or something.

Groaned: complain or speak unhappily.

din and bustle: noise because of the rush of people.

Dallied: to move slowly.

Incantations: words that are spoken to have a magical effect.

Crackled: to make a short , sharp and dry sound.

perception: understanding

bewildering: making one feel confused.

gratified: satisfied.

prophetic light: light as in the eyes of a prophet.

shaft: beam of light.

Impetuous: to act suddenly without thinking of the consequence.

paraphernalia: the tools related to a particular job.

careworn: appearing tired and unhappy.

piqued: angry, irritated.

babble: murmur.

whiskers: moustache.

Disgorge: pour out.

Haggling: arguing for the price of an item, bargain.

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## SUMMARY OF THE STORY

The story begins with the description of an astrologer who is sitting under a tamarind tree. On the forehead he has smeared sacred ash and vermilion. There was something special about his eyes. There was a sparkle in them that attracted people. This light was mistaken as prophetic light by his simple customers whereas R. K. Narayan describes this as the outcome of the continuous search for customers. He had dark moustache that came down to his cheeks. To complete the look he had a saffron coloured turban as well. He had cowrie shells and a square piece of cloth with obscure mystic charts and a bundle of palmyra writing. He was always searching for a customer in the crowd. The place where he was seated was surrounded by a variety of other traders like medicine sellers, auctioneers of cheap cloth, magicians as well as people who sold stolen goods. There was a vendor who sold fried ground nut but called his product by different names each day like 'Bombay Ice-cream', 'Delhi Almond', 'Raja's Delicacy', etc. Most of the people who came to the vendor went to the astrologer too. The entire place was lighted with shop lights. This is very common sight in India. Our astrologer was someone who knew very little of his own future. He was as much unaware of the stars as his customers yet he could manage to astonish people with what he said. This he made possible with practice and shrewd calculation. He was clever enough to trick others with his guesses. He managed to make a living as an astrologer because of his experience. He knew that people had problems due to money, marriage and household issues. Within five minutes he could guess what was wrong and never spoke for the first ten minutes. He let his customers talk and gathered information for many of the answers from which he would create his advice for them. He had some questions which he usually asked to get clues as to what advice he should give his customers. Each question was charged at the rate of three pies.

One evening after the nut vendor had blown out the light and when every other trader was getting ready to go home, the astrologer saw a man before him. The astrologer with his skills made the man sit there. He challenged the astrologer by saying that if the astrologer gave him right answers for his questions then he would give him eight annas and if he failed then the astrologer would have to pay him back twice the amount. The astrologer happily accepted the challenge. But when he saw the man's face from the light of a match stick he quickly gave back the amount he had taken. The man caught the astrologer by his wrist and said he could not back out now. The astrologer finally agreed to speak for a rupee and he began. The man was shocked by the astrologer's revelations. He said that the man was once left to die and that he was stabbed with a knife once. He also said that the man was pushed into a well near a field. The astrologer even goes out to the extent of calling the man by his name- Guru Nayak. With this the man is very pleased and impressed with the all knowing astrologer's knowledge. The astrologer advises the man to go back to his home town and never travel southwards again. He proceeds to say that the man who he was looking for is no longer alive. Four months ago he met with an accident and was crushed under a lorry. To this the man says that he was there in search of that man to take revenge and now that he was dead he would return home. The man leaves and the astrologer returns home. He tells his wife about his life before he met her. He tells her that in his home town he used to play cards, gamble, drink and quarrel. It so happened that one day he picked up a quarrel with a man and thought that he had killed him. He left his village thinking that he had the blood of another man on his hands. But now he says he can live peacefully not because Guru Nayak is alive but that after today's

session he would never come back there again. Guru Nayak could not identify the astrologer and the astrologer easily escaped the hands of his enemy. After telling his wife of what had happened he stretched himself on the pyol and went to sleep.

From this we know what kind of an astrologer he was and how he managed to trick people with his predictions.

### **QUESTIONS FOR REVISION**

I. Answer the following questions in two or three sentences.

1. What did the astrologer look like?

On the forehead of the astrologer he had smeared sacred ash and vermilion. There was something special about his eyes. There was a sparkle in them that attracted people. This light was mistaken as prophetic light by his simple customers even though it was nothing but the continuous searching look for customers that reflected through his eyes. He had dark moustache that came down to his cheeks. To complete the look he had a saffron coloured turban as well.

2. Describe the locality where the astrologer sat for his business.

The place where he was seated was surrounded by a variety of other traders like medicine sellers, auctioneers of cheap cloth, magicians as well as people who sold stolen goods. There was a vendor who sold fried ground nut but called his product by different names each day like 'Bombay Ice-cream', 'Delhi Almond', 'Raja's Delicacy', etc. Most of the people who came to the vendor went to the astrologer too. The entire place was lighted with shop lights.

3. Was the astrologer successful in pleasing his customers?

Yes, this he made possible with practice and shrewd calculation. He was clever enough to trick others with his guesses. He managed to make a living as an astrologer because of his experience. He knew that people had problems due to money, marriage and household issues. Within five minutes he could guess what was wrong and never spoke for the first ten minutes. He let his customers talk and gathered information for many of the answers from which he would create his advice for them. He had some questions which he usually asked to get clues as to what advice he should give his customers. This way he was successful in pleasing his customers.

4. What happened the night the astrologer was about to leave?

The astrologer was packing his things to go home. It was then that he saw a man standing in front of him. He called the man and talked to him and made him sit for a session before him.

5. What did the astrologer tell him?

The astrologer told him that he was once left to die in his village. He was stabbed by someone and that he was even thrown into a well near a field. He even called the stranger by his name. The astrologer advises him to go home and never to travel southwards again. He also tells him that the man he was looking for had met with an accident four months ago and got killed in it.

