

# **PROSE**

**B.A. (English) – First Year**

**Paper – II**

**Paper Code: BAEG 1912**



**PONDICHERRY UNIVERSITY**

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## **B.A. ENGLISH - SYLLABUS**

**Paper code: BAEG 1912**

### **PAPER - II**

#### **PROSE**

**Objectives:** To Introduce British prose writings of various periods.

**UNIT- 1:** Francis Bacon, 'Of Studies'

**UNIT - 2:** Oliver Goldsmith, 'Man in Black' Joseph Addison, "Sir Roger at Church"

**UNIT- 3:** Charles Lamb, 'Dream Children' William Hazlitt, "On Reading Old Books"

**UNIT - 4:** Russell, 'An Ideal Individual' G.K. Chesterton, 'Advantages of Having One Leg'

**UNIT - 5:** Orwell, 'Sporting Spirit'



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## PROSE

Before we approach the essays prescribed, it would be helpful to have a brief introduction to the origin and development of prose and essay form in general. The eight essays prescribed in this prose paper were written in different periods from sixteenth to twentieth century.

### 1.1.1 General Introduction

Prose form is a style of literary writing that was developed in the early century. The word 'prose' is derived from the Old French prose and originated from the Latin expression 'prosa oration' which means literally, 'straightforward or direct speech'. King Alfred contributed for the evolution of this genre when he was eager to improve the state of English learning. He introduced a program to translate some important texts into English mainly to reach the common man and he himself had translated some of the texts into English. The word 'prose' appeared in English in the fourteenth century though it was developed centuries back. The emergence of prose was the result of many attempts from the writers of various ages and the evolution of this genre evidenced many changes. The changes were due to differences in styles and techniques adopted by the writers of various periods.

The intention of switching over to the prose style from the poetic style was to make the reading possible even to laymen. The poetic style was mainly meant for the elite and was difficult for all the readers to comprehend the concept and theme because of the poetic diction and poetic devices deployed. The meaning is not directly conveyed in poetic writing thus confining the genre to suit only the scholars' intellect. In contrary, the prose writing uses plain language and simple structure which aid in conveying the meaning directly to the readers. Therefore, understanding prose is comparatively simpler than understanding poetry.

As prose emerged as a separate literary genre, it has developed into many types based on the purpose in which it was written. The types of prose can be broadly categorized as fiction and non-fiction. Fiction is based on one's creativity and imagination where the plot, character and setting are all the product of writers' imagination; whereas, non-fiction refers to a piece of writing which is based on truth and facts and narration involves characters and setting from real life. Sub-

genres that are grouped under fiction writing are short story, fable, parable, novel and novella. Sub-genres of non-fiction writing include biography, autobiography, essays (miscellaneous), travelogue or travel writing, news reports, historical writing and others so on.

As this prose paper deals with eight essays from different centuries, it would be useful to have a look at the definition and the development of the essay form. An essay is a short formal piece of writing, yet at times it can be a little informal too. Several definitions of essay are available but Dr. Johnson's definition of essay that it is "a loose sally of the mind, an irregular, undigested piece, not a regular and orderly composition" is quite famous. Saintsbury loosely describes essay as "a work of prose art." According to W. H. Hudson, an essay is essentially personal and it belongs to the literature of self-expression. Hugh Walker comments that essay form deals with all subjects and no subject is an exception.

The word 'essay' means an attempt or assay which means an attempt to dwell on some subject. The word essay is applied to various kinds of literary writings in prose form. It may contain reflections, quotations, didactic thoughts, deep observations on society or personal narration or reminisce. An essay does not deal with all aspects of a particular subject hence it is usually short and of moderate length. The essay is meant to convey ideas precisely and concisely. Mostly the essays are subjective and personal. The purpose of essay is to provide information to readers and to encourage their understanding and thought process on a particular subject or topic.

There are many types of essay but they are often broadly put into four categories: argumentative essay, expository essay, narrative essay and descriptive essay. The argumentative essay deals with an argument in detail for a particular thesis statement. The author takes a stance on the subject and develops the ideas based on evidences that are built in the essay and most of the academic essays are argumentative essays. The expository essay investigates an idea, evaluate the provided evidence, then expound on the idea and set forth an argument concerning that idea in a clear and concise manner. The narrative essay has a single motif and incidents, happenings and characters revolve around that single motif. The



descriptive essay describes an object or a person or a place or an experience or one's emotion or emotional situation.

The origin of the Essay had its root from the Roman writers, Cicero and Seneca and their *Epistles* were regarded as essays rather than letters. Plutarch's *Moralia* belongs to the essays of personal type. The French writer Montaigne of the sixteenth century had written a volume of essays titled *Essais*. He was the one who employed the term 'essays' for the first time. The literary essays can be broadly divided into six types based on the purpose and style in which they were written.

1. The Aphoristic Essay
2. The Character Essay
3. The Critical Essay
4. The Periodical Essay
5. The Personal Essay
6. Twentieth Century Essay

### **The Aphoristic Essay**

Discussing these different types of essays helps one get a clear idea about the development of essay century-wise too. The aphoristic essay mainly flourished in the sixteenth century. Inspired by the writings of the French writer Montaigne, Bacon was the first to write formal and proper essays in English. Bacon is known for his aphoristic style of essays which contain mostly crisp, short, pithy and epigrammatic sentences. The aphoristic essays are impersonal and objective. Aphoristic essays are well known for their balanced structure and exactness of style. These essays do not portray the humans and yet some essays are written to entertain the readers. Civil and moral codes are used in this type of essays. His essays carry a didactic tone and are called "counsels civil and moral" and 'dispersed meditations.' Bacon is the most important essayist and prose writer of the sixteenth century and is considered as the father of the English essay.

### **The Character Essay**

In the beginning of seventeenth century, the essay form began focusing on the character sketches. It was evident in the writings of John Earle, Joseph Hall and Sir Thomas Overbury. Mostly the character essays were known for minute details that were usually presented in a humorous and satirical way. Various types of men

are depicted as pen-pictures in this type of essays. This type of writing was actually influenced by the writings of the Greek Philosopher Theophrastus and the Roman Seneca. Joseph Addison's essays can be grouped under this category as his essays on Sir Roger de Coverley are famous.

### **1.1.2 The Critical Essay**

The new type of essay called the critical essay flourished during the seventeenth century was introduced by Dryden during the Restoration period. It gave importance to the traditional form and mostly the theme was literary criticism. The form of these essays followed the Montaigne's. All the essays and prefaces written by Dryden belonged to this type of essay. The *Essay of Dramatic Poesy* and the *Preface to the Fables* are the two best examples of this type of essay. Even in the works of Arnold, Hazlitt, Carlyle and Ruskin in the nineteenth century, this form of writing is obvious.

### **1.1.3 The Periodical and Social Essay**

The periodical essay flourished in the eighteenth century mainly with the publication of the *Tatler* and the *Spectator* but Daniel Defoe's *Review* set a new fashion. During this century, majority of the writers started writing to the periodicals and magazines. The subject matter of these essays is inspired by the social life of the people. The objective of Addison and Steel was to highlight the follies of the society and offer valuable moral and social guidance to the readers. The Periodical Essay was also adapted for literary criticism and the delineation of the character. Sir Roger de Coverley was a renowned fictitious character of the period. The growth and development of the periodical essays were supported by Dr. Johnson's *Rambler* and *Idler*. Jonathan Swift contributed to this form of essays as a pamphleteer. Jonathan Swift, Dr. Johnson and Oliver Goldsmith were some of the other essay writers of this period. The periodical essays were famous and continued to survive but there was no reasonable contribution in the nineteenth century until Charles Lamb transformed this form of the essay by adding personal experiences and pathos.

### **1.1.4 The Reviews**

The introduction of periodical writings paved way for review writing in the beginning of the nineteenth century. The journal, *the Review*, carried literary

features as well critical articles. *The Edinburgh* and the *Quarterly* were the best-known early Reviews. The important contributors of the *Review* are Southey, Scott, Hazlitt, Macaulay and Carlyle. These essays quoted verses and commented on them and sometimes criticized the texts.

Another type of periodical called the Magazine grew up during the same period. It was a miscellaneous composition of creative, critical, informative and entertaining elements; where the *Reviews* had only critical elements. *Blackwood's Magazine*, *Fraser's Magazine* and the *London Magazine* were some of the renowned magazines of the period. Lamb's essays were written in the magazines of this period. Mathew Arnold, Walter Pater, John Morley, Leslie Stephen and J.A. Symonds were some of the essay writers of the period.

#### **1.1.5 The Personal Essay**

The personal essay was particularly made famous by Charles Lamb through his personal confessions. The writer talks about himself and it is mainly like a conversation of the author with the reader. Lamb shares his happiness and sorrows in an easy and conversational tone. This personal essay began with Montaigne but it was perfected by Lamb in his Elia Essays. Elia essays are the mixture of autobiographical elements filled with humour and pathos. Thus this type of essay is mainly subjective in nature. This subjective element is evidenced even in the nineteenth century writings of Hazlitt, De Quincey and Leigh Hunt. Yet Lamb is the one who excelled in this kind of essay and he is rightly called as the prince of personal essayists.

The development of essay in the twentieth century is encouraged by the number of periodicals and newspapers. The essays initially published in the form of articles are collected and published in the book form. Some of the notable prose writers are Chesterton, A. G. Gardiner, Lucas, J. B. Priestly and Hilaire Belloc. The twentieth century essay is simple and conversational; the theme is not restricted to any particular subject; the language used is everyday speech devoid of artificial and complex style and use of satire, wit and humour are evidenced. Edmund Gosse, W.K. Ker, Andres Lang, Lascelles Abercrombie, Virginia Woolf, Sir A.T. Quiller-Couch and T.S. Eliot are some of the modern critics who wrote critical essays. Desmond MacCarthy, Aldous Huxley, E.M. Forster, G.K. Chesterton, A.G.

Gardiner, Hilaire Belloc, J.B. Priestley and Charles Morgan were some of the essayists of the modern period. The miscellaneous prose patterns – memoirs, biography, autobiography, travelogues, history writing, works on religion and philosophy, science literature, literary criticism – were produced during the modern period.

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## **UNIT – 1**

### **LESSON 1.1: Francis Bacon, “Of Studies”**

This unit offers one essay titled “Of Studies” written by Francis Bacon hence the essay is referred to as Lesson 1.1

#### **1.1.1 Objectives**

This unit introduces to the students the contributions made by Bacon to English literature. It enables students to grasp the literary and social background in which Bacon wrote his essays. It helps students to critically appreciate and analyze Bacon’s writings. By analyzing this essay critically, students learn the importance of reading books and various methods in learning and choosing the books.

#### **1.1.2 Biographical Note**

Francis Bacon, born on 22 January 1561 at York House in London, was the son of Sir Nicholas Bacon, the Lord Keeper of the Great Seal and his second wife Anne, the daughter of Anthony Cooke, the noted Renaissance Humanist. It is believed that Bacon, due to his poor health, was educated privately in his early years. He had his private education from John Walsall, an Oxford graduate with a strong inclination to Puritanism. Bacon, at the age of twelve, preceded to Trinity College, Cambridge in 1573. He met the Queen for the first time here and the latter was overwhelmed by his precocious intellect and called him “the young Lord Keeper.” Bacon lived in Cambridge for three years together with his elder brother Anthony Bacon under the personal tutelage of Dr. John Whitgift, future Archbishop of Canterbury. Bacon received his education predominantly in Latin following the medieval curriculum. His studies instilled in him the disbelief towards the methods and results of science then practiced. He believed that those methods were inexact and erroneous. To uncover truth, to serve his country and to serve the church, were the foremost goals of Bacon. Though Bacon had great reverence towards Aristotle, he couldn’t completely accept Aristotelian philosophy and disagreed with most of his philosophical statements considering the same as barren and unfruitful disputations.

Bacon went to Gray's Inn in the year 1576 and thereafter he moved to abroad, where he completed his education. The regime of Henry III in France and the societal condition helped Bacon gain valuable political training and also he joined the embassy of Sir Amyas Paulet. For the next few years, he visited many places such as Blois, Poitiers, Tours, Italy, and Spain and so on. Bacon performed routine diplomatic works simultaneously mastering language, statecraft, civil law during his travels. All these experiences prepared Bacon to begin his political endeavor but he had to return to England in 1579 because of the unexpected demise of his father. After his father's demise, to support himself to lead a life, Bacon borrowed money and got into debt. Also he was in a situation to decide upon a profession. Hence, to put an end to all his problems and to pursue a life of learning, he decided to look for a prestigious post in the court for which Bacon sought his uncle, Lord Burghley's aid to apply for a post at court in the year 1580 but his effort was unsuccessful. No other go, he worked at Gray's Inn for a couple of years until he was admitted as a barrister in 1582. Bacon started to pen about the state of affairs of parties in the church and also published a Latin tract, his philosophical reform, *Temporis Partus Maximus (The Greatest Birth of Time)*, the first draft of his own system. As Bacon had compassion towards Puritanism, he attended the sermons of the Puritan chaplain of Gray's Inn and also accompanied his mother to the Temple Church to listen to Walter Travers which led to the publication of his earliest existing piece criticizing the suppression of the Puritan clergy by the English church.

The maiden step in Bacon's parliamentary career to enter the House of Commons was set when he was elected as Member of Parliament for Bossiney, Devon in 1581 by-election. Then he continued to stay in the same status in 1584, 1586, 1589, 1593 and 1597 for Melcombe in Dorset, Taunton, Liverpool, Middlesex and Southampton respectively. Though he was too intimate to the crown, Bacon was against dictatorial dominance, feudal freedoms and religious discrimination hence he can be called a liberal-minded reformer who was willing to improve and simplify the law. Bacon being one of the influences behind the union of the United Kingdom, advocated the unification of England and Scotland. In the parliament of 1586, he played a prominent role in advising the execution of Mary, Queen of Scots

yet Bacon didn't gain any valuable post that would lead him to achieve success and power.

In the year 1596, he was made a legal counsel of the Queen which had given him the honour of being the first Queen's Counsel designate. The very next year, that is, in 1597, Bacon published the first edition of his *Essays* (which were totally ten in number). Earl of Essex, who was once influential in the court and also a friend and benefactor to Bacon, had lost the Queen's favour and had planned a rebellion against the Queen by 1601. A team was appointed to investigate the charges against the Earl of Essex and Bacon was one among them. Bacon showed additional interest and crude eagerness in confirming the charges against his patron, Essex who was executed in the same year. After his execution, the Queen commanded Bacon to pen an official account of the trial, which was later published as *A Declaration of the Practices and Treasons attempted and committed by Robert late Earle of Essex and his Complices, against her Majestie and her Kingdoms . . .* Yet Bacon was unpopular with Queen and also his circumstances were bad for some time that he had been arrested for debt but fortunately he could come out of this problem with some assistance.

The accession of James gave a fortunate turn to Bacon's life. His career flourished and he was conferred with Knighthood in the year 1603. Cleverly, to set right the things happened Bacon wrote his *Apologie* in defence of his proceedings in the case of Essex, as Essex was the one who favoured James in succeeding the throne. After these, Bacon was fortunate to get appointed in various posts and positions in the court of King James. In the first Parliament of the new king, Bacon was appointed a Commissioner for the unification with Scotland. In the year 1605, he published his work *The Advancement of Learning*, which was dedicated to the king. The following year, Bacon married Alice Barnham, the daughter of a London merchant. His success in political career continued when he was appointed as a Solicitor-General in 1607. In the year 1608, Bacon had entered upon the Clerkship of the Star Chamber and enjoyed a large source of income still he was eager to obtain further promotion and wealth by supporting the king in most of his endeavours and policies. He became Attorney-General in 1613 and in 1618, Lord Keeper, the next Lord Chancellor, the most powerful position in England and Baron

Verulam. At this time, he wrote a political romance entitled *Novum Organum* and presented to the king.

Though Bacon was a man of intellect, he failed to retain his good character and expressed a failure of character in his office. He was corrupt completely politically as well as judicially craving for promotions and fame. In 1621, he was charged for accepting bribes and involving in corruption by the Parliament Committee. As all the evidences were clear, Bacon made no effort to defence himself. Thus he was removed from all his titles and was exiled from court thus ending his public career in disgrace. Thereafter he dedicated himself completely to writing and died of pneumonia on 9<sup>th</sup> April 1626 at Highgate outside London. An influential account of the circumstances of his death was given by John Aubrey's *Brief Lives*.

### **1.1.3 Bacon's Literary Career**

Bacon, a Renaissance man, was an English essayist, philosopher, lawyer, statesman and a pioneer of modern scientific thought. He is called the Father of English essays and his works were influential through the scientific revolution. As discussed in his biography, during his service to the court as a statesman occupying various posts, Bacon often penned for the court. In 1584, he wrote his first political memorandum, *A Letter of Advice to Queen Elizabeth*. He drafted a speech in praise of knowledge to celebrate the anniversary of the queen's coronation in 1592. He introduced a method of scientific inquiry in his works which was often called the *Baconian* method, or simply the scientific method. This is very important empirical method formulated by Bacon as a substitute for the existing systems of thought. Bacon is considered so important for the emergence of Enlightenment because he is seen as the embodiment of both scientific and rational thought. His works spread inductive methods for scientific analysis. Talking about Bacon's philosophy, it is widely presented in the immense and diverse writings he left, which can be put under three categories:

#### **1. Scientific works**

The works fall under this category contain Bacon's ideas for a universal reform of knowledge as opposed to the traditional ideas and methods; inductive methods of scientific inquiry and the improvement of mankind's



state. He did not depend on any traditional approach rather he preferred a direct inquiry of nature then to move on to empirical and general knowledge.

2. Religious and Literary works

This group of works displays his moral philosophy, theological meditations and critique of the nature of the human mind.

3. Juridical works

The works of this group proposes his reforms in Law.

As far Bacon's writings are concerned, he wrote both in Latin and English of which his Latin works were considered more important. One of the significant English works of Bacon is his *Essays: Religious Meditations* which first appeared in the year 1597 and this first edition contains ten essays in total. They cover various topics drawn from both public and private life and were written in a wide range of styles. *The Advancement of Learning* published in 1605 was considered the first important philosophical book to be written in English. This work tells about Bacon's appraisal of the current state of learning and his efforts to reform and advance learning.