6. Who was the man who sat before him that night?

His name was Guru Nayak and he was the same man whom the astrologer had tried to kill years back in his village when he was living the life of a rowdy drinking, gambling and quarrelling with people.

7. What confession did the astrologer make to his wife?

The astrologer tells his wife of his life before he met her. He tells her that the man he thought he had killed was alive. He tells her that he thought he had the blood of another man on his hands.

8. Describe the incident that took place in the astrologer's life that changed his life?

The astrologer used to be a ruffian in his village years back when he was young. He used to drink, gamble and pick up fights with people. He had once quarrelled with a person and tried to kill him. He then ran away and settled in a different village in the South.

9. What challenge did the man put before the astrologer?

The stranger challenged the astrologer by saying that if the astrologer gave him right answers for his questions then he would give him eight annas and if he failed then the astrologer would have to pay him back twice the amount. The astrologer happily accepted the challenge.

- II. Answer the following questions in a paragraph not exceeding 100 words

10. How do you think the story is a reflection up on the Indian Psyche?

(Refer notes given above.)

- III. Answer the following in not more than 300 words.

11. The Astrologer's Day is a humorous short story. Explain.

[Hints: Narayan depicts Indian life- presents Indian character and temperament-surrounding is very well presented-different kinds of vendors-irony in the portrayal of the people- the astrologer analyses the people the first few minutes-charged three pies per question-Narayan narrates the incident from the astrologer's life- a stranger comes to him-astrologer recognizes him-it is humorous to note the attitude of the common people- the author has carefully presented how the astrologer works- Narayan humorously portrays Indian life-personal history of the astrologer is also revealed in the end.]

## CHAPTER -13

### THE LAST LEAF

By

O.HENRY

**Learning Objectives:** To introduce to the students

1. A prolific American short story writer of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.
2. O. Henry's creative style of story narration

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**O.HENRY:** (1862-1910)

O. Henry is the pen name of William Sydney Porter. He was born on 11<sup>th</sup> September 1862 in North Carolina. Porter was a voracious reader and he had the habit of reading right from childhood. His favourite works were Lane's translation of one thousand and one nights and Burton's anatomy of Melancholy. He discontinued his studies and started working at a very young age. He has done all kinds of jobs to earn a living. He worked at his Uncle's drug store and later at a National Bank in Austin from where he was convicted for stealing and was imprisoned. He started writing while in jail and published fourteen stories in various names. He then moved to New York in 1902 from where he wrote 381 stories. This is one of the best periods of his career as a writer.

#### ABOUT THE STORY

This is a beautiful story of a sacrifice done by an old man, a frustrated artist, in order to save the life of a young girl who falls ill with Pneumonia and connects her death with the fall of leaves from an ivy vine. This old man had dreamt of painting his masterpiece one day but is never able to. However the story narrates how he paints a leaf that seems so original that the girl takes it for an original leaf and slowly recovers. This story ends with the death of the old artist who dies painting his masterpiece, the last leaf.

#### MEANING OF DIFFICULT WORDS

Strips: thin pieces of land.

Traverse: travel.

Cent: name of money.

Quaint: peculiar, strange.

Prowling: moving restlessly like a hunter looking for prey.

Art people: artists.

Pewter mugs: a mug made of an alloy of tin with copper and antimony.

Chafing dish: a metal pan used for keeping food warm.

Squatty: short

Congenial: pleasant

Chicory salad: cornflower cultivated for salad leaves.

Bishop sleeves: puffy shirt sleeves.

Stalked about: hurt people, here pneumonia was attacking people.

Ravager: destroyer, here pneumonia.

Strode: walk with big steps

Smiting: strike with a firm blow, hit hard.

Scores: here it means in large numbers.

table d'hôte: a group table in a restaurant.

Delmonico's: a chain of family owned restaurants in New York City.

Trod: walk.

Maze: confusing

Moss: flowerless green plant.

Chivalric: dignified

Duffer: a stupid.

Smote: Past tense of smite.

Shaggy: untidy

mite: a small child.

Pharmacopoeia: an encyclopaedia of drugs.



Monocle: glass made for only one eye to look through it.

Idaho: a state in the Pacific north-west area of the United States.

Solicitously: carefully.

Dreary: dry

Gnarled: twisted

Scorn: with hate.

Pork chops: a food item made of pork.

Broth: soup.

Satyr: a mythological creature which has the features of both man and goat.

Imp: here means devilish.

Daub: coat

Ivy: is a creeper which has leaves that resemble the leaves of grapevine.

Scoffed: to make fun of.

Mastiff-in-waiting: protect like mastiff dog. (mastiff is a breed of dog).

Vass: what asked with a German accent.

Dere: There.

De: The.

Der: The

Dey: They.

Haf: have.

Bose: Pose.

Vy: why.

Pusiness: business.

Dot: that

Vass! he cried. Is dere people in de world mit der foolishness to die because leafs dey

drop off from a confounded vine? I haf not heard of such a thing. No, I will not bose as

a model for your fool hermit-dunderhead. Vy do you allow dot silly pusiness to come in

der brain of her? Ach, dot poor leetle Miss Yohnsy. : What he cried. Is there people in the world with their foolishness to die because leaves they drop off from a confounded vine? I have not heard of such a thing. No, I will not pose as a model for your fool hermit- thunderhead. Why do you allow that silly business to come in the brain of her? Oh, that poor little Miss Johnsy.

Undertaker: the person who makes arrangements for burial and funeral of the dead body

Bedstead: The frame in which bed is kept.

old flibbertigibbet: silly person.

Peen: been.

Mit: with.

Blace: place.

Goot: good.

Yohnsy: Johnsy.

Vill: will.

Baint : paint.

Ve: we.

Gott: God.

Who said I will not bose? Go on. I come mit you. For half an hour I haf peen trying to say dot I am ready to bose. Gott! dis isnot any blace in which one so goot as Miss Yohnsy shall lie sick. Some day I vill baint a masterpiece and ve shall all go away. Gott! yes. : Who said I will not pose? Go on. I come with you. For half an hour I have been trying to say that I am ready to pose. God! This is not any place in which one so good as Miss Johnsy shall lie sick. Some day I will paint a masterpiece and we shall go away. God! Yes.

Bay of Naples: a bay in the Mediterranean, near the south-western coast of Italy

Persistent: continuing firmly in a course of action in spite of all the trouble.

Morbid: unhealthy.

Michael Angelo's Moses: Reference to a famous sculpture of Michelangelo. In it, Moses has long flowing beard that curls down to his lap.

Serrated: means uneven tooth like that of a saw blade.

eaves: the part of a roof that meets the walls of a building.

Juniper berries: berries from which gin is made.

Swagger: walk with arrogance or anger.

cried a Japanese napkin to a pulp: cry bitterly and wet a napkin with tears.

Peered: peeped, look secretly without others noticing.

Gusts: strong rush of wind.

palette: a wooden board used for mixing colours for a painting.

Lonesomest: most lonesome or lonely.

Janitor: one who is kept to take care of a building.

## **SUMMARY OF THE STORY**

This is an interesting story that relates the life two artists who lives in a place called Greenwich Village where painters come to set up their art studio. This place has curious maze streets criss-crossing one another. A traveller loses the directions of the streets and comes back to the same point from where they started travelling. Poor artists living here thought that it was easy to escape from bill collectors without paying them. This description of the streets has relevance to the story in which a strong and strange sense of mental weakness is focused. The main theme is then introduced; it has two characters – [Sue and Johnsy](#). They met together suddenly at a hotel and found themselves sharing their taste in chicory salad, bishop sleeves and painting. They become intimate friends and in a cheap rented house the two friends [Sue and Johnsy](#) set up a common studio.

The story begins with Johnsy lying ill in bed. She is attacked with pneumonia. She becomes gradually weak in body and mind. She is possessed with death wish. She watches the leaves falling from a nearby ivy vine and believes that she will die when the last leaf falls from the ivy vine. Sue, her best friend and room mate brings a doctor to see her who tells her that there is only one in ten chances for Johnsy to stay alive. He also tells her that if Sue could bring hope and desire in Johnsy to look forward to life then the chances would go up, her life depends on her wish to live. If a patient loses her will power to live, no disease can be resisted. Johnsy does not like eating and drinking. She only looks vacantly at the window counting the number of leaves falling. Her friend Sue tries to divert her mind from the window. She sits by her for painting so that she will be inspired to live for painting. She offers her broth, wine, milk and she tries to take her mind from death wish but she cannot succeed. The doctor leaves and Sue is confused and worried about Johnsy. Below their flat lived Behrman, an ill tempered and frustrated artist who earned a living by occasionally posing as model for other artists. As a painter he is a failure. But he has the ambition

to paint a masterpiece. Behrman loves these two young painters and protects them as guardians. Sue goes to him to tell him about Johnsy who has given up her hope to live. She believes that her life is connected with the fall of the leaves from the ivy vine. Behrman laughs at this and dismisses this fancy as foolish. He decides to see Johnsy and the ivy. He comes upstairs with Sue to pose for her as model for the old hermit miner. A persistent cold rain is falling mingled with snow. That night there is a heavy storm. Sue pulls the curtains and asks Johnsy to go to sleep. The next morning Johnsy eagerly looks out of the window to see if the leaf has fallen. But the last leaf remains there and upon seeing this Johnsy realizes that the last leaf had stayed there to show her how wicked she was. She starts to recover through the day. The last leaf continues to live and so she will live. She starts eating and assures herself that one day she will paint her masterpiece – the Bay of Naples. She is declared out of danger by the doctor after two days. Later Sue tells her of Behrman's death, who was taken ill with pneumonia and died that day. He had been ill only for two days. The janitor said that he found Mr. Behrman sick in his apartment where he saw Behrman's wet shoes and clothes. He further found out that there was a ladder dragged down from his place where a lantern was placed which was still lighted. There was also a palette with green and yellow paints mixed. She then asks Johnsy to look out of the window at the last leaf that clung on to the ivy, which remained motionless and told her that it was Behrman's masterpiece which was painted the same night the last leaf fell in the storm.

### **QUESTIONS FOR REVISION**

- I. Answer the following questions in two or three sentences.
  1. Where did Sue and Johnsy live?  
Sue and Johnsy lived in old Greenwich Village where painters came to set up their art studio because they could find rooms at low rents here.
  2. How did Sue and Johnsy meet?  
Sue and Johnsy met suddenly at a hotel. They found that they shared their taste in Chicory salads, bishop sleeves and painting. So, they decide to live together in a studio apartment.
  3. What had happened to Johnsy?  
Johnsy was lying ill in bed. She is attacked with pneumonia. She becomes gradually weak in body and mind. She is possessed with death wish. She watches the leaves falling from a nearby ivy vine and believes that she will die when the last leaf falls from the ivy vine.
  4. What did the doctor tell Sue about Johnsy's illness?  
The doctor tells Sue that there is only one in ten chances for Johnsy to stay alive. Her life depended on her wish to live. If a patient loses her will power to live, no disease can be resisted. He also tells her that if Sue could bring hope and desire in Johnsy to look forward to life then her chances to survive would go up.
  5. What was Johnsy's fancy?

Johnsy had gradually become weak in body and mind and was possessed with death wish. She watched the leaves falling from a nearby ivy vine and believed that she would die when the last leaf fell from it.