*The Wisdom of the Ancients* published in 1609, is a series of commentaries on thirty one mythological characters whose stories Bacon tries to interpret and uncover the hidden profound meanings and symbols in the name of new learning to fit into his contemporary times. Bacon produced his second edition of essays containing thirty eight numbers in 1612. *Novum Organum* was published in 1620 and the title translates to "New Instrument" or "New Method". The full title of this work is *Novum Organum, Sive Indicia Vera de Interpretatione Naturae* (New Organon, or True Directions Concerning the Interpretation of Nature) or *Instaurationis Magnae, Pars II* (Part II of The Great Instauration). This philosophical work contains the base of Bacon's philosophy and details the new logic and method of reasoning which he believes to be superior to the old ways. The first sketch of this work is *Cogita et Visa* and the third part of the *Instauratio* appeared in 1622.

*History of the Reign of King Henry VII* details the reign of the first Tudor monarch Henry VII. After the completion of the work in 1621, the copy was sent to James I and was published in the following year. This was Bacon's only completed

work of history. The first part of the Latin version of *De Augmentis Scientiarum* appeared in 1623 and this work is an expanded version of his earlier English work, *The Advancement of Learning*, published in 1605. This work gives a general summary of human knowledge and highlights the lacunae and imperfections in science. *History of Life and Death* was published in 1623. The third edition of essays titled *Essayes or Counsels, Civil and Morall*, published in 1625 contain fifty eight essays. These essays are called by Bacon as ‘dispersed meditations’ and ‘brief sketches’. Though critics made the point clear that Bacon’s essays were borrowed forms, his essays remained in high repute.

To mention other Latin works of Bacon are *Sylva Sylvarum: Or a Natural History in Ten Centuries* is a part of his philosophical works which was actually designed to give a complete view of Natural Philosophy and Natural History. At the time of his death Bacon was engaged upon this work hence it was published posthumously. It is said that this book is collection of one thousand paragraphs, mainly extracts from various books dealing with the medical treatments for the prolongation of life and the preservation of flesh. With this can be included *The New-Atlantis*, an unfinished work which describes a utopian island and its scientific community. His other works are *Apophthegms*, *Scala Intellectus*, *Prodromi*, *Philosophia Secunda* and a translation of some of the Psalms.

#### **1.1.4 Short Summary of Bacon’s “Of Studies”**

Bacon begins his essay by unfolding the three primary purposes of study: delight, ornament and ability. Studies are the source of happiness and it gives reading the sense of satisfaction. It has many advantages and usefulness at the same time, demerits and limitations too. Bacon discusses various ways in which studies benefit readers. Different types of people view studies in different perspectives. According to Bacon, reading guides people in their life when it is applied correctly. Knowledge and experience should go hand in hand to encounter life. The author elaborates the merits and demerits of reading books, the application of studies in daily lives, various methods of choosing books, how studies without the practical application end in vain and finally how studies can become remedy to various defects of human mind.

### 1.1.5 Detailed Summary of Bacon's "Of Studies"

"Of Studies" is the essay from the series of ten essays published in 1597 (the first edition of *Essays*). It was revised in 1612 and additions were made with more sentences and ideas in it along with the modification in some vocabulary and phrases. The title "Of Studies" refers to the collective studies that a person learns in his life. In this classic essay, Bacon puts forth the importance of knowledge and highlights the benefits of reading. It is true that reading activity has various advantages. It helps the readers to endure and tackle difficult and challenging situations. It expands readers' intellectual thinking and cures the illness and blockades in the mind. Bacon provides some right methods to approach different books of different branches and their benefits to our life. He also highlights and illustrates the role of studies in any individual's routine life and how the studies benefit a reader's life in many different ways. As far Bacon is concerned, the study should always be related to the application of knowledge in practical life.

Bacon begins his essay by unfolding the three primary purposes of study: studying for delight, for ornamenting one's life and to improve one's ability. To quote Bacon's words: "Studies serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability." The first chief use of studies is that studies serve for delight meaning studies is the source of happiness and it gives a feeling of extreme pleasure and satisfaction to the readers. This delight the reader may experience the most in solitude ("in privateness") and in leisure after freeing oneself from the busy bee life ("retiring"). Studying in school or college is carried out with a purpose of facing an examination but reading in one's private space offers a valuable pleasure. Irrespective of the personal preferences of the reader, one may feel content in himself/herself by involving in the reading activity. Studies makes a man relaxed and gives him extreme joy when one is away from social life. It is a kind of voyage to the self-discovery when carried out in solitude like Thoreau's *Walden* is a voyage of spiritual discovery by undertaking a simple living in natural surroundings.

The second use is that studies "for ornament in discourse". Certainly study has a decorative value which is evident in discussion, discourse and dialogue. It is obvious that a person with wide knowledge and good command over the language can render a speech or involve in a discussion more impressively than an

uneducated person. It is because studies helps one get enough source of ideas and perspectives to decorate his dialogue. When a well-read person involves in a conversation, he could hold the interest of the listener by exhibiting his knowledge in a prudent way by stating more supportive points and facts to convince the person engaged in conversation than an average person does. The author of this essay for instance, provides Latin phrases wherever possible is mainly to add ornamental value to his essay and to display his versatile scholarship.

The third use of studies is to develop the “ability in the judgment and disposition of business.” Ability to judge accurately is an art as it expresses one’s behavioral characteristics. Such ability to judge can be improved by studies as they aid to perceive things from different viewpoints and in proper dealing of affairs. Bacon further elaborates on this idea by giving distinction between expert men and learned men. An expert can be good at executing things but he gets trained or specialized in only one particular field. Hence he may also be good in planning and judging a situation but he is not the same as a learned man because learned man performs better in giving counsels, making plans and organizing things. An expert man judges matters one by one and offers solutions according to his experience. However, an educated man with his knowledge can provide counsels at any situation so learned men are best at “marshaling of affairs.” It is because studies help him to evolve as an efficient and experienced man so that he could manage his business fastidiously and yield the best result. Accordingly Bacon is of the view that only learned and well-read men can accomplish plans effectively and manage their daily affairs.

In the next few lines, Bacon talks about the effect of excessive reading. Studies serve the readers in the best way and it has many advantages and usefulness which was discussed in the previous lines by the author but at the same time, there are certain demerits and limitations of study as well. Again the author here states the three abuses of studies. Firstly, spending too much time on study makes one lazy because anything in excess causes the pitfall. If a man spends prolonged time on study that too studying with wrong intentions, makes the man idle. Seeing from physiological perspective, when a reader sits for a long time, the immobility of the body would lead to sluggishness as reading doesn’t require any physical activity and it is an inactive task.

Secondly, using the study as a mere decoration results in artificiality. One should use his knowledge in an appropriate conversation otherwise it would be simply an imprudent display of his learning. It may sound contradictory when related to the one of the three chief uses of studies stated in the second line. But the author is of the opinion that though the study has an ornamental value, it may end in exaggeration and showing-off if used excessively in conversation and project a learned man as flamboyant which is a moral degradation too. Thirdly, a scholar who makes his judgment wholly by their rules seems to be silly and foolish and it will just reveal his quaintness as a scholar. It is not possible to make judgment every time with the help of bookish knowledge alone because application of the knowledge without understanding the practicality is a fault. Although the reader gets influenced by the book, one must be able to clearly draw a line between the bookish world and the real world, between theory and practical while making judgment.

Bacon reiterates the benefits of study as they enhance human nature which is “perfected by experience.” He makes an analogy between the natural abilities of a person and the natural plants which needs pruning to shape into any aesthetic design and also for the overall growth of the tree. Likewise, the natural talents of a man need to be pruned by study. But at the same time, enhancing the knowledge alone makes the reader unfulfilled because it has to be blended with related experience as study aims to offer a holistic development which is accomplished through knowledge and experience together. Thus studies “perfect nature and are perfected by experience.”

According to Bacon, studies benefit readers in varied ways. There are crafty men, simple men and wise men who view study through different lens. In Bacon’s words, “Crafty men condemn studies, simple men admire them, and wise men use them.” Some may admire study whereas some may not. Some may get maximum benefit of it while some others may not. Shrewd and cunning people condemn studies and never respect it because to them studies are of no use. They believe that they are able to handle any situation without studies. On the contrary, to simple men, study is the most valuable thing to be cherished. Although they are not voracious readers, they are aware of the value of books and knowledge and they pay due respect to the learned man. The third category of men, that is, the wise men

always make the best use of the studies because they are aware of the value of study and realize the purpose of practical application of the knowledge to the real life.

Studies do not teach their own use rather it is the person's understanding and wisdom gained through the application of knowledge teaches the usage of studies. This understanding is gained through observation. Books do not only contain wisdom that can be comprehensible through surface reading whereas they carry wisdom beyond it. Hence to comprehend this wisdom through our mind's eye, practical knowledge combined with theoretical knowledge is required. Thus study without pragmatic experience is incomplete because the main objective of study, according to Bacon, is to guide people in all situations they encounter and fill their mind with experience to face the real world. So, studies should be complemented with practical experience. Only when they are tied together, a man's personality attains perfection.

In the next few lines, Bacon suggests the real methods of studies. According to him, to get the real essence from the books, certain methods should be followed while indulging in reading activity because the books we read leave some imprints on our mind. One ought to approach a book with correct attitude because say for instance, if one tries to mainly disapprove others or to prove them wrong during conversation, the person will look for the points only to support his arguments throughout the book he reads. Thus one should "read not to contradict and confute." Bacon suggests the readers to not to believe completely what the book states and not to take everything that is written for granted. Also books should not be read with the intention of critiquing and to judge its merit and value or to use them to enrich oneself to express in discussion or discourse. If one reads a book with such intention then the reader will fail to imbibe the real wisdom thus resulting in superficial reading. Contrary to these ways, one should read a book to "weigh and consider." Before allowing the book to influence one's mind, the person should completely comprehend the writer's intention and message. One ought to not wholly rely on words rather should read and realize the value of the intended message and use it in the real life. The writer further elaborates this point in the following lines of the essay where he reminds the readers that all books are not same.

For Bacon, “some books are to be tasted; others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested.” He advises the readers to choose wisely before reading any book as not all books contain the essence of knowledge. Taking cue from the first line, if some books are meant to give delight to the readers then they are the ones to be just tasted. Certain books need not to be read thoroughly and they are sufficient to be read in parts only. Moreover, these books may be helpful for a person only at some places and not in all situations. Thus one can skim the parts of the books as it is not worthy to read them word by word. Certain other books are to be read hastily and they do not demand much time to complete. At the same time, there are certain books that are to be read “but not curiously” and also certain books require utmost attention and they are “to be read wholly and with diligence and attention.” Here the point is that the books that demand the reader’s diligence may contain hidden wisdom and are to be swallowed.

The books that contain deeper thoughts which are worthier and necessary to be read completely must be chewed and digested like nutrients are absorbed by the body when one chews and digests the food. So while reading such books, readers need to read every part of the book with full devotion. There are few other books which may be “read by deputy” that is, these less important or unimportant books or meaner sort of books may be read only through summaries made by others. Yet reading summaries of certain books written by others will not give the pleasure of reading a primary text. So to get this pleasure, one must read the book completely by oneself or at least choose to read abridged versions. There is another type of distilled books which are like “common distilled waters”. These are extracts made from the books by others and compiled as one book. These books are like “flashy things” which can be used at that time but have no much significance later. Thus, the author has listed out various methods to choose a book and how to go about it and now it is the reader to decide to make the right choice.

In the next few lines, Bacon discusses the merits and effects of involving in activities such as reading, writing and conference. Firstly, “reading maketh a full man.” Bacon had already elaborated on the usefulness of reading, the methods and modes of reading and the overuse of reading. However here he emphasizes the point that only reading makes a man perfect. Reading books fill our minds with novel ideas and sensible thoughts which in turn shape our personality consciously or

unconsciously. When one continues to read books, his knowledge constantly increases consequently making him complete in all aspects. Secondly, “conference a ready man.” Participating in a conversation or a discussion is an appreciable task as many will not volunteer to do immediately. The reason for this initial hesitancy would be lack of ideas and facts and presence of mind to support and substantiate one’s arguments. Comparatively if a person continues to partake in a discourse or discussion readily, it makes him prepared and quick-witted. Definitely such person will be topnotch in using the right words at the right place and he would be never at a loss of words. Besides, such person will gain confidence in dealing with any problems practically scrutinizing the pros and cons and come out with all possible positive solutions. Thirdly, “writing an exact man” – according to the author, writing makes an ideal person. Nowadays the writing habit has been reduced largely with the advent of technological gadgets. But regular writing will make one become quicker at conveying opinions through good sentence construction. Writing helps one to improve analytical and problem-solving skills. It broadens the knowledge and widens the vocabulary. Thus the more one writes, the more he/she learns.

Furthermore, if a person cultivates the writing habit, it improves concentration as well as he or she can relook the notes at any time in future and reuse the ideas to do wonders. So if one does not have the writing habit, then he or she must have great memory to stockpile all learned things in his mind which will not be helpful in all times. Also it is good to take down notes when one reads a book so that his thoughts will be systematized and also it helps in developing preciseness of delivering the ideas and thoughts as the author’s style is. Likewise, if one confers little then he needs to have the presence of mind and sharp wit to manage the discussion. If one reads little, he needs to exhibit pretension of knowing things which he actually does not know.

Bacon, as concluding points of his essay, recommends various studies that serve vital purpose to the individual and to the world as each has its own value. Reading diverse subjects aid an individual in eliminating the blockades of one’s mind and by suggesting this, Bacon rightly puts forth the value of different studies. He opines that like the diseases of the body may be treated with appropriate treatment or apt exercises, the illness of the mind can also be treated with varied appropriate studies as they have curative powers too. Bacon says, “Bowling is good



for the stone and reins; shooting for the lungs and breast; gentle walking for the stomach; riding for the head and the like.” Like how bowling is good for the kidneys, shooting for the lungs and walking is good for the digestion, if a person feels gloomy and low-spirited, he can make him better through studies.

The same point is further asserted by considering reading as a remedy for the deficiencies of the human mind. Studies influence manners and enhance one’s wit. Bacon declares, “Histories make men wise, poets witty, the mathematics subtle, natural philosophy deep, moral grave, logic and rhetoric able to contend.” These words contain volumes of meaning in them. Bacon says that reading the history of ancients makes new generations prudent and witty. By reading poetry, a person develops his imagination and inventiveness. By working out the formulae and laws stated in mathematics, one becomes subtle and keen. Hence if a person’s mind wanders or gets distracted frequently, studying mathematical problems is the only cure and prescription because mathematics helps in increasing one’s concentration. If complete focus and concentration is lacking, one cannot come out with the right solutions to the problems in mathematics. If the mind has difficulty in finding differences between matters or has a confusion of thoughts, then the best option would be to study the works of philosophers and theologians of the middle ages. Philosophy has deeper meanings and it acts as a guiding principle for one’s behaviour. Natural philosophy aids a man to delve deep into a subject to relish the taste of wisdom. Moral philosophy aids in cultivating a serious attitude in man. Logic and rhetoric enables one to see things differently and it is a kind of intellectual self-defense which helps you find the right distinctions between things. Furthermore, if one wishes not to be a circumlocutory and wants to improve his/her argumentative skills, then he/she would prefer studying lawyer’s cases. To solve a case, lawyers take references from various incidents to support their arguments. Hence those who have poor memory and could not develop or recall supportive statements for his arguments, then one must go for lawyer’s cases. So for any problem of psyche, reading has a solution to overcome. Therefore Bacon concludes his essay with the words, “every defect of the mind may have a special receipt.” Thus any impediment to a man’s wit can be eliminated by seeking suitable remedy in studies.

To sum up, in the essay “Of Studies,” Bacon details the value of knowledge and wisdom in practical terms. Also he elaborates the merits and demerits of reading books, the usefulness of studies in daily lives, how knowledge and experience must go hand in hand to attain wisdom, various methods of choosing books, how studies without the practical application goes in vain and finally how studies can provide remedy to various defects of human mind. Thus studies play an important part in a man’s life making him learned, knowledgeable, witty and experienced.

### **1.1.6 Line by Line analysis of the text**

#### **Studies serve for delight, or ornament, and for ability.**

This line is about the three main purposes of studies: delight, ornament and ability. Whatever the purpose of study is, in whatever form it is, it gives happiness to the readers and enriches their thinking, speaking and writing ability adding holistic development to one’s personality. On the whole, study of books is always useful to the one who reads them may it gives delight and pleasure or adds decorative value or augments practical talents.

#### **Their chief use for delight is in privateness and retiring; for ornament in discourse; and for ability in the judgment, and disposition of business.**

Reading is a private activity so it gives delight if people engage in when they are alone as it comforts them amidst the humdrum existence. So when one’s mind is relaxed, it gives pleasure. In another way, when a man is experiencing loneliness lacking human company, books become a pleasant companion especially after retiring from strenuous years of routine. Ornamental value of a book is exposed when a person engages in conversation with others because a learned man has already enough stuff to decorate his arguments. He embellishes his discourse with ease using illustrations and references. Next, reading books enhances one’s practical ability and helps to judge things soundly. Compared to an ordinary person, the learned man can handle his day-to-day affairs in a more capable way.

#### **For expert men can execute, and perhaps judge, of particulars one by one, but the general counsels, and the plots and marshaling of affairs, come best from those that are learned.**

Reading helps the learned man to critically examine all issues. Though the expert men can execute things efficiently and make judgment competently, he cannot be on par with learned men. As the learned men have studied extensively, he is able to scrutinize the matters meticulously by garnering facts and arrive at a sensible conclusion. Also planning and marshaling of affairs require systematic effort. Though worldly experience can help man to carry out his plans, it is the study that aids man with experience to judge sensibly and to rationalize the affairs.

**To spend too much time in studies is sloth; to use them too much for ornament is affectation; to make judgment wholly by their rules is the humor of a scholar.**

Bacon underscores the demerits of studies such as over-indulgence in reading makes one indolent. Undoubtedly a book is a source of pleasure, but one should spend only a reasonable time in reading. Otherwise instead of feeling delighted, it will simply induce indolence and make one unfit for any physical labour. Also if one uses his knowledge to show off, it may result in embellishment. Knowledge has to come to one's rescue whenever necessary and it should not be overused to deal with commonplace issues. If it happens then it would be a vain display of knowledge and scholarship. Also one need not use pedantic and impressive language unnecessarily in an ordinary conversation thus resulting in affectation. Next depending too much on the rules without considering the situation in reality may end in mockery. One has to give priority to the state of affairs to judge a situation with the guidance of studies which forms the quality of a true scholar.