6. What happened to the last leaf? Did it fall?

Johnsy notices that there was only one leaf left on the ivy vine. That night there is a heavy storm. She was sure that the last leaf would fall in the storm and that she would die along with it. Sue pulls the curtains and asks Johnsy to go to sleep. The next morning Johnsy eagerly looks out of the window to see if the leaf has fallen. But the last leaf remains there and upon seeing this Johnsy realizes that the last leaf had stayed there to show her how wicked she was. She starts to recover through the day. The presence of the leaf brings back Johnsy's will to live.

7. Who was Behrman?

Behrman was an old artist who lived below their flat. He was an ill tempered and frustrated artist who earned a living by occasionally posing as model for other artists. As a painter he was a failure. But he had the ambition to paint a masterpiece. Behrman loved the two young painters and protected them as their guardian.

8. What was Behrman's sacrifice?

Behrman knew that Johnsy had associated her life with the fall of the leaves on the ivy vine. He laughs at Johnsy's fancy and dismisses it. He decides to see her and the ivy vine. On the night of the heavy storm he goes out in the storm and paints a leaf on the wall. However, he is taken ill with pneumonia and dies within two days. The leaf looked so original that Johnsy mistakes this for the last leaf on the ivy and starts to recover. But she is later told by Sue of what had happened to Behrman. This way Behrman dies fulfilling his dream of painting his masterpiece and saving the life of Johnsy.

9. What does the last leaf represent?

The last leaf in the story represents noble sacrifice. It teaches us of the selfless love of an old painter who gave his life to save the life of girl who was sick with pneumonia. By sacrificing his life he tried to find the true worth of his life. It is representative of the humanitarian concern that is slowly found disappearing from this world.

10. Mr. Pneumonia was not what you would call a chivalric old gentleman. Explain.

In the story Last Leaf, written by William Sydney Porter who wrote under the pen name O. Henry, the author describes an old village named Greenwich which was occupied mainly by artists. Once all the inhabitants of this colony were infected by pneumonia. Here the writer refers to the disease as a person and comments that he was not a chivalric gentleman. A chivalric man is kind, gentle and good towards women but here the disease did not hesitate to get hold of young women. Johnsy was unhealthy and weak. She would have been considered by a gentleman but pneumonia was rather cruel and made her sick.

II. Answer the following questions in a paragraph not exceeding 100 words.

11. What is the humour in the story *The Last Leaf*?

The story starts by giving us a description of the Greenwich Village. The author starts to unwind humour through his description of the Village by saying that the artists prefer to stay there because of the crazy streets that would confuse the bill collectors and bring them back to the point where they started. The description of pneumonia as a red fisted duffer makes us laugh. The author has also made use of humour in the characterization of Behrman. The German artist is described as having the head of a satyr and the body of an imp. According to the author he was a “mastiff-in-waiting” to protect the young artists. He boasts of his masterpiece without having touched the brush for forty years. The pronunciation of Behrman is rather amusing. He talks English with a German accent. The ending of the story is one filled with humour and pathos with the typical O. Henry twist.

12. How did Johnsy recover?

(Refer to the answers given above.)

13. Behrman can be considered as the real hero of the story *The Last Leaf*. Comment.

(Refer to the answers given above.)

III. Answer the following in not more than 300 words.

14. *The Last Leaf* is a suitable title for the story. Discuss.

(Refer to the answers given above.)

## **MODULE FOUR: DRAMA**

### **CHAPTER -14**

#### **THE RISING OF THE MOON**

**By**

**LADY GREGORY**

**Learning Objectives:** To enable the students

1. To be acquainted with Irish literature.
2. To understand the characteristic features of Irish drama.

#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

##### **LADY GREGORY: (1852-1932)**

Isabella Augusta, Lady Gregory, who was an Irish dramatist and folklorist, was the co-founder of the Irish Literary Theatre and the Abbey Theatre. She was born into a class that identified closely with the British rule but her sympathies were with the Irish struggle for freedom. She was greatly inspired by the Irish mythology and folklore and has written numerous plays and stories. Lady Gregory is mainly remembered for her work behind the Irish Literary Revival.

In 1880 she married Sir William Henry Gregory, a neighbouring landowner who had previously served as a Member of Parliament and as governor of Ceylon (Sri Lanka). Her literary career began after his death in 1892. In 1896 she met William Butler Yeats and became his lifelong friend and patron. She took part in the foundation of the Irish Literary Theatre (1899) and became a director (1904) of the Abbey Theatre, which owed much of its success to her skill at smoothing the disputes among its highly individualistic Irish nationalist founders. As a playwright, she wrote pleasant comedies based on Irish folkways and picturesque peasant speech, offsetting the more tragic tones of the dramas of Yeats and J.M.Synge.

Lady Gregory portrays life as she sees it. She is more interested in people than in things and abstract ideas. *The Rising of the Moon* is a political play, written in the background of the Anglo-Irish War. The Irish War of Independence was a guerrilla war launched by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) against the British government and its forces in Ireland. Lady Gregory presents characters that are torn between duty and patriotism. The play is an exhortation to the people of Ireland to stand united for a unified Ireland. She believed that mythology, folklore and other cultural devices are effective tools to bring people together.

Lady Gregory wrote or translated nearly 40 plays. *Seven Short Plays* (1909) is the first of her dramatic works and are among her best. The longer comedies, *The Image* and *Damer's Gold*, were published in 1910 and 1913 and her strange realistic fantasies, *The Golden Apple* and *The Dragon*, in 1916 and 1920. She also arranged and made continuous narratives out of the various versions of Irish sagas, translating them into an Anglo-Irish peasant dialect that she labeled "Kiltartan." These were published as *Cuchulain of Muirthemne* (1902) and *Gods and Fighting Men* (1904).

## **ABOUT THE PLAY**

Lady Gregory's *The Rising of the Moon* is a political play dealing with the relation between England and Ireland. Here we find Ireland trying to free itself from the English rule. The English has dominated over Ireland for a long period of time. In this play we find that the characters are torn between duty and patriotism and are ultimately united together as Irishmen through the folklore, myths and songs which they share as a nation. The thought of being the citizen of a country is considered as more important over one's feelings of duty towards a foreign nation. Patriotism is the force that unites the people of a country.

## **MEANING OF DIFFICULT WORDS**

be off with you: get out, go away.

quay: A stone or concrete structure for loading and unloading ships, boats; a wharf.

gaol: jail.

kelp: a type of large brown sea grass used in some food and medicines.

assize time: Time of sittings of the judges, known as justices of assize. Assizes were periodic criminal courts held around England and Wales until 1972 to hear most serious criminal cases.

to be in someone's shoes: to be in someone's position or place, to feel their pain.

don't be too long: come quickly.

I wouldn't be in your shoes: I wouldn't dare to do it (catch the culprit) if I were you.

County: a geographical area under a Count, Earl or Lord.

slap: a sharp blow with the open hand you'd be as wise as myself: Knowledge of my name wont make you wiser.

ballad: a song narrating a story.

Its often ... the quay in hand cart: A reference to the drunken sailors who fall unconscious in the streets.



Content and a pipe, The Peeler and the goat, Johnny Hart: ballad titles.

Peeler: slang for a policeman.

Highland: mountainous region.

Highland plaid: a rectangular woollen scarf which people of hilly regions use.

distracted: unable to concentrate.

distracted mad: mad and distracted with grief.

there isn't a weapon he doesn't know the use of: he knows the use of all weapons.

made me feel a bit queer: made me a bit uncomfortable, frightened.

for the life of you: even if you get killed.

shuffle: to walk pulling the feet slowly, dragging one's feet.

shamrock: a low-growing plant of the pea family.

vale: valley.

Granuaile: The Queen of Umail, the chieftain of Umaille clan and a pirate in 16th century Ireland.

heart up: to arouse confidence.

pensive: thoughtful.

pensive strain: uncomfortable thoughts.

plaintive wail: sorrowful cries.

tunic: a sleeveless loose garment reaching to the knees

in spite of your belt and tunic: in spite of the fact that you are a policeman.

Shawn O'Farrell: possibly the hero a ballad glorifies.

gore: blood that has been shed.

I daresay: I suppose.

Shan Van Vocht: The poor old woman in Irish, it is a traditional personification of the country and the title of a patriotic song.

Green on the Cape: an Irish ballad.

dock: the enclosure in a criminal court where a defendant is placed it won't be unknown: (here) he won't make a secret escape.

pike: spear; a long pole weapon

## **SUMMARY OF THE STORY**

Lady Gregory's play written in Irish English presents two characters. One is an Irish patriot with a prize on his head who is involved in the Irish struggle for freedom. The other person is a sergeant who is on the look-out for him. He is posted at the harbour to check whether the wanted man who has escaped is seen passing by. The sergeant is a poor family man who is badly in need of money. The patriot comes that way disguised as a ballad singer. He sings patriotic folk songs and arouses the sergeant's nationalistic feelings. Finally he identifies him but does not arrest him. He lets him go and willingly loses the reward. His patriotism outweighs his duty.

The scene is a harbour somewhere in Ireland. The British are still the rulers and the Irish patriots are still fighting for their country's independence. One such Irish nationalist has been arrested but he has escaped from jail. The authorities put a prize on his head and the play begins with a sergeant and two policemen pasting a notice or a placard with physical details of the escaped prisoner.

The sergeant suggests that they put up the notice on the barrel. There is a flight of steps that lead to the barrel. This place must be watched because there is every chance that the friends of the escapee might bring a boat there to help him get away to some safe place. The sergeant reads the placard and feels sorry that he had not seen before he escaped from jail. He knows that the wanted man is no ordinary criminal but an important political figure. He is the person who makes all the plans for the entire Irish nationalist organization. The sergeant believes that he could not have escaped without the support of some of the jailors. Policeman B says that the hundred pounds reward is not enough but he is sure that any policeman who captures him will get promotion. The sergeant then says that he will mind the place himself because he is sure that he will be able to catch the wanted man himself. However he regrets the fact there is no one to help him. He, being a family man requires the money. Policeman B says that if they capture him, the people will abuse them and their own relations will not be happy. The officers know how popular the escapee is with the Irish people. But the sergeant says that they were only doing their duty. The whole country depends upon the policemen to keep law and order. If the officers do not carry out their duties, those who are down will be up and vice versa. He sends the two policemen to put up the placards in other places and asks them to come back to the harbour because he has only the moon as his companion. Policeman B says that it is pity that the government has not brought more policemen into the town. They wish the sergeant good luck and they go away.

As the sergeant thinks of the reward a ragged man comes up. The sergeant does not know who this ragged man is. He introduces himself as an Irish ballad singer from the town of Ennis. But he was none other than the Irish nationalist who escaped from jail. He says he has come to the harbour to sell some ballads to the sailors. He has gone to the assizes to sell ballads and is now at the harbour, having come there by the same train as the judges. The man then goes towards the

flight of steps and is prevented by the sergeant. The man however promises to sit on the steps till some sailor buys a ballad. He knows that they will be going back to the ship late. He has often seen them in the neighbouring town of Cork, carried down to the harbour in a hand -cart. He then gives the sergeant a few ballads. When the officer orders him back, the man starts singing a ballad, about a rich farmer's daughter who fell in love with a Scottish soldier. The sergeant is not pleased and orders him away. The man looks at the placard and tells the sergeant that he knows the wanted man. The sergeant now wants him to tell him all about the escapee.