**They perfect nature, and are perfected by experience: for natural abilities are like natural plants, that need pruning, by study; and studies themselves do give forth directions too much at large, except they be bounded in by experience.**

Bacon compares the natural abilities to the natural plants that require nurturing. Likewise, if one has to shape his inherent qualities, it can be done through experiences. Though plants can grow on their own with the help of sunlight and rain, it has to be subjected to regular pruning and trimming to obtain the desired shape. Therefore man's abilities are to be pruned and perfected only by books and experience. Studies offer wide knowledge but to apply this wide knowledge in a

practical life, one needs the guidance of experience to yield the best result. Studies have to be bounded in by experience to not to arrive at misleading conclusions. Thus study without experience is ineffectual.

**Crafty men condemn studies, simple men admire them, and wise men use them; for they teach not their own use, but that is a wisdom without them and above them, won by observation.**

In these lines, Bacon discusses the varied attitudes of different people towards studies. Crafty men are cunning people who never consider book as a fruitful tool. Though the word crafty means cunning, here Bacon refers to the people who assume themselves as superior because they possess practical knowledge and experience. These people disregard studies and don't appreciate studies because they fail to understand the real value of books and studies. Simple men are shallow illiterates or uneducated who look upon studies in awe though they do not reap the fruit of it. For them, learned men are far above them and always pay respect to them because they realize the value of studies. Wise men are the one who makes the best use of studies. They know well to blend bookish knowledge and experience as they have savored the real wisdom from books. Thus crafty men deprecate studies; shallow and simple men approve studies; however the wise and prudent men utilize education according to the understanding of the real-world.

**Read not to contradict and confute; nor to believe and take for granted; nor to find talk and discourse; but to weigh and consider.**

In these lines, Bacon discusses the real purposes of reading and its effects on one's attitude. The point here is one must not read just to contradict and refute the arguments of other people. If one does so then his reading will be oriented towards culling out points to display at the time of argument and the resultant of it would be pointless squabble. Thus the reader's mind should not be pre-occupied with preconceptions when he or she approaches a book. Also Bacon tells the reader not to believe a book completely like a gospel and take for granted what is written in the books. One should weigh each and every word in the book as it influences and shapes our personality. Before jumping into any conclusion, one has to rationally analyze and examine the intention of the author and also check whether the facts provided by the author befit our ideas and opinions or not.

**Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested; that is, some books are to be read only in parts; others to be read, but not curiously; and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention.**

In these lines, Bacon categorizes books according to the amount of attention it needs in the reading process. Bacon has used the metaphor of eating to indicate the various ways of studying. Some foods are just meant for tasting whereas some other items are to be swallowed as it may be good for health. Some food items kept as main dishes or chief dishes have to be chewed well and digested. Similarly, there are different types of books and the reader has to be aware of how to choose the right book and how much importance to be given to the chosen book. For some books that are to be tasted, cursory or surface reading would suffice. Some books that are to be swallowed are to be read wholly but they do not require much attention and hence a quick glance would do in such cases. A few selected books that are to be chewed and digested are to be paid full attention. They ought to be read slowly and diligently to comprehend the underlying meaning.

**Some books also may be read by deputy, and extracts made of them by others; but that would be only in the less important arguments, and the meaner sort of books, else distilled books are like common distilled waters, flashy things.**

In these lines, Bacon continues to reiterate on the modes of reading. Some books may be read with the help of an assistant or deputy so instead of reading the complete book, it is better to go for the summary to know the crux. Reading the summary written by others or extract of books does not give satisfaction still these books demand only lesser importance so in this case, one may choose to read abridged version of the same. There are also meaner sort of books which involves insipid reading. Bacon compares some books with distilled water which are purified and like flashy things. Such books cannot be used forever rather they can be used to absorb the essence at the moment.

**Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man.**

In this line, Bacon states the effect and outcome of triple activities: reading, conference and writing. A person who is well-read is always regarded with respect by others. He is given primary importance wherever he goes because through studies, he attains more maturity and adds perfection to his personality. Thus he becomes a full man loaded with wide knowledge. Partaking in conversation sharpens one's wit and makes him a ready man by imparting practical skills. One will be always ready to involve in a discussion when his/her mind is filled with facts gained through studies. Thus conversation and discussion make a man resourceful. A person with writing habit is blessed with good memory and it makes an exact man because it purges the ignorance in the mind of the readers. Also when one takes down the notes while reading, the ideas and the contents stay in the mind forever and do not easily gets elapsed.

**And therefore, if a man write little, he had need have a great memory; if he confer little, he had need have a present wit: and if he read little, he had need have much cunning, to seem to know that he doth not.**

Bacon's view of writing in these lines may sound contrary to the previous one. He says that if a man is gifted with a sound memory then he can store everything in his memory instead of writing or taking down notes. At the same time, not all are blessed with such good memory because when we read more and more, many things go out of the mind. Likewise if one converses little then he needs to have a sharp presence of mind because too much of talking reveals one's ignorance. These qualities are found only in the learned men and those who read little, will search crooked means to achieve the destination. Also such person who reads less has to pretend to exhibit false knowledge.

**Histories make men wise; poets witty; the mathematics subtle; natural philosophy deep, moral grave, logic and rhetoric able to contend.**

These lines emphasize the importance of different subjects and how it benefits the readers. Studying history makes a man wiser because it teaches valuable experiences of ancient people so one who is ready to learn from experience becomes wiser. Studying poetry grooms a man wittier as it kindles one's imaginative abilities. Studying mathematical problems and theories tailors one to become intellectually sharp and improves concentration. It also helps in controlling the

wavering mind. Studying philosophy instills valuable lessons on morality and helps one attain seriousness towards life. Studying logic and rhetoric develops one as a skilled person in arguments.

***Abeunt studia in mores* [Studies pass into and influence manners]. Nay, there is no stound or impediment in the wit but may be wrought out by fit studies; like as diseases of the body may have appropriate exercises.**

According to Bacon, studies influence one's personality and manners. It helps in elevating one's character and deal with difficulties successfully. Bacon also points out that if a person experiences any mental shortcomings or an impediment in his wit, it can be honed only by selective reading. This is similar to curing different illness of the body with appropriate exercises. Thus studies not only give pleasure but also contain therapeutic value to purge various mental defects.

**Bowling is good for the stone and reins; shooting for the lungs and breast; gentle walking for the stomach; riding for the head; and the like.**

This line can be read in connection with the previous sentence which states that studies have curative value. Usually doctor suggests physical exercises to cure certain illnesses of the body. For instance, playing bowling is a good remedy for the men who are suffering from the formation of stone in their kidney and the gall bladder. Shooting bow and arrow cures the diseases of the lungs and the heart. Walking is a good prescription for all sorts of stomach troubles such as indigestion and etc. Finally, to cure problems related to head like giddiness, headache, etc. riding is the best therapy.

**So if a man's wit be wandering, let him study the mathematics; for in demonstrations, if his wit be called away never so little, he must begin again.**

As stated in the previous lines, every illness has one or the other physical exercise as a remedy. Correspondingly, every mental disorder or defect can be eliminated by the right choice of study. For instance, studying mathematics is helpful for a man who cannot control his mind from wandering even after he has put his utmost effort to hold his concentration. When he tries to arrive at a solution to the mathematical problems, gradually he could increase his concentration and he has to start over again and again until he gets good control over his mind because

mathematics demands the maximum focus and even the slightest inattention would result in error.

**If his wit be not apt to distinguish or find differences, let him study the Schoolmen; for they are *cymini sectores* [splitters of hairs].**

Scholars and philosophers are referred to as schoolmen. Philosophical writings are *cymini sectores*, that is, they are hair splitters. So if one comprehends such scholastic philosophy, then he or she is topnotch when compared to an ordinary person who could not even think of reading a line from philosophical works. Therefore a person who is not able to find differences or not apt to distinguish, reading philosophy would be the best cure as it trains him to attain mental stability and notice subtle distinctions.

**If he be not apt to beat over matters, and to call up one thing to prove and illustrate another, let him study the lawyers' cases. So every defect of the mind may have a special receipt.**

For a man who cannot speak sequentially explaining one after another, studying lawyer's cases would be the remedy. Because lawyers cannot just like that argue a case whereas he has to pay attention to even the minute facts to prove his side convincingly. Thus every defect of the mind can be treated with suitable studies.

### **1.1.7 Critical Observation**

Bacon, a philosopher and scientist by nature, is one of the most influential thinkers of his day. He is considered as a founder of the modern empirical tradition because of his close observation of the physical world and rational interpretation of the results of his experiments to discern the workings of the universe. He was influenced by the French Essayist and Philosopher, Michel de Montaigne, the father of French essay. Bacon manipulated Montaigne's form and style to suit his subject matter yet Bacon's essays are well known for being compact and formal whereas Montaigne's essays attempted to explore his views on life and tried to relate it with his life. Montaigne combined personal elements with a graceful style to introduce unusual themes whereas Bacon's essays are impersonal and they mainly offer advice and so they are called 'dispersed meditations.'



Although Bacon wrote many Latin and English works, he is still best remembered for his essays which are famous for their wit and insight. One can trace the development of Bacon's style in the three different editions of his *Essays*. In the first edition, the style is compact, detached, succinct and filled with pithy statements. In the next two editions, the ideas are elaborated yet lack of pointedness in the expressions is evident. However, they reveal his worldly wisdom. Bacon followed the plain and direct style of writing derived from Sir Thomas Malory and others. This simple and direct style made his writings much admired from his time to the present day. Though his writing seems to be simple, it carries denseness and certain pattern is followed in interlacing the ideas together. The structure of expressing the ideas from the first to the last hasn't changed in this essay. All the ideas are expressed to the point like scientific precision. Thus systematization of ideas is obvious in this essay.

Bacon's essays are objective, detached, impersonal and systematic in thought. They deal with varied subjects like moral, domestic, political, religious and so on which would serve as a best guidance for a successful life. As Bacon is well known for his preciseness and compactness, his style is called epigrammatic and aphoristic (based on his use of aphorism). Like aphorisms and sayings that can be easily memorized Bacon's lines can also be easily memorized and quoted. Sometimes his prose style appears poetic may be because of his use of analogy and other devices. For instance, the use of metaphor in this essay adds richness and clarity to his prose. It also helps to express the ideas powerfully. It seems that these devices come to Bacon's mind naturally. His knowledge of classics is revealed through his use of allusions to Latin phrases. Thus reading Bacon's essay, his prose style sounds classic.

Unlike Montaigne's works, Bacon's "Of Studies" is very direct and sharp from the beginning to the end. One can even say that the whole essay is an elaboration of the first line yet expressed in a pointed manner as Bacon's prose style is short in structure and uninvolved. A sense of related ideas is organized one by one. The essay contains the whole of wisdom and it can be regarded as Bacon's masterpiece. No reader finds difficulty in reading Bacon's "Of Studies" save some Latin phrases as Bacon have attempted in the language of ordinary men. The essay

is very brief, terse, clear, and packed with antithetical sentences like maxims. “No man ever spoke more neatly, more precisely, more weightily or suffered less emptiness and less idleness in what he uttered.” In Ben Jonson’s words, “He seemed to me ever by his work one of the greatest men and the most worthy of admiration.”

In general, Bacon’s essays can be called ‘counsels: civil and moral’. Bacon has deployed figures of speech such as metaphor, simile, and analogies and also enriched his essay with Latin vocabulary revealing his scholarship. When a person reads this essay, he is able to connect the essay to his times as it contains wisdom to the world of all times. Bacon has adopted a didactic and pragmatic approach to enlighten the reader about the benefits of reading and studies in one’s life. To conclude in the words of romantic essayist Hazlitt says, “His writings have the gravity of prose with the fervor and vividness of poetry. His sayings have effect of axioms and at once striking and self-evident. His style is equally sharp and sweet flowing and pithy, condensed and expansive, expressing volumes in a sentence, of amplifying a single thought into pages of rich, glowing and delightful eloquence.”

### **1.1.8 Important Questions to Read**

1. Write briefly about Bacon’s biography.
2. Give a brief account of Bacon’s political career.
3. Who influenced Bacon in writing essays?
4. According to Bacon, what are the three main benefits of studies?
5. How does study serve for delight according to Bacon?
6. Justify the ornamental value of studies with reference to the essay “Of Studies”.
7. How does study develop a person’s ability from Bacon’s point of view?
8. What is the consequence of spending too much time in reading?
9. What effect does overuse of studies for ornament create?
10. Is it correct to make judgment wholly by the rules and why?
11. How does studies and experience go hand in hand in shaping human nature?
12. What does Bacon compare the man’s natural abilities to?
13. How do people with different attitudes view studies, according to Bacon?

14. Explain - “some books are to be tasted, others are to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested.”
15. Why are some books compared to the distilled water by Bacon?
16. How does writing make an exact man?
17. How do studies help in curing man’s impediments?
18. To cure which illness does Bacon recommend studying mathematics?
19. What are Bacon’s views about studies in his essay “Of Studies”?
20. Discuss the theme of the essay “Of Studies”.
21. Write in detail about Bacon’s contribution to the literature.
22. Comment on Bacon’s style with reference to “Of Studies”.
23. Justify the title “Of Studies”.
24. Sir Francis Bacon is a great essayist – Discuss.
25. “Of Studies” is nothing but counsels – explain.

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## **UNIT – 2**

### **LESSON 2.1: Oliver Goldsmith, “Man in Black”**

This unit consists of two essays and the first essay, Oliver Goldsmith’s “Man in Black” is considered Lesson 2.1 and the second essay, Joseph Addison’s “Sir Roger at Church” is considered Lesson 2.2.

#### **2.1.1 Objectives**

This unit introduces two essays written by Oliver Goldsmith and Joseph Addison, the prose writers of eighteenth century. The primary objective of the essays given in the unit is to make the students enhance their critical skills. The reading of the essays helps the students to learn to present a common and ordinary subject in a literary way and gives a chance to explore different styles employed in their writings by the writers of the same century.

#### **2.1.2 Author Introduction**

An Anglo-Irish novelist, playwright and poet, Oliver Goldsmith (1728 – 1774) was born in Kilkenny West, County Westmeath, Ireland. He was the son of an Irish clergyman, the Rev. Charles Goldsmith, curate in charge of Kilkenny west. After Oliver Goldsmith’s birth, the family moved to Lissoy where Oliver spent his childhood. Oliver was talented in storytelling from a young age. Speaking about his education, he was graduated from Trinity College, Dublin, in the year 1749. But he was expelled from the college for his involvement in the Black Dog riot that was a result of a protest. Though he left college temporarily, he eventually returned and completed his under graduation. He studied medicine at Edinburgh and Leiden, but never received his degree hence his career as a physician was not a successful one. He kept wandering around Europe leading an itinerant life. He made desperate attempts at making a living. He was apothecary’s assistant, proofreader, usher in a school, publisher’s hack and finally a resident of Grub street. In the year 1756, he settled in London and as he was in short of funds, he started contributing to miscellaneous periodicals and achieved some success as the author of *An Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe* (1759). Thereafter, Goldsmith wrote more numbers of essays and works in other genres too which gained him popularity. In 1774, at the age of just 43, Goldsmith died of illness caused by a

kidney infection resulting from a stone in the bladder and was buried in London's Temple Church. On the death of Goldsmith, Dr. Johnson wrote this epitaph describing Goldsmith as "Oliver Goldsmith: A Poet, Naturalist, and Historian, who left scarcely any style of writing untouched, and touched nothing that he did not adorn. Of all the passions, whether smiles were to move or tears, a powerful yet gentle master. In genius, vivid, versatile, sublime. In style, clear, elevated, elegant."

### 2.1.3 Oliver Goldsmith's Literary Journey

Oliver Goldsmith is one of the most important writers of the eighteenth century. Yet his contributions to literature made the critics consider him under five aspects: compiler, essayist, poet, novelist and dramatist. Now Goldsmith is best remembered for his novel *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1766), his pastoral poem, *The Deserted Village* (1770) and his plays *The Good-Natur'd Man* (1768) and *She Stoops to Conquer* (1771, first performed in 1773).

Seeing through chronological lens, Goldsmith reached London in 1756 and began his contributions to various magazines. It was the time when booksellers were well supported by the public on par with writers for their publications. It was at this juncture Oliver began his writing and also befriended some of the artistic and literary personalities of the time, including Samuel Johnson, James Boswell, Sir Joshua Reynolds and Edmund Burke. For about six years, that is, from 1757 to 1762, Goldsmith wrote for ten different periodicals and published various works which are discussed genre wise in the following paragraphs.

Goldsmith attempted writing various volumes on different branches of history – political and natural. He compiled a *History of Mecklenburgh*; two histories of England, one a *History of England in a series of Letters from a Nobleman to his Son* (in two volumes published in 1764), the other a *History of England*, a Roman history (in four volumes published in 1769), seven volumes of *Plutarch's Lives* (1762); two volumes of *The Grecian History* and finally developed the lengthiest of all, his eight volumes of *An History of Earth and Animated Nature* (1774), a textbook on natural history.

As far essay form is concerned, Goldsmith contributed substantially. Miscellaneous articles and scattered essays were published in various periodicals of

his time. *An Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe* (1759) is a minor work. But after this he soon emerged as an essayist with the publication in *The Bee*, a short-lived literary magazine started by Oliver in 1759 which contains some of his best essays. He also published in *The Public Ledger* in which “the Chinese Letters” appeared first. *The Citizen of the World* (1762) is a collection of letters written from the perspective of a Chinese philosopher living in London and these letters were published in series from 1760 to 1761.

Goldsmith’s first poem is *The Traveller, or, a Prospect of Society*, published in 1764. The four hundred lines philosophic poem deals with his wanderings through Europe. It contains firsthand experience that is, a series of descriptions and criticisms of the places and peoples which he had experienced. The other main poem of Goldsmith is *The Deserted Village* (1770), the nostalgic pastoral, dealing with the memories of his youth. Some of his shorter pieces are *The Haunch of Venision*, *Retaliation* and *The Hermit*. *The Hermit* was written in a sentimental fashion. Goldsmith also attempted an elegy on “Death of a Mad Dog” (1766). To mention Goldsmith’s other poems are *Poems for Young Ladies* and *The Beauties of English Poesy* (1767). He is said to have written “The History of Little Goody Two-Shoes” (1765), the classic children’s tale though it was published by Newbery.

To the field of the drama, Goldsmith added two prose comedies which are lively and witty. They are *The Good-Natured Man* (1768) and *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773). The first did not attain success on stage but the second one had an immense success mainly because of its uproarious laughter and romantic appeal in which a woman poses as a maid in order to let a man fall for her. The play was written in parts like much of Goldsmith’s work mainly to pay of his debts and it is still considered as a piece of intellectual work among the eighteenth century comedy. Goldsmith gained a special place in the field of novel writing with the publication of *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1766). It is a humourous and melodramatic story of a country parson and his family. In the field of biography, he produced lives of Voltaire, Beau Nash, Parnell and Lord Viscount Bolingbroke.

#### **2.1.4 Goldsmith’s Focus on Journalism**

Goldsmith’s writing career began in London when he turned to journalism contributing to various magazines. His frequent contributions were made to Ralph

Griffith's *Monthly Review*. This helped him to emerge as an essayist soon and most of his essays were collected as *The Citizen of the World* (1762). Eventually he developed friendship with some literary personalities and through his works he entered into Samuel Johnson's circle. Johnson and the artist Joshua Reynolds founded The Club, a literary dining society in 1746 in which Goldsmith became one of the nine original members. The literary club included the painter, Sir Joshua Reynolds, writers Samuel Johnson, James Boswell, Edmund Burke, Thomas Percy and an actor, David Garrick. After his first meeting with Goldsmith, Johnson described him in his journal as a 'Curious odd pedantic fellow with some Genius.' Although Goldsmith appeared awkward to people, the members of the literary club often appreciated him. Thus he started earning his early reputation as an essayist by contributing to various magazines in particular to *The Bee* (1759). This eight issue run contains some of Goldsmith's best poems, short pieces of fiction, book reviews and play reviews (play reviews - a kind of dramatic criticism). One of Goldsmith's essays praising the works of Samuel Johnson and Tobias Smollett caught the attention of the latter and he offered Goldsmith a chance to contribute to his *Critical Review* and *British Magazine*. He was invited by John Newbery to publish essays in his *Publick Ledger*.

Goldsmith's maiden book, *An Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe*, a long essay on European culture and literature was published anonymously in the year 1759. Although, it appeared anonymously, the writer's identity was easy to trace from the style it was written. Thus Goldsmith's fame as a writer began to grow with this publication. This was followed by his contribution to *Publick Ledger* in 1760. It contains Goldsmith's most important and popular series of periodical essays, the "Chinese Letters." These are letters written by a Chinese Philosopher who visits London. Although the essays are witty and humourous, they are also philosophical and introspective in nature and are coated with a thin layer of social satire on the customs and manners of Londoners. The essays were collected and published under the title *The Citizen of the World or Letters from a Chinese Philosopher Residing in London to His Friends in the East*, in 1762. In the year 1764, he imprinted his reputation with the publication of the poem, *The Traveller, or, a Prospect of Society*, the first poetical work to contain his signature. Thus, to say, more than forty volumes were written, translated and compiled by Goldsmith.

### 2.1.5 Goldsmith's Hack Writing

Although the readers welcomed him as a writer, he could only produce literary hackwork for his survival because of his financial constraints. Johnson also helped him to sell his novel *The Vicar of Wakefield*, a humourous portrait of village life, to manage his financial crisis. The term “Grub Street” in those days was associated with the hack writers who produce essays and other works for a living. Because Grub Street present in seventeenth century near Moorfields was usually occupied by the insignificant writers of the day. Goldsmith settled in this Grub Street and began his hack work when he was twenty nine and continued till the end of his life but his experience in hack writing provided him an opportunity to produce large volumes of works. He gathered all sorts of miscellaneous materials and tailored them into new works for which he was stereotyped with the image of a plagiarist. To cite an instance, in writing “Chinese Letters”, he was influenced by Voltaire’s description of China and Chinese culture. Few critics credit him for his real genius and for the simplicity his works carry. However, his hack publications reveal his versatility as an essayist. Robert Hazen Hopkins in his book, *The True Genius of Oliver Goldsmith* (published in 1969), appreciates Goldsmith as a supreme satirist who has a great insight into his own age and literature and into general humanity.

### 2.1.6 Goldsmith as an Essayist

Oliver Goldsmith was one of the most noticeable essayists of the eighteenth century. Before eighteenth century, the essay form was noted for the expression of the personality of its author and his experiences. Essayists like Montaigne stamped their influences in this form of essay writing whereas in the eighteenth century, the essay form took a different shape in the name of Character essay which is coated with a pinch of humour and satire. Joseph Addison and Richard Steele set the vogue for this type of essay in their *Spectator* and *Tatler*, mainly to highlight the follies of their time. Thus essay written mainly in didactic tone became a kind of contemporary social and political criticism in the hands of the two writers, Addison and Steele. The influence of these two writers was sensed amidst the writers of that time and some even imitated the technique deployed by Addison and Steele and one among those writers is Goldsmith.



Goldsmith entered the field of the essay with the publication of *An Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe* in 1759. This challenging piece of work contains fourteen chapters which attempt to study the condition of letters principally in Italy, Germany, France and England. Then Goldsmith contributed to a periodical *Publick Ledger*. In the issue of January 24, 1760, a letter supposedly written by a Chinese visitor in London appeared as the first of a series followed by series of letters. Goldsmith attempted the popular eighteenth century device of a foreign traveller commenting upon the strange customs of the land through epistles to his home country. These “Chinese Letters” bear testimony to Goldsmith’s glory as an essayist. Newbery collected the one hundred and twenty-three letters into two volumes and printed them under the title, *The Citizen of the World or Letters from a Chinese Philosopher, Residing in London, to his Friends in the East* in 1762. It was this publication, a series of satirical essays, carved him as an able man of letters.

#### **2.1.7 The Citizen of the World**

*The Citizen of the World*, originally published in John Newbery’s *Public Ledger* as the “Chinese letters,” are a series of essays written in the letter format with a tint of satire. These essays are gathered and published in two bound volumes which are entitled *The Citizen of the World or Letters from a Chinese Philosopher, Residing in London, to his Friends in the East* (the shortened title is *The Citizen of the World*). The two volumes contain all the original letters with four new essays added additionally. That is, the original series comprises of one hundred and nineteen essays and in *The Citizen of the World*, the total essays are one hundred and twenty three in number.

Goldsmith’s ideal of writing Chinese letters are not original still the Chinese letters are remarkable for their subtle observation covered with gentle satire. Goldsmith found an opportunity to articulate his views on manifold topics which he had gathered over many years. His adoption of the Chinese personality in the Chinese Letters was not original rather it was taken from the works of other writers. For instance, he took the name of the traveller from Horace Walpole. Still, Goldsmith’s *The Citizen of the World* is characterized with some novelty in essay writing. One of the notable things is the scheme used is a kind of unity permeates in almost all the essays. All the letters were written and received by one single person

is the connecting cord. When one reads all the letters, the reader will realize that each letter reveals more of the writer's personality traits, his style and his peculiar thinking.

The Chinese visitor, Lien Chi Altangi, kindles readers' interest on him more and more through his letters because he unveils many of his opinions and attitudes which are Goldsmith's himself, so it is also an opportunity to know about Goldsmith's personality. In an attempt of capturing the true account of his experiences and observations, Goldsmith gives a realistic tone to his letters. Even the depiction of different characters whom Altangi meets also adds to the factors of realism in the essays. The best example would be the character of the Man in Black who is quiet and mysterious and loaded with peculiarities which are evident through his actions. Let us take references from the essay "Man in Black" to prove his peculiarities. When the Man in Black takes a walk around the streets, on seeing a beggar, he delivers an emphatic speech accusing people who give alms to beggars. But when unnoticed by his friend, he also tries to help the beggar by giving alms to him. The Chinese Visitor, Altangi, a much-discussed character is seen as a mask behind Goldsmith to tell the people of London certain truths about themselves. In fact Goldsmith uses the mask of an assumed character more comfortably so that he could highlight the follies of the society.

### **2.1.8 Short Summary of Goldsmith's "Man in Black"**

The essay "Man in Black" falls under the category of the character essay as Oliver Goldsmith focuses on the character just named Man in Black in the essay. Goldsmith details the characteristics of this particular character that is remorseful of his benign behavior and philanthropic actions. He tries to hide his innate nature of goodness under the mask coloured with negative qualities. To bring out his real character, the author narrates three incidents that occurred when they went on an excursion to the country. In the first incident, an old man in ragged clothes beseeched their compassion. The old man assured that unlike other beggars, he was pushed into such shameful profession to support his dying wife and five hungry children. Hearing this, the Man in Black was waiting for the right opportunity to drop a piece of silver in the hands of the old man. The author who knew his friend's character, deliberately turned aside to give him a chance. So Man in Black dropped

a silver coin believing that his friend doesn't know it. In the second incident, a sailor with a wooden leg carrying a bundle of chips approached them for help. As usual Man in Black enquired him in a harsh tone with the underlying intention to help him at the right hour. So he had bought the bundle of chips paying amount more than it actually costs and gave justifications to his friend for buying it. In the final incident, a woman carrying children and singing ballad approached him. This time he could not hide his real nature and immediately started searching his pockets. As he couldn't find anything, he dropped the bundle of chips in her hand even when his friend is watching him. So the mask that the Man in Black was wearing slowly had started dropping. Thus the Man in Black hides his true nature to the world and pretends to the world as the man-hater but in reality his heart is filled with compassion and consideration.

### **2.1.9 Detailed Summary of Goldsmith's "Man in Black"**

The essay "Man in Black" is taken from the book *The Citizen of the World* penned by Oliver Goldsmith. It was formerly published as "The Character of the Man in Black" in the magazine *Public Ledger*. In this essay, the author talks about a man who is regretful of his benevolent actions. So he wears a shield to not to reveal his innate nature. The first paragraph introduces Lien Chi Altangi, a Chinese traveller who visits England and narrates his experience in the first person 'I'. His name is not mentioned in the essay hence it also refers to the author himself. Though the visitor is fond of many acquaintances, he desires to develop an intimacy only with a few people. He has great respect for the Man in Black as he possesses strange manners that make him an interesting character in the eyes of the visitor. He says, "his manners, it is true, are tinctured with some strange inconsistencies." Man in Black is generous and sympathetic to the poor but he is ashamed of revealing his benevolence. He is a charitable man but he pretends to not to worry about the well-being of others. He is very good at pretending that he knows well how to avoid embarrassment and project him as a prudent man. Goldsmith termed him as "humourist in a nation of humourists" because of the eccentricities observed in the character of Man in Black.

Man in Black, although, assumes a stern appearance and replete his conversation with sordid and selfish maxims, his heart is filled with unbounded

love. Often he “profess himself a man-hater” but his countenance reveals the compassionate spirits in him because, he cannot wear the assumed harshness for a long time. The author further goes on to describe the character of Man in Black. Taking inferences from his conversation with Man in Black, he says he had heard him use most ill-natured language which affect the humanity and also boasts that these are his innate qualities. But in reality, he masks himself with such pretended nature as he is the one who is ashamed of exposing his empathetic qualities. While he pretends to hate mankind, he is not good at pretending to be one. Every time when he tries to mask his good qualities, the mask drops off and even an ordinary observer could easily find the real man behind it. “He takes as much pains to hide his feelings, as any hypocrite would to conceal his indifference; but on every unguarded moment the mask drops off, and reveals him to the most superficial observer.”

Goldsmith focuses on sharing his experiences with Man in Black and it is also an attempt to show the readers the real nature of Man of Black. Once when Man in Black and the author went on an excursion into the country, they happened to involve in a discourse upon the provisions that was needed by the poor in the country. The Man in Black is concerned with the poverty-stricken condition of the poor that he complains to the author about the ignorance of the countrymen and wealthy towards the living condition of the poorer people. The Man in Black states how the have-nots are supplied with all the basic necessities in every parish house yet they feel discontented. Lots of relief measures were taken by the Government to relieve their suffering but they wander around pestering travellers and foreigners for alms. It is because of the inattention of the privileged too. “In every parish house, says he, “the poor are supplied with food, clothes, fire, and a bed to lie on; they want no more, I desire no more myself; yet still they seem discontented. . . .” He further speaks against beggary that the beggars are hypocrites who remain lazy and loaf around and who do not want to avail the facilities provided to them by the Government rather lead a life gaining sympathies of the people. He calls them an “impostors” who “merit a prison than relief” as they bring shame to their country. He also reproaches the people who pity them and offer charities to the beggars which encourages idleness in them.

While the man in Black is proceeding in this manner, an old man in tattered finery implored their compassion. The old man assured that he was not like other beggars rather he was pushed into such shameful profession to support his dying wife and five hungry children. The author knows that it was a cooked up story and it did not create least influence on him whereas, it is not the same with the Man in Black who is visibly moved by it. It is obvious from the expressions on his countenance and interruption in his speech: "I could see it visibly operate upon his countenance, and effectually interrupt his harangue." The author could read the face of the Man in Black who wants to immediately help the beggar atleast for the five starving children but at the same time, he has too much pride to reveal his soft spot for the less privileged. He is not ready to scrutinize if it is a real story and whether they are imposters or not but just he wants to help them. His friend, the author, who has a great respect on him understood the situation and gave him an opportunity by pretending to look aside.

The Man in Black, who is caught between his pride and compassion, grabbed the chance and dropped a piece of silver stealthily into the beggar's hands. Nevertheless he commanded the beggar in a loud voice to not to trouble travellers with such falsehoods. The foreigner says, "I pretended to look another way, and he seized this opportunity of giving the poor petitioner a piece of silver, bidding him at the same time, in order that I should not hear, go work for his bread, and not tease passengers with such impertinent falsehoods for the future." Here the point to be noted is that the Man in Black is of the assumption that the author did not notice his benevolence since continued his harangue on beggars.

The Man in Black stated some episodes to testify his profound skill in discovering impostors and how he would deal with them if he were a magistrate. Then, he tells two stories of ladies who were robbed by beggars. When he was about to start the third story, a sailor with a wooden leg carrying a bundle of chips appealed for help. He looked miserable but the author pretended as if he didn't notice him and continued walking. The Man in Black stopped the author and pretending to expose the deceiver, angrily examined the sailor about how he had lost his leg. In author's words, "I was for going on without taking any notice, but my friend looking wistfully upon the poor petitioner, bid me stop, and he would show me with how much ease he could at any time detect an imposter."

The sailor replied in the same angry tone as of the Man in Black's that he had been an officer on board a private ship of war and that he was disabled in defence thus rendered unfit for service. On hearing the reply of the sailor, the Man in Black's serious and harsh tone vanished in a moment and focused on how he could relieve him unobserved by his friend and others. Yet he managed to cast a furious look for his friend's sake. In the spur of the moment, the Man in Black enquired the sailor about the cost of the bundles of chips and without expecting reply, he offered to buy the bundle for one shilling to the surprise of the sailor. The sailor says, "Here, master," . . . "take all my cargo, and a blessing into the bargain."

The Man in Black marched off with an air of triumph assuring his friend that he had made a cheap purchase. He says firmly that "those fellows must have stolen their goods, who could thus afford to sell them for half value." He justifies the inconsistency in his character by saying that he plans to use the matches to light candles instead of thrusting them into the fire and in this way he is saving a lot of money. He is trying to hold the mask tightly not revealing his true colours. Then the Man in Black happened to see an old woman in rags with one child in her arms and another on her back, who looked more distressful than either of the former. She was attempting to sing ballads but hers is so mournful voice that it is hard to determine whether she was singing or wailing.

The Man in Black could not withstand the poor state of the wretched woman. He interrupted his discourse and even in the presence of the author, rummages his pocket to relieve her but he could nothing. Compared to the strong agony visible on the visage of the Man in Black for he could not relieve her, the misery painted on the woman's face is less: "The misery painted on woman's visage was not half so strongly expressed as the agony in his." Then realizing that he had no money, he remembers the bundle of chips he bought from the sailor and puts the "shilling's worth of matches" into the woman's hand. Thus the anonymous Man in Black is a man of magnanimity but he is shameful of it without any known reason. He is named Man in Black because he hides his true nature to the world and pretends to the world as the man-hater but in reality, he has the pristine and noble heart.

### **2.1.10 Analysis of the Character of Man in Black**

According to Goldsmith's words, the Man in Black was modeled on his father, an Anglican curate but critics have observed that the character bears a striking resemblance to the author himself. Goldsmith himself is a man of feeling as the Man in Black is a man of sentiment. The essay begins with the author's statement of his admiration to the man in black and also gives the reason for his admiration. The characteristics of the man in black are described as amiable, sympathetic and concerned. On the contrary, he reveals his characteristics as strict, hostile and unkind in contrast with his inner personality. Though he is magnanimous, he pretends to be a miser and a misanthrope who is unconcerned towards the poor. In reality, he immediately helps the poor with whatever he has. For instance, in the attempt to help the women in misery, he gave the shilling worth pocket of chips at once he realized his pocket is empty. Thus Man in Black is inconsistent in his character and every attempt of hiding his real nature ends in vain.

The Man in Black is a real philanthropist who is remorseful of his charitable actions. Goldsmith says, "he is the only man I ever knew who seemed ashamed of his natural benevolence." Thus this essay is an attempt to illustrate the inherent quality of the character Man in Black through his actions. The benevolent nature of the Man in Black is exemplified through three different examples in the essay. First, when an old man approaches the author and the Man in Black requesting for alms, the latter helped him by giving a piece of silver after ensuring that his weakness is not revealed. However, he also reproaches the old man loudly for pestering the travellers by telling false stories. Second, when a lame sailor approached, the Man in Black pretended to wear an angry gesture and questioned the sailor about his disability. But at the same time, to relieve him, he bought the bundle of chips for one shilling which was a surprise demand for the sailor. Third, when a woman carrying children and singing ballad approached him, he could not hide his real nature and immediately started searching his pockets. Finding nothing, he gave away the bundle of chips to the woman to his relief. In the first two instances, the Man in Black could maintain his pretension but in the third instance, his mask drops off automatically and his generosity and benevolence is evident. Thus in all the situations, he tries to hide behind the mask but his natural kindness comes out.