The ragged man then goes on to tell him that he saw the wanted man in county clare. He warns the sergeant that he is a dangerous man who knows how to use every weapon and his muscles are hard. With a stone, he once killed a sergeant from the town of Bally Vaughan. The sergeant says he has not heard of such an incident. The man explains that the newspapers had not reported it. In the town of Limerick, there was once an attack on the police barracks on a moonlit night. The man tells the sergeant that the nationalist kidnapped a policeman from the barracks and nothing has been heard of him ever since. The sergeant says that it was terrible. The man continues his account of the adventurous exploits of the nationalist. It is difficult for the policeman to capture him because he is such a guerrilla. He will be upon the sergeant before he knew where he was. The sergeant says that a whole troop of police ought to be put there. The man offers to help the sergeant by sitting on the barrel and keeping an eye on that side of the harbour. The sergeant accepts his offer. The man does not want to share the reward.

The two sit on the barrel and the conversation continues as they keep an eye on the water. The man asks for a match to light his pipe and the sergeant obliges him and lights his own pipe. The sergeant says it is a hard thing to be a policeman. His is a thankless and dangerous job; Policemen have to face the criticism of the people and have no choice but to obey their orders. People do not know how married policemen feel when they are sent on dangerous mission. The man then sings a famous Irish folklore. The sergeant asks him to stop singing the song because it is unsuitable to the times. The man says that he wanted to sing it to keep up his spirit. His heart sinks when he thinks of the escapee creeping up to get them. The man pretends that something has hit him and he rubs his heart. The sergeant tells him that he will get his reward in heaven and the man replies that life is precious. Then he resumes the singing about the wrongs that the foreigners have done to mother Ireland. The sergeant tells him that he has missed a line about Mother Ireland's blood stained gown. The man is happy that he knows that patriotic ballad. He reminds the sergeant that as a young man, he must have sung that ballad with his friends. He must have sung other ballads too, like Shan Bhean Bhoct and Grean on the Cape. The nationalist also must have sung those ballads when he was young. The man appeals to the sergeant's patriotism. He tells him that the wanted man might have been one of his friends. The sergeant agrees. The man says that in his youth, if his friends told him a plan to free Ireland from foreign hands then he might have joined them because he too liked his motherland to be free. The sergeant agrees that in his youth he had the nationalist spirit. The man says that it is a strange world because a mother cannot say what her child will grow up to be or who will be who in the end. The sergeant agrees with the man's argument. If he had not become a policeman for the sake of his family, who knows what he would have become. He might have become a nationalist and might have escaped the jail and might have been sitting like this on the barrel and the wanted man might have become a sergeant and might

have hunted him. He might have broken the law and the wanted man might be keeping it. He might have tried to kill him with a pistol or a stone.

The two men hear the sound of boat in the water. The man tells a lie that he hears nothing. He adds that when the sergeant was young, he was with the people and not with the law. This remark hurts the sergeant who replies that he is proud of being an officer. The man says that he should have been a nationalist and then he would have been on the side of Ireland. The sergeant is angry and tells the man not to talk like that. He has his duties to perform. As he hears the sound of a boat approaching, the man begins to sing a patriotic ballad. The song was a signal to the boatman to come. The sergeant threatens the man with arrest if he does not stop singing. A whistle from below answers the song of the wanted man, repeating the tune. The sergeant tries to stop the man and asks him who he is. He realises at once that he is the wanted man. As the man takes off his hat and wig, the sergeant seizes them. He is sorry that he has been deceived well. The man declares that he will arrest him. As the man tries to take out a pistol from his pocket, the voice of the two policemen is heard. Then he requests the sergeant not to betray him.

As the two colleagues come near he hides the wig and hat behind him. He says he had seen no one and does not require their company. He wants the place to be quiet. When policeman B offers to leave a lantern with him, he does not accept it. They tell him that he may need it as the night is dark and cloudy. Besides they tell him a lantern is a comfort. It provides not only light but warmth too. It is like the fire at home. The sergeant orders them to go at once. As they go, the man comes out from behind the barrel. He tells the sergeant that he wants his hat and wig back before he goes away. As the man goes towards the steps, he expresses his gratitude to him. He tells him that he may be able to do as much for him When Ireland becomes free, when the small will rise and the big will fall down. At the rising of the Moon they will change places. The Rising of the Moon is a symbol of Irish independence. As the man disappears the sergeant reads the placard and then turning to the audience, wonders whether he is a fool to give up the reward.

## **QUESTIONS FOR REVISION**

I. Answer the following questions in two or three sentences.

1. What were the sergeant and the policemen doing near the harbour?

The sergeant and the policemen were outing up placard of the escapee on the barrel at the quayside.

2. What would be the reaction of the people if they were to arrest the nationalist?

People would abuse the police if they were to arrest the escapee because he was a popular nationalist and a revolutionary who wanted his motherland to be free from British domination.

3. In what disguise does the patriot appear before the sergeant?

The patriot after escaping from jail comes to the harbour disguised as a poor ballad singer named Jimmy Walsh. He tells the sergeant that he wants to sell ballads to the sailors.

4. What is the sergeant's attitude towards policeman's job?

According to the sergeant, policeman's job is a hard one. It is thankless and a bit dangerous too. He gets nothing but the abuse from the people but he has his duties to perform.

5. Why doesn't the sergeant betray the patriot?

The sergeant does not betray the patriot because he himself feels the noble emotion of patriotism. In his heart he feels sympathy for the man and his great cause.

- II. Answer the following questions in a paragraph not exceeding 100 words.

6. What was the confusion the sergeant had in the play 'The Rising of The Moon'?

(Refer to the notes given above.)

- III. Answer the following in not more than 300 words.

7. Give an account of how the sergeant let the patriot escape.

(Refer to the notes given above.)