### 2.1.11 Critical Observation

The essay “Man in Black” is full of humanism which is very essential for human life. Under the guise of Altangi, a Chinese philosopher, Goldsmith gives a fascinating account of the Man in Black, who is probably an English man. Goldsmith did not reveal the imaginary Chinese traveller’s name in this essay hence the first person ‘I’ can be associated to the author himself thus making this essay autobiographical in nature. The Man in Black is a remarkable creation of Goldsmith and he might have intended to describe English life and culture to the world through this character. The essay is well-organized and it contains the realistic touch by reflecting the happenings of the society. The Man in Black may be taken as a metaphor. He is wearing white dress on his black body which symbolizes his two-sided personality. It can also be considered as symbolizing two different sectors of people dwelling in the society: the fortunate and the less privileged.

The essay is a mockery of the contemporary society of Goldsmith’s times. It can be read as an attack on the society and the socio-political condition prevailed in England during his times. This satirical piece also attempts to shake the stereotypical male image of being chauvinistic, macho and stern which are regarded as dignified male characteristics. Though the Man in Black maintains his pride of being stern and harsh, the qualities of male according to the societal structure, the innate nature as a human being is revealed whenever the situation demands. The essay makes an attempt to indirectly tell the reader to be aware of the hypocrisy hidden in the society. For instance, Man in Black says that the parish house provides all the basic necessities to the poor yet they feel discontent. At the same time, when all the basic requirements are fulfilled, why does poverty exist and what is the necessity for the poor to beg for alms. Goldsmith’s brilliant illustration of the character, Man in Black provokes the readers to brood over such questions and inspect the self.

Talking about Goldsmith’s style, this essay is written in an elegant, simple, easy, understandable and readable manner. The essay can be appreciated for its simplicity, sentiment and pathos. Another feature is that the essay is not crowded with too many characters. The limited characters and incidents convey the author’s intended feelings and thoughts clearly. The way the essay is narrated holds the



attention of the reader and also compels us to believe the incidents as true. Goldsmith's work is terser and possesses a moral tone. When it comes to the language of Goldsmith, it is coloured beautifully with the right choice of words and vocabulary that adds beauty to the essay.

Goldsmith was a genuine moralist who created works with intentional satire. Best example is his *The Citizen of the World*, a notable collection that contains exceptional examples of the satiric essay. Satirical works were in vogue at the time when Goldsmith published this collection and so he used the genre effectively to exhibit the foibles of the society with subtle satire. Goldsmith's Chinese Letters can be compared to Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* and Lord Byron's *Don Juan* in terms of technique deployed – a naive observer focusing on the incongruities and disparities in the society of which he is a part. In the essay "Man in Black", Goldsmith's observer is a foreigner who compares and contrasts his own society with the one he visits. Through him, the two different worlds in London society is exposed: the affluent and the underprivileged, the haves and the have-nots.

#### **2.1.12 The Character Essay**

Although character descriptions and portrayals were common in the Character essay or periodical essay, Goldsmith had attempted to introduce an interesting element of foreign observer type of writing. Some of the famous English writers who endeavored to capture the soul of personality in literary works are Addison who created Sir Roger de Coverley, Steele who created Will Wimble, Samuel Johnson who originated Dick Minim and Mr. Sober and Oliver Goldsmith's characters in *The Citizen of the World*. The main quality of the character essay is that by describing the character of a single person, it can describe the feebleness of many personalities thus satirizing a wide range of human frailties. So this one character becomes representative of all and also universalized.

One such memorable character of *The Citizen of the World* is the Man in Black, who is often related with his creator, Goldsmith. Goldsmith's depiction of the Man in Black is a satire on the innate goodness of man. For instance, the Man in Black tells two stories of ladies that were robbed by beggar men. But actually these ladies are impostors who pretend to gain sympathy from benevolent people. So this experience might have led the Man in Black assume the three beggars, the old man,

the sailor and the woman, in the essay as imposters. This is the reason why the Man in Black constantly denounces the principle of benevolence. While trying to help the three beggars he and the foreigner meet on street, the Man in Black criticizes the people with compassion and benevolence but he helps the beggars when unnoticed by the foreigner. The foreigner and the Man in Black are extreme opposites. The former, though is filled with compassion, he is not moved immediately by the passions and believes his reason. Whereas the latter is moved by passions and puts his reason secondary. Thus the foreigner and the Man in Black are the target of satire in this essay through whom the foibles of the society are attacked.

### 2.1.13 Important Questions to Read

1. Write a note on Goldsmith's biography.
2. What is the contribution made by Goldsmith to the genre of drama?
3. List out the poetical contributions of Goldsmith.
4. What is the complete title of The Citizen of the World?
5. What type of essay is "Man in Black"?
6. Why does the author call the Man in Black a "humorist in a nation of humorists"?
7. How is the Man in Black pictured in the essay?
8. What type of a person is the Man in Black in reality?
9. Comment on the views of the Man in Black regarding beggars.
10. Did the Man in Black help the beggar in tattered finery? If so, how?
11. What was the reaction of the Man in Black to the soldier with a wooden leg?
12. How did the sailor become disabled?
13. What is the justification given by the Man in Black for the bargain he had made with the soldier?
14. How did the Man in Black help the woman?
15. What was the reaction of the foreigner to the sailor?
16. Explain – "let me assure you, sir, they are imposters, every one of them, and rather merit a prison than relief."
17. Explain – "a blessing into the bargain."
18. Compare and contrast the characters of the foreigner and the Man in Black.

19. Write a note on the Character Essay.
20. “Man in Black” is a satire – Justify.
21. Write briefly about Goldsmith’s style.
22. Trace the development of Goldsmith as an essayist.
23. What is hack writing?
24. Comment on the Grub Street.
25. “Man in Black” is an attack on the socio-political situation of the time –  
Elaborate.

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## LESSON – 2.2: Joseph Addison, “Sir Roger at Church”

This lesson deals with the second essay of this unit titled “Sir Roger at Church” written by Joseph Addison.

### 2.2.1 Biographical Note

Joseph Addison (1672-1719) was an eminent English poet, playwright, politician and classical scholar of the eighteenth century. Addison was born on May 1, 1672 in Milston, Wiltshire, to Reverend Lancelot Addison, who later became archdeacon of Coventry and Dean of Lichfield. The eldest son of Lancelot Addison, Joseph Addison had schooling in Amesbury, Salisbury and at Lichfield Grammar School. Later he joined the Charterhouse School, a boarding school in Godalming, Surrey, where he got the opportunity to meet his future literary partner and friend, Richard Steele. He then entered Queen’s college, Oxford and excelled in classics particularly gained proficiency in Latin verse which helped him to become a Fellow of Magdalen College where he completed his post graduation in 1693. In the same college, he spent some years as tutor and began his career as a scholar and man of letters.

Addison, though mainly was a writer, his writing skill gave him a chance to serve as a politician holding various positions like Undersecretary of State, Lord Lieutenant, Chief Secretary for Ireland and also became an important member of the Whig Party which is also called Liberal Party from the year 1708 till his death. It began in 1695 when Addison wrote “A Poem to his Majesty,” dedicating it to the Lord Keeper Somers who was the influential Whig Statesman of the time. With Somers, Charles Montague, Earl of Halifax, also recognized the skill of Addison as a writer and believed that he can be of use to the crown. At this time, he wrote the preface to Virgil’s *Georgics*, the great translation of John Dryden carried out in 1697. Then he went on tour around Europe which gave him twin advantage of gaining acquaintance with English diplomats as well as meeting contemporary men of letters. He was known for his magnanimous personality and calm and casual nature. In 1716, Addison married the Countess of Warwick. In the last years of his life, he had a quarrel with Alexander Pope and the latter pictured Addison as an envious man of letters in his poem “An Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot” and the quarrel

continued in other aspects too. After that, Addison suffered from poor health and passed away on 17 June, 1719 and was buried at Westminster Abbey.

### 2.2.2 Addison's Literary Contribution

Addison's first major work titled *Account of the Greatest English Poets* was published in 1694 while he was a student. This work was followed by a translation of Virgil's *Georgics*. Then after returning to England from European tour, Addison was commissioned to write a poem for the Battle of Blenheim and the result is "The Campaign." Written in heroic couplets, the poem celebrates the victory of Blenheim and it is an effective portrayal of Marlborough's military genius. This poem imprinted his reputation as one of the major poets of the age. It was followed by an opera *Rosamund*, which was a failure.

Addison, though was a poet and dramatist, he was well-known for his finest periodical essays. He contributed to the development of the essay form which flourished well in the eighteenth century. Along with his friend Richard Steele, he founded the daily journal *The Spectator* (1711-1714), which was the popular publication of that time. Addison contributed over two hundred and seventy four essays to the *The Spectator* and forty two essays to *The Tatler* (1709-1711), literary and social journal begun by Steele and appeared thrice weekly. Again they began *The Guardian*, a journal which achieved moderate success. To this Addison wrote fifty one essays. Addison through these journals, tried to bring political, literary and philosophical interactions to the access of the middle class people.

Addison's contribution to the field of drama was the legendary play, *Cato, a Tragedy*, published in 1712. Written in blank verse, the play is set in Rome during the reign of Julius Caesar and focuses on the final hours of Marcus Porcius Cato, a man of virtue who sternly opposed Caesar's tyranny. The play had successful run of twenty performances and also continued to be staged throughout the century. Then Addison wrote a series of political essays titled *The Free-Holder, or, Political Essays* and also attempted a prose comedy, *The Drummer*, which was unsuccessful. Addison established "Kit-Cat-Club" which included powerful Whig leaders such as Somers, Halifax and literary figures of the day, Richard Steele, Sir John Vanbrugh and William Congreve.

### 2.2.3 Periodical Essays

Periodical essays are named so because the essays are not published in the book form whereas they are published as series in magazines and journals twice or thrice a week. Eighteenth century is considered the great age of the flourishing of periodical essays in English. Some of the notable periodical essayists of the time are Joseph Addison, Richard Steele, Samuel Johnson and Oliver Goldsmith. The main reason for the rise of such essay was to enlighten the middle class audience who did not have formal education. To understand the content of periodicals and pamphlets is comparatively easy as they were written in simple language to instruct the middle classes.

Addison is best remembered even today for the periodical essays compared to his contributions to the other genres. Along with his friend Steele, Addison wrote a series of articles in the periodicals, *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*. Being in the Age of Enlightenment, these essays were used for moral and educational purposes. So to do this successfully, Addison and Steele created fictional characters and through them they commented on the contemporary social and political conditions. These fictional characters were usually satirical sketches of the upper middle classes. Also these essays addressed various issues such as code of conduct, practical joke, fashions in vogue, improving the moral standards, conventions in marriage and also sometimes as political propaganda. Almost all the essays were of uniform length and have excellent style. They were written on wide range of subjects and present some deeper themes such as immorality, death, jealousy, etc. The essays, no doubt, depict true picture of the contemporary society.

In this way, *The Tatler* attained immediate success which contained 188 essays of Steele and 42 essays of Addison. After *The Tatler* was closed in 1711, the authors started the next periodical, *The Spectator* which contained a total of 635 essays. While *The Tatler* gave more space to political discussions, *The Spectator* became famous for its fictional characterizations such as Sir Roger de Coverley, an old country knight; Will Honeycomb, a middle-aged beau; Sir Andrew Freeport, a city merchant; Captain Sentry, a soldier; and Mr. Spectator put together who are grouped under the name “Spectator Club.” Though the Spectator Club was the idea of Steele, Addison added charm to it through his writings filled with pleasant

humour. After the closing of *The Spectator*, the authors together started *The Guardian* but this journal did not achieve popularity.

Addison appears as a judicious moral and social critic in his Periodical essays published in *The Spectator*. The essays in this journal were written to refine and elevate the literary and critical tastes of its readers. The journal also contains several essays dealing with purely literary topics such as wit, imagination, sublime and etc. thus devoting a considerable portion to literary criticism. Though the characters are fictitious, they are portrayed with realistic touch. The members of the Spectator Club represent an important section of the society of that time. Another remarkable thing to be noted is that some essays center around the character called Sir Roger and hence those essays are titled the Coverley papers. The main theme of the Coverley papers is to satire the society and they represent the contemporary lifestyle of rural England. Thus the contributions made in *The Tatler* and *The Spectator* may be considered the masterpieces of Addison and Steele. Thus in Addison's words, the objective of periodical essay is "to enliven morality with wit; and to temper wit with morality."

#### **2.2.4 Short Summary of Addison's "Sir Roger at Church"**

Addison in this important essay "Sir Roger at Church" stresses the significance of Sunday as a holiday for the villagers and how on Sundays, Sir Roger behaves like a churchman believing that only he can civilize people of that particular village that comes under his in charge. The author is of the opinion that the Sundays should be observed as a holiday so that people can save themselves from being savages by attending prayers at Church, which according to him is significant purification process. Sir Roger's character is discussed in detail throughout the essay by citing various incidents. He took interest in the village church and decorated it by spending lot of his money. He decorated the inner part of the church by displaying the best quotations from the Bible of his choice. Then he had beautified the interior of the church by covering the pulpit with a beautiful cloth and building a railing in the communion table at his own expense. He tried all possible ways to civilize the villagers and worked for their well-being. Sir Roger was an old knight who is actually quirky by nature and his peculiarities are displayed on many occasions especially on Sundays at the prayer hours yet they are

harmless. Thus to say the essay emphasizes the importance of holiness of Sunday, and the character Sir Roger who in spite of all his eccentricities, admired for his good qualities too.

### 2.2.5 Detailed Summary

“Sir Roger at Church” was first published in *The Spectator* on 9 July, 1711. Addison in this significant essay stresses the importance of Sunday as a holiday for the villages and how on Sundays, Sir Roger behaves like a churchman thinking that only he can civilize people. The author begins the essay by saying he is happy on Sunday in his village and that by observing Sunday as a holy day, mankind gets civilized and polished. “if keeping holy the seventh day were only a human institution, it would be the best method that could have been thought of for the polishing and civilizing of mankind.” The author is of the opinion that the Sundays should be observed as a holiday so that people can save themselves from being barbarians. He says, “It is certain the country-people would soon degenerate into a kind of savages and barbarians, were there not such frequent returns of a stated time

For the villages, Sundays have special significance in another aspect as it is the only day on which the whole village looks fresh, clean and cheerful. Both men and women dress up well to give their best appearance in the church. Everyone in the village get time to meet each other and discuss their problems with one another, a kind of stress buster or a relief and also to display their intelligence. “ the whole village meet together with their best faces, and in their cleanliest habits, to converse with one another upon indifferent subjects.” On this particular day, they are reminded of their duties and responsibilities to the self, society and the Supreme by the priest. The villagers attend the Sunday prayers together every week and learn required life lessons. They listen to the sermons patiently and sing psalms together to praise and thank the Almighty for his mercy. Thus it creates good effect in the minds of the villagers which in turn help them surrender themselves to the Supreme Being.

The author believes that Sunday is the only day that purges the villagers by removing the dirt from their minds as well as the body that they stack up throughout the week’s hard labour devoid of entertainment and relaxation. When they are involved in six days of hard work for their survival, they may become selfish and



savage. Thus going to church on Sundays not only refreshes their minds by instilling the notion of religion but also helps them project themselves in their best quality as being cultured for the admiration of the fellow villagers. To quote author's words, "Sunday clears away the rust of the whole week, not only as it refreshes in their minds the notions of religion, but as it puts both the sexes upon appearing in their most agreeable forms, and exerting all such qualities as are apt to give them a figure in the eye of the village." Thus Sunday as a holiday is a blessing for the villagers and a kind of rebirth, according to the author.

The author compares the village church to the markets in the cities. In the cities, where the entertainment option is more, people are found in exchange markets where merchants reveal their knowledge about their merchandise and expose their ability in business transactions to the customers as well as to the fellow businessmen. Likewise, people in the village utilize the Sundays to discuss different subjects like politics and other day-to-day problems to his fellow villagers either before or after the sermon.

In the second paragraph, the author introduces his friend Sir Roger as a good church-man who is keen in civilizing the villagers. Sir Roger took interest in the village church and decorated it by spending lot of his money. He decorated the inner part of the church by displaying the best quotations from the Bible of his choice. Then he had beautified the interior of the church by covering the pulpit with a beautiful cloth and building a railing in the communion table at his own expense. The author says, he has "... beautified the inside of his church with several texts of his own choosing: he has likewise given a handsome pulpit-cloth, and railed in the communion-table at his own expense." He had often told the author about the irregularities of the people towards the church and the religion. He further said that in order to make them visit the church regularly and kneel before God, he provided each and every one a hassock (cushion for kneeling) and a Common Prayer Book. Sir Roger did not stop with these; he hired an itinerant singing master to teach the villagers the right tune and rhythm to sing the psalms and offer the prayers respectively. The author states that Sir Roger was successful in his efforts that the villagers feel proud of themselves that they can sing their psalms and prayer in a better way. Indeed, it is the best church of all that the author had heard and seen in

his life. “they now very much value themselves, and indeed out-do most of the country churches that I have ever heard.”

In the next paragraph, the author described the nature of Sir Roger. He was a rich man and the landlord to the whole congregation hence he took the whole responsibility for the villagers as well as the church: “. . . he keeps them in very good order.” As a religious man, he was very strict with rules and regulations and always insists the gathering to maintain strict discipline and decorum in the church. He tried all possible ways to keep the villagers in a good manner. He never let anyone sleep during the prayer hours except that he sleeps for a short while. If by chance, he goes into a short nap at sermon, he ensures that no one else is nodding the moment he was awoken. At once he wakes up, he cautiously looked around to find if anyone is dozing. If he sees anybody nodding, either he himself wakes him up or send his servant to do his work.

Sir Roger was an old knight who is quirky by nature. His peculiarities are displayed on many occasions especially on Sundays at the prayer hours. “Several other of the old knight’s particularities break out upon these occasions . . . .” During the prayer, when all people sing their psalms, Sir Roger also sings with them but sometimes he continues to drag for a minute or more though others had stopped singing. Sometimes, when he was deep with his own devotion, he pronounced amen three or four times extra to the same prayer. Likewise, when all people were on their knees, he stood up to count the congregation to ensure that no one was absent. In this way, he relaxes the rules for himself but does not permit such relaxation for others.

Addison narrates another incident which showed Sir Roger’s complete control over the villagers. If Sir Roger felt anyone disturbing the church service, he called them in the middle of the service to deliver advice. Once when Addison accompanied Sir Roger to the church, he saw Sir Roger calling out John Matthews in the midst of the service to remind him not to disturb others while praying. This John Matthews is notable for being an idle person that he often behaved badly in the gathering and at that time when Sir Roger called him, he was kicking his heels on the floor. Sir Roger had many peculiarities like this but his friends do not take it seriously as they know well that Sir Roger possessed many good qualities. Hence

these idiosyncrasies were not seen as blemishes. Although Sir Roger exerts complete authority over his tenants, like a master does to his subjects in a typical way, it produced only positive effect on the villagers because he is a well-wisher at heart. The villagers also never disobeyed his words though he behaved strangely at times. Because they knew well that he did so much for the development of the tenants. Thus he was primarily a good man who did not hide his peculiarities and always tried to help the villagers. “This authority of the knight, though exerted in that odd manner which accompanies him in all circumstances of all, has a very good effect upon the parish, who are not polite enough to see anything ridiculous in his behavior; besides that the general good sense and worthiness of his character, make his friends observe these little singularities as foils that rather set off than blemish his good qualities.”

As soon as the sermon was over, nobody tried to move out until Sir Roger had gone out from the church. Once the sermon was finished, when all were awaiting the departure of Sir Roger, he walks down from his seat to the people sitting on both sides and enquires about their family members and relatives, who didn't turn up to the sermon. This is actually a secret reproach to the person that was absent. Sir Roger did use various methods to kindle the interest of the people in religion and church and encouraged the children and the young men to stay attentive in church services. The priest had told the author that once on a catechizing day, Sir Roger examined the children's knowledge on Bible and when he felt satisfied with a boy's answers so he gifted the boy with a Bible as a sign of encouragement. Sometimes, he gave a piece of roasted pig along with the Bible to the boy's mother as a mark of appreciation.

Likewise, Sir Roger added five pounds a year to the clerk's post so that it might encourage the clerk as well as other young fellows to involve in church services zealously and discharge their duties sincerely. He constantly encouraged the young men to join the church service. He also promised them that one of the young fellows would be appointed in the place of the present clerk since he was getting old to retire. Also he placed a condition that the appointment would be made only in the order of merit and the able person would be appointed.

The author has described the nature of Sir Roger and how he dominates the subjects of the village taking decisions on his own without asking for suggestions from the chaplain. Yet Sir Roger had maintained a fair understanding with his chaplain and their mutual concurrence was good. The parson also did not have any issue with Sir Roger as he had worked for the improvement of the church and the betterment of the people. This may sound unimportant but when observing the situation prevailing in the next villages, the importance of this relation is realized. Such good rapport between the landlord and the priest was not found in the nearby villages. The squire and the vicar in the nearby villages always were famous for their differences of opinion that often resulted in conflict and hostility. The author says, “the very next village is famous for the differences and contentions that rise between the parson and the ‘squire, who live in a perpetual state of war.” The squire would not visit the church and the parson criticized the squire openly and in every prayer, he told the people that he was better than the squire. The parson spoke against the squire and the latter to take revenge upon the former, converted all the people of that village into non-believers of God and prohibited them from paying tithes. This had come to such extreme that “the squire has not said his prayers either in public or private this half year; and that the parson threatens him, if he does not mend his manners, to pray for him in the face of the whole congregation” to declare him as a sinner. Thus neither the chaplain, nor the squire was ready to settle the dispute consequently affecting the lives of the ordinary people in the village.

The author records, “Feuds of this nature, though too frequent in the country, are very fatal to the ordinary people.” It is common for the ordinary people get dazzled by the rich people like the squire. So it is sometimes difficult for even a learned man like priest to make them understand the truth when they come to know that there are several men who earn more than five hundred pounds actually do not believe in God. Therefore through this essay, Addison stresses the point that the Squire and the parson should maintain a good relationship like Sir Roger and the vicar of his village for the well-being of the common people. Thus the essay emphasizes the importance of holiness of Sunday, and the character Sir Roger who in spite of all his eccentricities, admired for his good qualities too. The essay mirrors Addison’s opinions about the role played by the church in the development of the rural community of England.

### 2.2.6 Critical Analysis

“Sir Roger at Church” is a seminal essay which forms the part of the series of “The Spectator Club”. Addison took a critical perspective in viewing religious practices of the time thus giving importance to reason which is one of the tenets of the Age of Enlightenment. In the essay, Addison gives the picture of a church congregation on a Sunday in a detailed manner. His description and narration of the congregation is done efficiently that it comes alive before the eyes of the readers. One vital reason for the successful functioning of the church in the village is the sincere effort of Sir Roger, an old squire, whose character is engraved by Addison with much importance. Though Sir Roger is strict and stern, at times, his actions are filled with humour too. In the name of civilizing the villagers, he controls and dictates them in the name of spirituality though it doesn’t create any pessimistic effect.

In this essay, Sir Roger has been depicted both as a kind of country gentleman and an individual with peculiarities and distinctions loaded. As a landlord, he works for the development of the church and the well-being of the people. As an individual, he is at his best even with his oddities and singularities. Sir Roger is kind to his friends and caring to his tenants. When it comes to the church services, he is uncompromising and maintains the understanding with the priest of the village church. If analysed keenly, Sir Roger appears to be a strict father figure who instructs the villagers with complete authority.

Addison’s portrayal of Sir Roger as an individual filled with eccentricities contains satirical undertones though they provoke laughter. His dealings with the church are satirized and dealt with irony too. He causes disturbances in the middle of the prayer by standing while others were kneeling to take note of the people; by keeping vigil over the people whether they are sleeping during the sermon or not; by lengthening the lines of psalms; by repeating amen whenever he is pleased to do and calling out the names of the person who disturbs the sermon. Sir Roger does all these in the middle of the sermon causing disturbances to others. But these eccentric behaviors are tolerated by everyone including his friends, priest and the village folks. May be the village folks do not notice his strange behavior but the learned man like the parson is aware of it yet ignore them to sense the worthiness in his

character. It is because of his innate good qualities, others understand his oddities rather than considering them as blemishes. Thus the ironical picturisation of the character of Sir Roger is in no way offensive as it is coated with humour. Actually we laugh at Sir Roger's strange behaviour at church but at the same time, a sense of reverence is developed for him.

### **2.2.7 Character analysis of Sir Roger de Coverley**

Sir Roger de Coverley is a fictional Tory character created by the Whig authors, Addison and Steele. He was mainly invented to represent the typical farcical landlord of the bygone era. His character is a mixture of goodness and strangeness. He is kind, honest, helpful, generous, caring at the same time strange, distinctive and peculiar. Even though Addison created Sir Roger to mock the Tory behaviours of the bygone days, his satire is inoffensive and mild. Addison's use of mild satire in the portrayal of Sir Roger made the latter an agreeable character. He is revered by all in spite of his oddities as they spring from his good nature. Addison added peculiarities in the character of Sir Roger mainly to highlight the foibles and vices of the eighteenth century society. But the primary purpose of creating such a character is to mock and satirise the Tory party and promote the Whig. The authors attempted to mock the conventional authoritarian attitude of Sir Roger. In course of doing this, however, the two Whig authors developed a kind of liking towards Sir Roger for his characteristics.

One of the notable characteristics of Sir Roger is that he is a man of humanity and kindness who loves not only the servants of his house but also the people who live around him and the whole village to say. For instances, Sir Roger enquires about the condition of the people's friends and relatives who are absent at the sermon. Though "a secret reprimand," his words are coated with a layer of warmth and affection towards the people because he wants everybody to attend the sermon and get benefitted by it. Sir Roger's repeated encouragement to the young fellows of the village to involve in the church services and to develop the quality for the post of clerk exhibit his interest in the well-being of the village. These incidences exemplify that he is benevolent and kind hearted who often thinks about others and not about the self alone.

Next quality is that Sir Roger is a religious man and a regular church goer. He also motivates others to come to the church regularly as he believes it nourishes one's soul. He volunteers to do church services and encourages the young men of the village to involve in the same. It is evident when he decorated and beautified the church at his own expense. He believed that by doing so, the country people would avidly come to the church. The author says, "My friend Sir Roger, being a good churchman, has beautified the inside of his church with several texts of his own choosing: he has likewise given a handsome pulpit cloth and railed in the communion-table at his own expense."

Next quality is Sir Roger's authoritative nature. The author says, "As Sir Roger is landlord to the whole congregation, he keeps them in good order, and will suffer no body to sleep in it . . . ." If he notices anybody nodding, he goes and wakes up that person or sends his servants to do the job. He hires the singing master to teach the tune of the psalms to the village folks and he promises to appoint the able young fellow in the place of clerk as he is at the verge of retirement. Furthermore, the parson doesn't question Sir Roger for any of his behaviours. Usually the priest is a learned man who makes important decisions but Sir Roger enjoys the privilege of being the decision maker which is also the result of his authoritative quality in a benign manner.

Next quality to be noted and appreciated in Sir Roger is that he is a talented organizer. He is very keen in organizing things not only in his house but also in the church. It is best exemplified in the way he embellishes the church by displaying the best quotations from Bible, covering the pulpit and railing the communion table at his own expense. He also encourages people to engage themselves in beautifying church to maintain good order and discipline. Addison states that he has "beautified the inside of his church with several texts of his own choosing: he has likewise given a handsome pulpit-cloth and railed in the communion-table at his own expense."

Sir Roger's responsible nature is noteworthy to mention. He believes that being the landlord of whole congregation he has to shoulder the responsibility to discipline them. At the time of his arrival in the village, he found the irregularity in the people in coming to the church hence he provided them a cushion to kneel and a

common prayer book to make them responsible because he is of the opinion that the country people's irregular visit to the church "would soon degenerate into a kind of savages and barbarians." Addison reinstates Sir Roger's words, "at his coming to his estate he found his parishioners very irregular; and that in order to make them kneel and join in the responses, he gave every one of them a hassock and a Common Prayer Book." Besides he never allowed any one to sleep during the sermon and if he finds any dozing off, he wakes up that person immediately. He would stand up and count heads even in the midst of the service to ensure everyone's presence. In author's words, "Sometimes stands up when everybody else is upon their knees, to count the congregation, or see if any of his tenants are missing."

Sir Roger's eccentric behavior is obvious in this essay through almost all his actions and in particular when he exercises his authority over the country folks. He expects his tenants to behave in a disciplined and responsible manner in the church. His odd mannerisms are waking up the people in the middle of the service, lengthening the psalms, adding more amen when he is pleased to do, and standing up when others on knees and counting heads during the prayer. He actually does not realize the disturbance caused to the sermon by such strange behaviours. Considering such oddities, Sir Roger may be called a humourist as his eccentricities provoke laughter.

To sum up, it can be said that in spite of Sir Roger's particularities, he is regarded as a man of great respect by his friends and country folks. However, the primary objective of Addison to include such singularities in the character of Sir Roger is not only to add charm and liveliness but to highlight follies and irrationalities and to reform the society. Thus Addison used Sir Roger as a stereotype to mock the Tory party as well as to satire the societal foibles but in a mild way. Nevertheless Sir Roger has evolved into a favourite and lovable creation of Addison.

#### **2.2.8 Addison's Prose Style**

Joseph Addison is one of the greatest prose writers in English literary history. He is known for his simple, lucid, moderate style that is free from ostentatious expression. The most prominent feature of Addison's style is lucidity of expression. There are no complex sentence structures and the sentences lend



themselves for easy comprehension. The essay is loaded with long sentences and one can find the period only at the end of fifth or sixth line whereas short sentences are used only few times. For instance, “as soon as the sermon is finished, nobody presumes to stir till Sir Roger is gone out of the Church.” One can perceive the intended meaning of the author at the first reading even though the essay contains lengthy sentences. In this way, the essay is free from obscurity of thoughts.

One important thing to be noted is that Addison’s essay is headed by the quotation from the classical author which in a way connects to the essay’s subject matter. “Sir Roger at Church” begins with the maxim of Pythagoras: “*First, in obedience to thy country’s rites, Worship the immortal Gods.*” Addison’s use of humour is subtle and unoffending. His irony is mild and urbane with a view of highlighting follies mainly to reform the society. His use of satire does not symbolize any individual directly like the satirical works of Alexander Pope. As far the language is concerned, he is efficient in using choosy and apt vocabulary with graceful rhythm which best suits the chosen theme. Moreover his sentences are not usually crowded with pedantic phrases and fanciful figures of speech leading to affectation. He uses figurative language only when the necessity demands and when he thinks that it contains effectiveness. Moreover, Addison’s style reads like a kind of conversation and the reader can connect with the author while reading the essay. But it doesn’t mean that he has used informal language. It is just he has avoided the language of a serious works like philosophy or other huge treatise. On the whole, Addison’s essay is free from pedantic extravagances employed by eighteenth century writers. Thus like Pope and Dryden, his style is natural and spontaneous which can be called a perfect prose style and he can be called as one of the great prose stylists.

### **2.2.9 Important Questions**

1. Write a short note on Addison.
2. Make a note on Addison’s contribution to periodicals.
3. What is Periodical essay?
4. List out the names of the Periodicals to which Addison made his contribution.
5. Write briefly about Coverley papers.
6. Who founded the Spectator Club and what is the aim of the Club?

7. Who are the members of the Spectator Club?
8. List out some memorable characters created by Addison and Steele?
9. Why does the author say that Sunday is a holiday?
10. What are the things provided to the villagers by Sir Roger?
11. How did Sir Roger beautify the church?
12. Give some instances for Sir Roger's singularities.
13. What is the name of the boy whom Sir Roger calls in the middle of the prayer and why did he call him?
14. What are the measures taken by Sir Roger to encourage the young fellows of the village?
15. How did Sir Roger reward the boy who gave the correct answer on catechizing-day?
16. Comment on the understanding between Sir Roger and the chaplain?
17. Why do the squire and the parson in the nearby village often quarrel?
18. How do the feuds of landlord and parson affect the common man?
19. How do the people around Sir Roger view his peculiarities?
20. Why does Sir Roger hire a singing master?
21. Discuss the character of Sir Roger.
22. Comment on the theme of the essay "Sir Roger at Church."
23. Elaborate on Addison's prose style with reference to the essay "Sir Roger at Church."
24. "Sir Roger at Church" is a satire – Discuss.
25. Discuss the contributions made by Addison to the English literature.

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## **UNIT – 3**

### **LESSON – 3.1: Charles Lamb, “Dream Children”**

The third unit consists of two essays written by Charles Lamb and William Hazlitt, the major prose writers of the nineteenth century. The first essay “Dream Children” by Charles Lamb is considered as the first lesson of this unit and marked Lesson 3.1. The second essay “On Reading Old Books” by William Hazlitt is considered as the second lesson of this unit and marked Lesson 3.2.

#### **3.1.1 Objectives**

The lessons in this unit introduce two major essays of the nineteenth century. The students get a chance to explore the new kind of essay called personal essay developed in the nineteenth century. It helps students to learn to present a personal experience in a prose form deploying various styles. The critical study of the essays helps the students to view the personal narration in an objective perspective.

#### **3.1.2 Biographical Note**

Charles Lamb (1775 – 1834) was born on 10 February 1775 in the Inner Temple as the youngest son of John Lamb and Elizabeth Field. His father was employed as a clerk to a lawyer and spent most of his professional life in the same way as an assistant to Samuel Salt, a barrister who lived in the Inner Temple. Charles Lamb created a portrait of his father in his “Elia on the Old Benchers” under the name Lovel. Charles Lamb had a brother John and a sister Mary and four other siblings but the four siblings did not survive their infancy. So he grew up with John and Mary who were many years older to him. Charles loved his paternal aunt Hetty and maternal grandmother Mrs. Field very much. He was cared by aunt Hetty as she had special fondness for him. Charles spent some of his memorable childhood days with his grandmother Mrs. Field in the large country house owned by the Plumer family near Widford, Hertfordshire where Mrs. Field worked as a servant. Charles’s sister Mary taught him to read at his early age. Then he suffered from smallpox and after recovery from the same, Charles was put under the tutelage of Mrs. Reynolds whose relationship Lamb maintained throughout his life.

Charles spent his adulthood in the Inner Temple and later attended the Bluecoat Charity Boarding School at Christ’s Hospital, a traditional British

boarding school. Here he met Samuel Taylor Coleridge (a romantic poet) and made friendship with him which continued till his life. Rev. James Boyer, the headmaster of the school was famous for teaching Latin and Greek at the same time for his harshness. Charles' account of the days spent in the Christ's Hospital had been recorded in many of his essays. In his essay "Christ's Hospital Five and Thirty Years Ago," Charles described his experiences referring to himself in the third person as "L". Charles's speech impediment came as an obstacle to get into a good career. Because of this, he was disqualified from a clerical career and forced to choose an ordinary career after discontinuing the school at the age of fourteen when other boys including Coleridge moved on to Cambridge. After leaving school in 1791, Charles held a small post in the examiner's office of the South Sea House. Then he was employed in the accountant's office of the East India Company in 1792. There he rendered his service for almost three decades till his retirement.

Charles fell in love with Ann Simmons at the age of twenty however it was a hopeless love affair. He had spent years courting Miss Simmons but there was no record about the relationship between the two excepting some pages of Charles' writing. The most desperate thing is that Charles became heart-broken hearing the marriage of Ann Simmons and Mr. Bartram, a silversmith. Thus he suffered from neurosis problem which resulted in temporary insanity. Later, his sister Mary became insane and at one point of time when she was out of control with extreme lunacy, she stabbed her mother, Elizabeth Field, with a table knife. From then onwards, Charles Lamb stayed with his sister to pay special attention to her. Charles also was not completely recovered from his temporary insanity then hence both suffered from mental ailment in different phases. Consequently, Charles was admitted in psychiatric hospital for six weeks in 1795.