## CHAPTER -15

### THE BEAR

By

ANTON CHEKHOV

**Learning Objectives:** To enable the students

1. To familiarise with the Russian literature
2. To understand Chekhov's style of writing.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

##### ANTON CHEKHOV: (1860-1904)

Chekhov is a dramatist and short story writer who is one of the greatest figures in Russian literature. He was the son of a merchant and belonged to a family that could buy their freedom with money. He was fortunate enough to get good education and graduated from the School of Medicine at the University of Moscow. It was in order to support his family that he started writing stories and jokes which he published under strange pen-names like 'The Doctor without Patients', 'My Brother's Brother', etc.

The theatre had always attracted Chekhov especially the light musical comedy known as Vaudeville. This influenced him to write his comedies, 'The Bear', 'The Proposal' and 'The Wedding'. Some of his major plays are 'The Sea –Gull', 'Uncle Vanya' and 'The Cherry Orchard'. These plays give a very good picture of Russia immediately before the revolution.

#### ABOUT THE PLAY

Although the plot is simple Chekhov has shown his excellence in the creation of the atmosphere and the delineation of the character. He described the play as a 'jest' and was very much surprised when it turned out to be highly successful and profitable. It is a relatively simple kind of comedy which is not concerned with any serious idea. It presents a simple but amusing situation which ends in a delightful conclusion. Madame Popov is a pretty widow who has shut herself up in mourning for a husband who was never faithful to her. A boorish creditor, who is a retired lieutenant of artillery, comes on the scene, bullies her, challenges her to a duel and finding her spirited and brave ends up proposing to her. The characters are well drawn, and the dialogue is brilliant and full of delightful surprise.

#### MEANING OF DIFFICULT WORDS:

The Kingdom of heaven be his: May this soul go to heaven!

I buried my old woman too: my wife also died.

Livery: special uniform worn by the servants in a large house.

Gentry: people of good birth and social position.

Perfect sugar plums: Luka's way of saying that the officers are very handsome.

A sight for sore-eyes: a delightful and welcome sight.

Toby ,Giant: horses which Madame Popov's husband used to ride.

Christ be with you: an exclamation conveying sympathy and comfort.

The Kortchagins and Vlassovs: Russian families, friends of Madame Popov and her late husband.

Chubby: an adjective meaning plump and around, but used here as a term of endearment.

He is a regular devil: a frightening bully.

Artillery: the section of the army using big guns.

Steward: manager of the property.

dimple: a hollow place formed in the cheek when one smiles, a sign of beauty.

mourning: express grief over the death of someone.

harangue: to speak to someone for a long time to persuade her/him.

midges: a small fly that flies in groups and sometimes bites.

convent: a Christian community under monastic vows, especially one of nuns.

backbiting: to speak slanderously

there you are: these are the facts; this is what is happening.

Feel equal to: feel strong enough.

Pothouse : a low-class public house.

Vodka: a Russian alcoholic drink.

Gruzdiov, Yaroshevitch etc.....: people who owed him money.

A billion attack: sickness caused by too much bile.

Kvass: a thin sour beer.

Highway man: robber.

Take liberties: behave in an improper way with too much familiarity.

An infliction: a painful, troublesome experience.

*Je vous prie*( French) : I tell you.

All sentiment and honey: very loving and sweet.

A brass farthing: a worthless coin.

An ethereal being: a creature too light and delicate and too spiritual to be connected with the world.

*Chef-d'oeuvre*(French): a masterpiece (in art, literature, etc.)

Masquerade in black: go about in black clothes, putting up a false show of grief.

Ensign: an infantry officer who carried the ensign or the flag of the regiment.

Unfledged poet: one who is beginning to write poetry.

Flushing crimson: blushing a deep red.

Feminine frailty: weakness that is natural to women.

Emancipation: setting free.,( at the time when Chekhov was writing this play the freedom of women was being widely discussed.)

A mush of sentiment: a soft, sentimental creature.

A rouble: Russian coin.

The brace: a pair.

Ravishing: enchanting.

That's the last straw: that's the limit of my endurance.

You funk it,do you?: Are you afraid to fight? (funk is a slang).

Wriggling: trying to escape from having to fight.

I am done: I am ruined.

Thrown over: jilted.

Maudlin: weakly sentimental.

Completely bowled over: completely overwhelmed.



Holy saints: an exclamation of surprise on seeing Smirnov and Popov Kissing when they were expected to be duelling.

## SUMMARY OF THE TEXT

The play takes place in the [drawing room](#) of Elena Ivanovna Popova's [estate](#) on the seven month anniversary of her husband's death. Since her husband died, Popova has locked herself in the house in [mourning](#). Her footman, Luka, begins the play by begging Popova to stop mourning and step outside the estate. She ignores him, saying that she made a promise to her husband to remain forever faithful to his memory. Their conversation is interrupted when Grigory Stepanovitch Smirnov arrives and wishes to see the Elena Popova.

Although Luka tells Grigory Smirnov to leave, he ignores Luka's requests and barges into the [dining room](#). Popova agrees to meet him and Smirnov explains to her that her late husband owes him a sum of 1,200 [roubles](#). Because he is a landowner, Smirnov explains that he needs the sum paid to him on that same day to pay for the [mortgage](#) of a house due the next day. Popova explains that she has no money with her and that she will settle her husband's debts when her [steward](#) arrives the next day. Smirnov gets angered by her refusal to pay him back and mocks the supposed 'mourning' of her husband.

Smirnov decides that he will not leave the estate until his debts are paid off, even if that means waiting until the next day. He and Popova get into another argument when he starts yelling at the footman to bring him kvass or any alcoholic beverage. The argument turns into a debate about true love according to the different genders. Smirnov argues that women are incapable of loving "anybody except a lapdog," to which Popova argues that she wholeheartedly loved her husband although he cheated on her and disrespected her. The argument deteriorates into another shouting match about paying back the debt. During this argument Popova insults Smirnov by calling him a [bear](#), amongst other names, saying, "You're a [boor](#)! A coarse bear! A Bourbon! A [monster](#)!"

Smirnov, insulted, calls for a [duel](#), not caring that Popova is a woman. Popova, in turn, enthusiastically agrees and goes off to get a pair of guns her husband owned. Luka overhears their conversation, gets frightened for his mistress, and goes off to find someone to help put an end to their feud before anyone gets hurt. Meanwhile, Smirnov says to himself how impressed he is by Popova's audacity and slowly realizes that he has actually fallen in love with her and her [dimpled cheeks](#). When Popova returns with the [pistols](#), Smirnov makes his love confession. Popova oscillates between refusing him and ordering him to leave and telling him to stay. Eventually, the two get close and kiss each other just as Luka returns with the gardener and coachman.

## QUESTIONS FOR REVISION

- I. Answer the following questions in two or three sentences.
  1. Who was Luka?

Luka was Popova's footman.

2. What had Smirnov come asking for?

Popova's late husband owed Smirnov a sum of 1,200 [roubles](#). Smirnov explains that he needed the sum paid to him on that same day as he had to pay for the [mortgage](#) of a house due the next day.

3. What does Popova say when Smirnov demanded an immediate settlement of the accounts?

Popova explains that she has no money with her and that she will settle her husband's debts when her [steward](#) arrives the next day.

4. Why did Smirnov propose to Popova?

Smirnov was impressed with Popova's audacity and realizes that he had fallen in love with her dimpled cheeks.

5. Does Popova accept the proposal put forth by Smirnov?

Initially Popova is not able to make up her mind. She oscillates between refusing him and ordering him to leave and telling him to stay. Eventually, the two get close and kiss each other.

II. Answer the following questions in a paragraph not exceeding 100 words.

6. What were Lieutenant Smirnov's views on Women?
7. What were the incidents that led to the duel?
8. Write a character analysis of the following characters
- Luka
  - Lieutenant Smirnov
  - Popova

III. Answer the following in not more than 300 words.

9. Write an essay on the title of the play.
10. Write an essay on the play as a farce.

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## Model Question Paper

### Common Course

**Time: 3 Hrs**

**Total weight age: 30**

**I. Answer the following bunch of questions. (weight age 3×1)**

A 1. Rabindranath Tagore won the Nobel Prize for Literature in the year

- a. 1920
- b. 1912
- c. 1930
- d. 1913

2. O. Henry is the pen name of which American writer

- a. Wordsworth
- b. Robert Frost
- c. Willam Sydney Porter
- d. Emily Dickinson

3. Like the weight of Cathedral Tunes. The figure of speech used here is:

- a. simile
- b. personification
- c. metaphor
- d. synecdoche

4. A sonnet is a poem comprising of

- a. 16 lines
- b. 14 lines
- c. 15 lines
- d. 20 lines

B 5. The vendor who called his product by different names each day sold\_\_\_\_\_

- a. peanuts
- b. areca nuts
- c. almonds
- d. ground nuts

6. Peeler is a slang for:

- a. a policeman
- b. a sergeant
- c. an ordinary man
- d. a constable

7. Vass in German stands for:

- a. What
- b. Why
- c. goat
- d. coat

8. Chef d'oeuvre in French stands for:

- |                  |              |
|------------------|--------------|
| a. a masterpiece | c. a poem    |
| b. a cook        | d. a soldier |

9. What was Lamb's grand mother's name?

- |                  |                |
|------------------|----------------|
| a. Mary Fennings | c. Mrs. Philip |
| b. Anne Fennings | d. Sarah Field |

10. Which of the following is not true of Bertrand Russell?

- a. Russell was a prominent anti-war activist
- b. he championed anti-imperialism
- c. he was awarded the Nobel Prize for peace
- d. he was a prominent logician

11. How many roubles did Popova's husband have to pay Smirnov

- |         |         |
|---------|---------|
| a. 1200 | c. 1700 |
| b. 1600 | d. 1220 |

12. Which of the following is not a poem by Kamala Das?

- |                          |                                  |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| a. A Hot Noon in Malabar | c. My Grandmother's House        |
| b. My Story              | d. A Doll for a Child Prostitute |

**II. Answer the following questions in two or three sentences. (weight age 9×1)**

13. Why does the poet call Lucy Gray as 'solitary child'?

14. What were the sergeant and the policemen doing near the harbour?

15. Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection. Explain.

16. Why did the children gather around Charles Lamb?

17. Why is adulthood described as 'harsh adult glory'?

18. Who was the offensive woman traveller? What was peculiar about her?

19. What does the poet mean by the lines "If this be error and upon me proved, I never writ, nor no man ever loved"?

20. Why did Dr Kalam decide to interact with young students?

21. What had happened to Johnsy?

**III. Answer any five of the following questions in a paragraph not exceeding 100 words.  
(weight age 5×2)**

22. What were Lieutenant Smirnov's views on Women?

23. What was the confusion the sergeant had in the play 'The Rising of The Moon'?

24. What is the humour in the story *The Last Leaf*?

25. Describe the incident that took place in the astrologer's life that changed his life?

26. Road not taken as a philosophical poem.

27. The poem, "Lucy Gray" is very picturesque. Which are the words that give the poem this quality?

28. How does the poet react to his friend in "A poison Tree"? How is it different from the emotions he has for his enemy?

**IV. Write an essay of not more than 300 words: (weight age 2×4)**

29. 'Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.' Discuss

30. The Last Leaf is a suitable title for the story. Discuss.

31. Write an essay on the title of the play, "The Bear".

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