Charles' brother John Lamb died in 1799 and his death occasioned the essay "Dream Children: A Reverie". Thus after John's death, Charles became the only guardian to Mary Lamb as she could not look after herself because of her mental illness. However Charles was already gaining his name as a poet. Thus he could spend his meagre income to keep his sister in a private madhouse in Islington called Fisher House. Regardless of this, both Mary and Charles Lamb enjoyed a vigorous social life. To look after his sister, he had never had a family of his own. At the age of forty four, Charles Lamb proposed an actress, Fanny Kelly, of Covent Garden for

marriage but she refused him. Thus Charles remained a bachelor until his death and died of erysipelas and was buried in All Saints' Churchyard, Edmonton. Mary, who was ten years older to him, survived him for more than dozen years and after her death, she was buried beside her brother, Charles Lamb.

### 3.1.3 Charles Lamb's Literary Contribution

Charles Lamb was a famous British poet, essayist, critic, fiction writer, who is best known for his *Essays of Elia*. Charles began his literary career in 1796 by contributing four sonnets to Coleridge's first volume entitled *Poems on Various Subjects*. Significant growth of Charles Lamb as a poet is evidenced from his contributions to the second edition of the *Poems* which contains poems such as "The Tomb of Douglas" and "A Vision of Repentance". The temporary breach in Coleridge's relation with Charles Lamb resulted in the exclusion of the latter's poems in the third edition. Next Charles published *Blank Verse* with Charles Lloyd which contains Charles Lamb's famous poem "The Old Familiar Faces." This poem is sentimental in which Charles refers to all the old familiar faces, that is, old friends, family members and his love. It is a disturbing personal poem about nostalgia of the remote past. Charles wanted to be a poet since his young age but did not achieve success as a poet even after producing some notable poems.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, Charles Lamb tried his hand in attempting a prose work and published in 1798, a sentimental romance titled *A Tale of Rosamund Gray*. It is a story of a young girl named Allen Clare (who might have been inspired by Ann Simmons, Charles Lamb's love) who loves Rosamund Gray but their relationship ends in nothing because of Allen's sudden death. In the beginning of the nineteenth century, Charles began to contribute articles to magazines such as *The London Magazine* and *The Reflector* mainly to escape poverty. Charles wanted to attempt dramatic genre and was also actively associated with literary associations such as Drury Lane theatre. He staged his two-act farce, *Mr. H* in Drury Lane Theatre. In the year 1802, he wrote *Woodvil*, a blank verse play which was unsuccessful.

Charles again renewed friendship with Coleridge which had lasted for many years. Including Coleridge, Charles was also linked with many other literary personalities such as William Wordsworth and a group of young writers P. B.

Shelley, William Hazlitt and Leigh Hunt. In the early years of the nineteenth century, Charles Lamb started his literary collaboration with his sister Mary Lamb and produced at least three books jointly for William Godwin's Juvenile Library. The most remarkable of them was *Tales From Shakespeare* which had been republished many times in countless editions and had never been out of print. Many of the editions were illustrated too. *Tales From Shakespeare* is a simplified retelling of selected twenty plays of Shakespeare in a prose form written mainly for young readers. In this, Charles Lamb was responsible for retelling the tragedies and Mary Lamb the comedies.

In 1808, Charles published his version of Homer's *Odyssey*, *The Adventures of Ulysses* for children. In 1809, he again collaborated with his sister to write *Mrs. Leicester's School*, a book of children's stories and *Poetry for Children*. Then Charles edited *Specimens of the English Dramatic Poets Who Lived About the Time of Shakespeare*, the book which popularized Shakespeare's contemporaries. Through this work, Charles Lamb entered into the field of criticism. His critical career continued with the publication of essays such as "On the Tragedies of Shakespeare" and "On the Genius and Character of Hogarth" in Leigh Hunt's journal, *The Reflector* (in 1811). Even though Charles did not attempt to write his first Elia essay until 1820, he attained gradual perfection of the essay form by writing a series of open letters to Leigh Hunt's *The Reflector*. "The Londoner" is the most famous of these letters in which Charles ridicules the contemporary enthrallment of nature and the countryside.

In the year 1823, Charles Lamb published his collected essays entitled *Essays of Elia* under the *nom de plume* "Elia" which Lamb used as a contributor to *The London Magazine*. Next collection was published ten years later, shortly before Charles Lamb's death. Elia essays are personal and are conversational and introspective in tone. Charles' Elia essays are autobiographical in nature and he mainly used his Elia essays to reveal the writer's own personality thus introducing another type to the essay form called personal essay or familiar essay. Charles Lamb, thus, came to be known as the 'The Prince of Essayists' or 'The Prince of Personal Essays'.

### 3.1.4 Short Summary of "Dream Children"

“Dream Children: A Reverie” is an account of Charles Lamb’s reminiscence of bygone days. His days are filled with happiness, sorrows and an unfulfilled yearning for a comfortable life. The essay which is autobiographical in nature is nothing but the author’s dream tailored with disappointments, joys, longings and desires. When Charles Lamb was deep asleep, he entered the world of dreams and weaved a story of a life that he longed to lead. To his dream children, Alice and John, he began his narration of his childhood experiences especially his days spent in his grandmother’s house Mrs. Field. Through his narration, Charles had created living pictures of his grandmother and elder brother who left profound memories in his heart. He also reveals his unsuccessful courtship with Alice W—n. In the process of recollection, the author realised that his dream children began to recede and finally disappeared which made the author realize that it was nothing but his dream. Thus he was back to reality finding himself seated in his bachelor armchair with his sister Bridget by his side. Though the whole narration is nothing but a dream, Charles Lamb had brought the realities of his life before the eyes of the reader.

### **3.1.5 Detailed Summary**

“Dream Children: A Reverie” is an essay taken from Charles Lamb’s *Essays of Elia*. Formerly, *Essays of Elia* was published as a series in the *London Magazine* in 1820 and was brought out as a book in 1823. Charles begins his essay “Dream Children” by describing the interest in children to listen to stories about their grandparents and great grandparents whom they have never seen. He stated, “Children love to listen to stories about their elders, when they were children; to stretch their imagination to the conception of a traditionary great-uncle or grandame, whom they never saw.” He recounted how one evening his young children Alice and John crawled to him to hear the stories of their great grandmother, Mrs. Field. To satiate their eagerness, the author began his narration of his childhood experiences with his grandmother, Field in a nostalgic tone.

Mrs. Field lived in a big house in Norfolk which belonged to the Plumer family, the rich and noble family in the surroundings. The Plumer family moved to another new fashionable mansion and as Mrs. Field worked as servant in the house for many years, she was made the keeper of the house who looked after the house

with great care as if it was her own. The house is so big that the author describes it as “a hundred times bigger than that in which they and papa lived.” The tragic incidents of the two children and their cruel uncle occurred in the house and the whole story was “carved out in wood upon the chimney piece of the great hall.” The children were aware of this as they had read the story from the ballad of “The Children in the Wood.” But the rich man had pulled down the wooden chimney with story and replaced it with the marble chimney which contained no story on it. On hearing this, Alice expressed resentment towards it and looked upbraiding. The author admired the tender looks on Alice face which resembled her mother’s. “Here Alice put out one of her dear mother’s looks, too tender to be called upbraiding.”

The author went on to describe Grandmother Field as how good and pious woman she was. Grandmother Field was respected by everybody in the neighbourhood though she was not the mistress of the great house. It was obvious when Mrs. Field died many people in the neighbourhood, both poor and rich attended her funeral. They had revered her for her great memory skills and her gentle heart. Mrs. Field was familiar with The Book of Psalms in “The Old Testament” and a great portion of “The New Testament” of *The Bible*. Alice here spread her hands as if she was not interested in appreciating this quality of Mrs. Field that she herself did not possess.

After the death of Mrs. Field, the house came to decay with no one to look after. Hence the nobleman carried away the furniture and other antiques from the house and placed them in his new house constructed in the adjoining county. The author stated his opinion that the antiques did not suit the new house and it appeared as if one had shifted the tombs of Westminster Abbey to the average drawing room. “. . . all its old ornaments stripped and carried away to the owner’s other house, where they were set up, and looked as awkward as if some one were to carry away the old tombs they had seen lately at the Abbey, and stick them up in Lady C.’s tawdry gilt drawing-room.” Here John smiled at the comparison given by the author as if he agreed that the rich man’s decision was indeed foolish. Things appeared attractive only if they are in accordance with the surroundings.

The author laid much importance to the character of Mrs. Field and continues to describe her. Grandmother Field was a tall, upright and graceful



woman and was famous as a good dancer in her youth. At this juncture, Alice moved her right foot involuntarily as is she was also interested in dancing. Unfortunately, Grandmother Field suffered from a cruel disease called cancer still she stayed up with her good spirits. She slept alone in the lone chamber of the big lonely house without fearing the apparitions of two infants that glided up and down at midnight. Grandmother Field said, “those innocents would do her no harm.” The author compared himself with his grandmother to say how frightened he was to sleep alone and how he used to sleep with his maid and believed that it was mainly because he was not so religious. “Here John expanded all his eyebrows and tried to look courageous.”

Mrs. Field was good to her grandchildren. The author used to spend most of his childhood holidays in that big mansion with her. The author carried many special memories. He used to passionately gaze upon the old busts of the Twelve Caesars for long hours that either the Emperors of Rome would come back to life or he would transform into marble with them. “. . . in gazing upon the old busts of the Twelve Caesars, that had been Emperors of Rome, till the old marble heads would seem to live again, or I to be turned into marble with them.” Charles never felt tired of roaming around that huge mansion and its empty large rooms “with their worn-out hangings, fluttering tapestry, and carved oaken panels.” The mansion also had a “spacious old-fashioned gardens” where he used to hang about admiring the varieties of nectarines, oranges and peaches grown on the walls. Besides he preferred aimless wanderings in the garden happily admiring the “melancholy-looking” yew and fir trees, orchid trees and the fish pond than enjoying sweet fruits of like red berries and fir apples of the orchard. Though he had no work to do, he busied himself in this work: “busy-idle diversion.” Usually children preferred to relish the sweet fruits grown in the garden but the author is quite different. At this point, John slyly dropped the plate with a bunch of grapes but both seemed unwilling to taste the fruit as they were tempted by the story and not by the fruit.

The author in a heightened tone said how his grandmother showered special love on his brother John L “because he was so handsome and spirited a youth, and a king to the rest of us.” John was equally brave as he was handsome. Unlike other children who were confined to the boundaries of the big mansion, he used to mount on horse and ride round the country, join the hunters and involve in other outdoor

activities. John L was a daring man and won the admiration of every one. John L, who was senior to the author used to carry the latter upon his back for many miles as he was lame footed. The author felt sorry for this but John L was considerate to him. When his beloved brother passed away later, the author missed him much that it haunted him more and more. He regretted his inability to understand his brother's impatience when he was in pain carrying him. John's death had created a vacuum in Charles' life making him contemplative about the inevitability of life and death. ". . . when he died, though he had not been dead an hour, it seemed as if he had died a great while ago, such a distance there is betwixt life and death."

The author's narration took a tragic tone here and wished that his brother would come back to life again to cross with him and to quarrel with him. The children who were listening to the story even felt sad which conveyed their little mourning. Yet they pleaded the author to tell about their dead mother. So the author began his narration about his love and how he courted Alice W. for seven long years "in hope sometimes, sometimes in despair, yet persisting ever." He tried to make the children understand what coyness, difficulty and denial meant in young unmarried ladies. In the process of narration, he suddenly sensed that the soul of the Alice W was gazing from the eyes of little Alice that he was confused for a while to identify the person sitting before him. ". . . when suddenly turning to Alice, the soul of the first Alice looked out at her eyes with such a reality of re-presentment."

As the author looking at the children, John and Alice, were growing fainter and were receding from him. At last, he could see only two mournful features in the uttermost distance creating impact upon his mind with their speech: "we are not of Alice, nor of thee, nor are we children at all. The children of Alice call Bartrum father. We are nothing; less than nothing, and dreams. We are only what might have been, and must wait upon the tedious shores of Lethe millions of ages before we have existence, and a name." Thus the author finally woke up from his day dreams and found himself sitting in his bachelor's armchair, where he had fallen asleep. According to the Greek mythology, Lethe is the river of forgetfulness that a person has to cross after his death, before going to hell. Symbolically here it refers to the receding of the children from his eyes and his revelation to reality. Coming back to reality, he found his sister Bridget sitting by his side lamenting the permanent loss of John L. The readers were also brought back to reality when they realize that the

narration is nothing but the fabrication of author's imagination. To sum up, the essay "Dream Children: A Reverie" is the outcome of the unfulfilled yearnings, pains, losses and desires that the author carried in his heart.

### **3.1.6 Critical Analysis**

"Dream Children: A Reverie" is an account of Charles Lamb's recollection of bypast times filled with an unfulfilled yearning for a contented life. The whole essay is nothing but the author's dream tailored with sorrows, happiness, longings and desires. Hence it is autobiographical in nature. When he was deep asleep, he stepped into the world of dreams and created a story of a life which he actually wished to lead. To his dream children, Alice and John, he began narrating his childhood experiences especially his days spent in his grandmother's house Mrs. Field, an ideal woman with great qualities according to Charles Lamb. Through his narration, Charles had created living pictures of his grandmother and elder brother who left profound memories in his heart. He described the character of Mrs. Field of how pious, duty-conscious, responsible, courageous and caring she was. She was respected by the people in the neighborhood and her funeral was attended by many people, both poor and rich. After her death, the huge house which was under her charge was demolished.

Then continued the narration of the author of how he spent his childhood vacation in the big mansion. All three children, Charles, John and Mary were regularly invited by Mrs. Field to the house to spend their vacation. Charles Lamb was a kind of reserved and reticent in nature. He preferred wandering the house, staring at the busts of the emperors, observing the fish pond and strolling in the garden. Through his dream, Charles tried to give a complete picture of his childhood. He described the amount of fun he had at that house and the orchard. He then described his brother John L who was handsomely spirited youth. John L's nature is in contrast to Charles. He was adventurous and filled with enthusiasm and always engaged in some outdoor activities like riding and shooting but never confined to the big mansion alone. As a lame-footed boy, Charles' life was mostly filled with isolation because he couldn't move out without anybody's assistance thus remained stagnant. But John's attention towards Charles was remarkable because whenever possible, he carried Charles on his back to enjoy the outer world.

The author then expressed his deep sorrows of missing his elder brother, who became lame-footed later and died. The dream children also shared their sorrow by expressing little mourning. Then the author continued with his description of Alice W—n at the request of the children who liked to hear about their mother.

Alice W—n is a shadowed reality the author created. Charles recollected his courtship with Alice W—n and was explaining to the children about it. In the process of recalling, the author suddenly sensed that his dream daughter Alice and wife Alice have fused into one. When his dream children began to recede and finally disappeared, the author realized that it was nothing but his dream. Thus he was back to reality finding himself seated in his bachelor armchair with his faithful sister Bridget by his side. It is comprehensible from the author's description that Alice W—n referred to Ann Simmons, Charles' sweetheart. His yearnings to lead a happy domesticity are revealed through his dreams. He had two children Alice and John in his dream. Though he said that little Alice resembles her mother Alice, in the course of the narration about the latter, the author couldn't continue further. Before narrating about their marriage, the author could sense the soul of the elder Alice in little Alice and then immediately the children started to recede from his eyes and he woke up from his dream. This again symbolizes the unfulfilled and unrequited love of his life. Like bubbles that last for few seconds, his momentary life in the world of fantasy came to an end when he woke up from his slumber.

Charles' through his reminiscence carries the readers back to his old memorable days. Though the whole narration is nothing but a dream, Charles Lamb had brought the realities of his life before the eyes of the reader. Certainly, one would share the emotions, happiness, longings, sorrows and sufferings with the author during the course of narration. Besides the death of Mrs. Field and John and the unreciprocated love of Charles Lamb, the heightened pathetic note is given at the end of the essay when his imaginary children created a strange impression through their speech: "We are not of Alice, nor of thee, nor are we children at all . . . . We are nothing, less than nothing, dreams. We are only what might have been . . ." The author meditates on his childhood and regrets the loss of his beloved ones and memorable days. Through the recollection of his childhood memories and the loss of his relatives, the author strikes a philosophical cord about the ephemeral nature of life where nothing is permanent.

Charles Lamb in his dream tried to juxtapose the past and the present in the course of the narration. Alice expressed a sign of displeasure at the information of the subsequent replacement of the story-carved wooden chimney with the empty marble one in the large house. The resentment on Alice's countenance suggested that it should not have been replaced and her looks resembled her mother's. When he was describing Mrs. Field of how she was good at dancing at her young age, Alice who was listening to the story, made movements with her foot to express that she was equally interested in dancing. Alice expressed displeasure when the author appreciated talents of the grandmother, in particular her memory skills. The author said that he had never plucked any fruit grown in that garden. This statement of the author's conduct inspired the dream children to deposit back the fruits taken by them to relish. When the author expressed his grief over the death of his brother, the children immediately pleaded the author to stop his narration about their uncle and to continue with their mother's because innocent children do not realize what grief is hence they wanted to escape into happiness from grief. So such picturisation of the dream children gives the reader an impression of the real but the revelation is made in the end with poignant note. By mentioning the prompt reactions of his dream children, he infuses the aesthetic impact to the essay.

Speaking about the title of the essay, "Dream Children: A Reverie," 'dream children' refers to Alice and John and 'reverie' is a day dream. So save Alice and John, all other characters are real life characters in Charles Lamb's life. The essay begins on a genial and faithful note with the depiction of a contented domestic setting, then the writer entertains his two children with his past and finally everything ends in emptiness stating that it is just a reverie or a day dream. The narration is enlivened by the depiction of children and the grandmother. The desperate yearnings and loneliness in the author's adult age filled his mind with imagination. Charles remained a bachelor in his life so naturally the children are only his dream children, created in his own world of imagination. The children were portrayed in such a way that their movements, emotions, reactions and expressions were all realistic. They did not appear as the creations of the author's imagination. Charles Lamb had fascinated the readers with his intensified depiction of the children. Only at the end of the essay, when the author woke up from his dream, the readers were also brought back to reality to realize that the entire narration were

nothing but the painful past of the author. The incidents the author narrated in the essay were also real except the children to whom the narration was done. Grandmother Field, his brother John L, the big mansion, Charles' love and his courtship for seven long years all these are real life incidents. Like Charles' life, the essay also begins on a happy note but in due course, melancholic events end the essay in pathetic note.

Reflecting on the other characters in the essay, they played significant roles in Charles Lamb's life. First, Mrs. Field was Charles' grandmother. He presents her before his dream children as an ideal grandmother who was the embodiment of goodness. Charles Lamb's elder brother, John L— was a handsome, zealous, strong and compassionate person. But later in his old age, he suffered from irritation and pain because of his lame-footedness. Charles Lamb's sister Mary Lamb, who did not marry because of her attacks of insanity, was referred to in the essay as "faithful Bridget." She might have been called Faithful Bridget because she was the only companion in Charles Lamb's life. Even when the author bounced back to reality from his dreamy world, he found her seated by his side.

The essay "Dream Children" is a wonderful portrayal of Lamb's hidden desire of having a happy conjugal life. The essay has been given an apt title and from the title, the readers could infer that the whole essay takes place in the unseen world of imagination. When the author said "my little ones crept about me the other evening to hear about their great-grandmother . . . ," it explains how he had already dreamt of his children and his family in his imaginative world. As he had no one to share his repressed feelings, he created dream children and gave voice to his voiceless emotions. But the happiness he experienced dissolved into nothing when he woke up from his slumber. Thus the essay is enriched with pathos and each and every word is coated with intense emotions. To conclude, "Dream Children: A Reverie" sprung up from the deepest agonies repressed in the heart of Charles Lamb. The essay is a nostalgic reminiscence of the beautiful memories and unfulfilled yearnings of the bygone days.

### **3.1.7 "Dream Children: A Reverie" as an Autobiographical Essay**

Generally speaking, autobiographical essay is a narrative account of one's own life in the form of non-fiction. Various incidents and happenings from the

author's life and the characters involved in his life are revealed directly by the author himself typically in the first person narration. Mostly the recollections of the self would be true and accurate. But the author may deploy some creative writing techniques to make his narration impressive and engaging. The autobiographical essay is intensely personal and subjective in nature. The attempt of writing an autobiographical work involves the process of reliving of one's own life. It is a kind of introspective writing and involves self-revelation.

Charles Lamb, being a romantic writer, his writings are marked with subjectivity, which is one of the characteristic marks of romantic age. His essays are clearly autobiographical. He puts his self at the centre of his writings and converses with the readers directly. He shares his happiness, sorrows, agonies and longings with the readers. The autobiographical elements had made his essays intensely moving.

"Dream Children: A Reverie" is an autobiographical essay of Lamb. Charles Lamb here speaks of his childhood days and elaborates on his happy moments spent at the big mansion of his grandmother Mrs. Field during his vacations. The essay also contains description about Lamb's delightful attachment with John Lamb, his elder brother. John's character sketch as a courageous and high-spirited young boy is set as an example to the children. Charles Lamb's intense grief at the death of his brother and terrible loneliness that followed are also well revealed here. The essay also tells his courtship with Ann Simmons for seven long years. But it was a disappointing tragic love affair and the essay registers his sense of remorse and discontent for his lonely life. Another reason for Charles to embrace a bachelor life is his sister Mary Lamb and her insanity. Not only Charles depicts the characters from his life but also reveals himself and his true self. Charles is tender, reserved and humourous at times. His profound wish to have a happy nuptial life is incredibly brought out in the essay. Thus the essay is profuse in personal touches and can be considered as one the finest autobiographical essays in English literature.

The consequence of his deepening loneliness and anguish which he couldn't overcome is the dreamy narration in the essay. The author's tormented mind gave birth to two children, Alice and John to whom he narrates his childhood stories. This narration is a kind of recreation of his family members and his desired life.

With the significant inclusion of dreams, the essay is seen as the harmonious blending of reality and fiction. The faithful portrayal of the real life incidents are coalesced with some consciously constructed imaginary events. Though the essay is filled with real life personae, they are fictionalized with different names. Taking the children as a tool, Charles enters into the world of reverie and weaves stories of real life and of his underlying desire. Throughout the essay, only author's narration with little interruption from the children is seen. Thus the readers are the silent listeners of the spontaneous outpourings. This confessional tone becomes an important feature of this essay to exemplify it as an autobiographical essay.

### **3.1.8 Prose Style of Charles Lamb**

“Dream Children: A Reverie” is written in a gentle manner and a relaxed conversational tone which best suit the narration. The informal tone of the essay became the suitable vehicle to express author's own self. The opening of the essay itself is informal and it reveals the author's intention to share his experiences with the readers: “Children love to listen to stories about their elders, when they were children; to stretch their imagination to the conception of a traditionary great-uncle or grandame, whom they never saw.” Lamb is a good observer and he captures even the minutest details in his essay. It is evident in his dramatic description of grandmother and his brother and the large mansion. He chisels the character traits of grandmother and his brother so realistically that they come alive before the eyes of the reader. Even the dream children are depicted as the living pictures. So, all these characters, whether, imagined or actual, are best revealed in the essay proving Charles Lamb's ability of characterization.

The following description of the big mansion where the author spent his childhood is another wonderful example to quote. He observes, “how I never could be tired with roaming about that huge mansion, with its vast empty rooms, with their worn-out hangings, fluttering tapestry, and carved oaken panels, with the gliding almost rubbed out – sometimes in the spacious old-fashioned gardens, . . . and how the nectarines and peaches hung upon the walls . . . among the old melancholy-looking yew trees, or the firs and picking up the red berries, and the fir apples . . . with the oranges and the limes in that graceful warmth . . . with here and there great sulky pike hanging midway down the water in silent state . . .”



Stylistically analysed, the language of this essay is old-fashioned or antiquated and is decorated with some rhetorical devices such as metaphor, empathy, repetition, symbolism, juxtaposition and etc. Charles Lamb might have been influenced by Shakespeare and other writers whose work he had attempted to retell and appreciate. The author has used the device of repetition to lay emphasis in certain ideas in the essay. Some examples are, when describing the character of Mrs. Field, he reiterates the same idea many times. “Then I went on to say, how religious and how good their great-grandmother Field was . . .;” “because she had been such a good and religious woman;” “but they were still upright, because she was so good and religious;” and “because I was never half so good or religious as she.” In all these examples, Charles Lamb lay emphasis that his grandmother was very good and pious and also his religiosity is strongly expressed through this.

The use of symbolism is seen in the following examples of this essay. While describing the old big mansion, the author says that “all its old ornaments stripped and carried away to the owner’s other house . . . .” The owner of the house instead of living in such a big house, moved to the new house constructed in a fashionable manner in the adjoining county. Moreover, he carried all the antiques to place in his new house where they don’t fit at all. Another example is the replacing of wood carved chimney piece with the new marble one. All these symbolize how people prefer modernization forgetting their own culture and lifestyle. Things look beautiful only when they are kept at place but people in the name of renovation and innovation, mix and match the old and the new to suit their convenience. The next example, “bachelor armchair” symbolizes the bachelor life of Charles Lamb which is barren without a family of his own. When Charles was telling about Alice W suddenly “both the children gradually grew fainter to my view, receding . . . .” This is a symbolic reminder to Charles to come back to reality from his fantasy world because after this, unreal children reveal the stark truth of Charles’ existence.

Lamb has deployed a distinctive prose form in “Dream Children”. The sentences are lengthy without any notable paragraph breaks. This continuous free flow of thoughts or a dream appears similar to the stream of consciousness technique where the writer pens everything that comes to his mind. Probably the series of long sentences stretched out without any pause is to pull the reader into the author’s dream. So it is a series of recollections entwined with one after the other.

The special feature of the essay is the blending of humour and pathos. Admixture of humour and deep rooted pathos is dispersed in the essay. The initial narration describing the happy memories is coloured with humour. But this humourous tint is gradually shifted to gloomy mood by unfolding the tragic events occurred in his life. Charles Lamb's real life was in fact filled with distresses and frustrations yet he continued to see the positive light with his sister Mary leading a happy social life because he could not escape his mind from remembering the dark phases of his life. His laughter is followed by tears of pain and agony exemplifying the mingling of humour and pathos. Thus Charles Lamb's essay is enriched with humour and pathos that leaves an everlasting imprints in the minds of the readers. Charles did not strictly adhere to the classic rules and models to focus on the high didactic tone rather he encompassed a range of moods in his essay such as dreams, desires, delights, despairs and dejections. Even his despairs and dejections are beautifully pictured so as to create a deep impact in the readers. Thus to conclude, his essay is packed with autobiographical elements. He is rightly called the prince of personal or familiar essays. Like a play within a play, the essay contains the narration in the dream when already the essay is a narration of his dream. Thus the essay "Dream Children: A Reverie" displays all Charles Lamb's fortes as an essayist.

### **3.1.9 Themes in "Dream Children: A Reverie"**

Imagination and dream play the most important role in the essay "Dream Children: A Reverie." Charles Lamb uses the differences between reality and imagination to picture his repressed emotions. To the imagined children, the narrator as a loving father tells the story of his life. To begin with, he recalls happy memories in the impressively big house that his grandmother maintained. The house was decorated with "busts of the Twelve Caesars," "worn-out hangings," "fluttering tapestry," and "great sulky pike hanging midway down the water in silent state." Then he continued to describe the spacious garden in the mansion which contained "old melancholy-looking yew trees, or the firs," "the red berries and the fir apples" and "the oranges and the limes." These images evoke a sense of grandeur. The author's imagination takes a melancholic turn when he articulates the death of his grandmother and his elder brother. When he began his narration about Alice W-n both the children receded from his eyes symbolizing the end of his imagination.

Therefore Charles blends the fact and the fiction. With the words of the dream children, the author attains realization, that is, he jumps back to reality from his imagination. Yet his wish to have a happy domesticity is fulfilled in his dreams because the greatest desires which are impossible in reality are achieved only in imagination.

Next theme to be highlighted is nostalgia and reminiscence. Nostalgia permeates the essay as Lamb recollects various moments of his life that happened during his childhood. Also here the author's imagination has paved way for him to narrate the story to his children as a father. One thing to be noticed in this essay is that Charles Lamb gives utmost priority to the ancientness. He created a living picture of his grandmother so as to instill her qualities to his children. Then the importance given in picturing the old house in Norfolk, the stories related to the house and the demolition of the house, teach the significance of antiquity to the children. He is very particular in passing down the values of the bygone days to the young generation.

Nostalgia reminds the author of his regrets. It is obvious through his revelations because author's recollection of happy and fond memories are coloured with sadness and regrets. All joyful descriptions are followed with tragic events like death and decay. The description of the big house and the happy moments spent in that house ended with the death of the grandmother and the demolition of the house. Similarly, the heroic picturisation of John L is followed by his painful last hours ultimately leading to death. His death haunts Charles Lamb because he feels remorse for he did not shower his brotherly love as John L had showed to him. When the author talks about the two spirits haunting the house, he regrets that he is not as pious as his grandmother. All these regrets are explicitly voiced in the essay but his biggest regret of not having a family of his own is implicitly stated. So he created a family of his own in his imagination and in the world of dreams. Even though, the essay is underlined with pathetic tone, Charles makes it light with his affection over the children, which also indicates his deep love towards his family.

The theme of loneliness is highlighted at the end of the essay when Charles turns to reality from his imagination. "We are not of Alice, nor of thee, nor are we children at all. The children of Alice call Bartrum father. We are nothing; less than

nothing, and dreams. . . . and immediately awaking, I found myself quietly seated in my bachelor armchair where I had fallen asleep, with the faithful Bridget unchanged by my side – but John L. (or James Elia) was gone forever.” These lines state clearly that all the happenings are nothing but a dream. Finally Charles Lamb is left alone without his own family except his sister by his side leaving him to experience loneliness.

### 3.1.10 Important Questions

1. Write briefly about Charles Lamb.
2. Comment on Charles Lamb’s contribution to English essay.
3. What is autobiographical essay?
4. Write a short not on *Essay of Elia*.
5. Justify the title “Dream Children: A Reverie.”
6. What is the picture created by Lamb about his grandmother Mrs. Field?
7. Describe the big mansion that was maintained by Mrs. Field.
8. Sketch the character of John Lamb with reference to the essay?
9. Who is the “faithful Bridget” referred to in the essay?
10. “Here Alice put out one of her dear mother’s looks, too tender to be called upbraiding.” What does the author mean by the word upbraiding?
11. What is the theme of the essay?
12. What occasioned the writing of the essay “Dream Children: A Reverie.”
13. What is the main reason for creating the dream children?
14. Give two instances of little Alice’s resemblance to mother Alice.
15. How did the dream children, Alice and John, come to know about the ballad of the Children in the Wood?
16. Why did the grandmother love John L the most?
17. How did Alice react to the story telling of the author?
18. Describe Lamb’s childhood days with reference to the essay.
19. What does the author mean by “busy-idle diversion?”
20. How does the author end the essay?
21. Comment on the element of humour and pathos in the essay.
22. “Dream Children: A Reverie” is a product of Lamb’s imagination weaving together the fact and fiction – Discuss in detail.
23. “Dream Children” is an autobiographical essay – Discuss.

24. Write a note on the prose style of Charles Lamb.
25. Elaborate on Charles Lamb's contributions made to the English literature.

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## LESSON - 3.2: William Hazlitt, “On Reading Old Books”

This lesson deals with the second essay of this unit titled “On Reading Old Books” by William Hazlitt.

### 3.2.1. Biographical Note

William Hazlitt (1778 – 1830) is an English dramatist, literary critic, painter, journalist, lecturer, social commentator, idealist and essayist. Hazlitt was born at Maidstone, Kent and he spent his childhood in Ireland and in North America with his father, Reverend Hazlitt, who was a Unitarian Minister. After preaching Unitarianism for three years his family returned to England when Hazlitt was nine years old and settled in Shropshire. In his early ages, Hazlitt was moody, sullen and was unapproachable but he started laying strong foundation to his learning by engaging himself in intense reading. He went to New College in Hackney to study divinity but later withdrew from the college. As he found difficulty in expressing himself through speech and writing, he turned to painting and travelled to Paris in 1802 to study painting and to work on his favourite masterpieces in the Louvre to make his living expenses. He returned to England the following year. His literary acquaintances Wordsworth and Coleridge encouraged his aim to become a painter, but because of his pro-French views, he was driven out of the Lake District and was away from his friends and later made friendship with Southey and Charles Lamb.

In the year 1805, he turned his attention towards metaphysics and philosophy on which he had zeal already. Then in 1808, he married Sarah Stoddart and settled at Winterslow on Salisbury Plain. This place was Hazlitt’s much loved retreat for thinking and writing. In 1822, his nuptial life came to an end. Thereafter, he fell in love with the daughter of a London landlord which ended tragically. Later in 1824, he married a widow named Bridgewater who was resented by his beloved son hence they got separated. Hazlitt’s account of days spent abroad as part of his second marriage was recorded in *Notes of a Journey in France and Italy*. Hazlitt died in 1830 uttering his last words, “I have had a happy life.”

### 3.2.2. William Hazlitt’s Literary Contribution

Hazlitt is regarded as one of the important essayists and critics of the Romantic Period. The anonymous publication of *An Essay on the Principles of*

*Human Action* in 1805 marks the beginning of Hazlitt's writing career as one of the greatest essayists of his period. After that he published *Free Thoughts on Public Affairs* in 1806 and *Reply to the Essay on Population* and an anthology of parliamentary speeches in 1807. In 1812, he delivered a course of lectures in philosophy in Russell Institute, London. He started doing this mainly because he was penniless even after successful completion of several literary projects. Then with Lamb's support, he became parliamentary reporter for the *Morning Chronicle* and established himself as a critic, journalist and essayist. In 1814, he left *Morning Chronicle* and contributed to Leigh Hunt's radical journal *The Examiner*. Their association paved way to the publication of *The Round Table* in the year 1817. Out of fifty two essays in the book, forty were penned by Hazlitt. In the same year, he published his *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays*, which attained considerable success. He became an art critic of the *Champion* and started contributing regularly to the *Edinburgh Review* from 1814 to 1830.

In 1818, he laid foundation for dramatic criticism through his book *A View of the English Stage*. Then he made acquaintances with Percy Bysshe Shelley and John Keats and also continued delivering lecture series namely *On the English Poets* (1818) and *English Comic Writers* (1819). *Lectures on the Dramatic Literature of the Age of Elizabeth* – this volume was prepared during 1819 but then he diverted his focus completely in writing essays to various journals, mainly to John Scott's *London Magazine*. His most important book on politics is *Political Essays with Sketches of Public Characters*, published in 1819. During Hazlitt's tumultuous times after the divorce and traffic love affair, he wrote many essays. His 'insane passions' are described in *Liber Amoris; or, The New Pygmalion* (1823). His two other noteworthy books are *Table Talk* (1821) and *Sketches of the Principal Picture Galleries in England* (1824). Then he published some of his effective writings such as *The Spirit of the Age: Contemporary Portraits* (1825) in which he presents a series of contemporary portraits of Coleridge, Wordsworth, Southey, Cobbett, Godwin and Wilberforce and *Conversations of James Northcote*, a book that records his long friendship with the painter. These are followed by *The Plain Speaker* (1826). Staying in France, he attempted writing *Life of Napoleon* in four volumes but was not successful. Thus he is mainly considered as one of the greatest essayists.

### 3.2.3. Short Summary

Hazlitt's essay "On Reading Old Books" was first published in *New Monthly* magazine but it was also found in *Lectures on the English Comic Writers* (1819) and in *The Plain Speaker* (1826). The essay records Hazlitt's personal reading experience and details his particular preferences of choosing books. He states how he preferred reading books written by authors of the past compared to the books authored by his contemporaries and gives justification for his choices and continues to list out the names of authors and their works which he had enjoyed reading repeatedly followed by his favourite lists of books that he wished to read but had not read yet.

### 3.2.4. Detailed Summary

Hazlitt begins the essay with the confession that he hates to read new books. He has a selective collection of about twenty or thirty volumes of books that he re-reads and desires to read ever. It is obvious that the writer enjoys reading these volumes to the fullest and probably believes that they have something novel to offer at his every attempt of reading those books. The first book Hazlitt mentions is Sir Walter Scott's *Tales of My Landlord*. He admits that the novels of Scott have "made a considerable addition to my scanty library" though he chose to read them after much deliberation. Besides, he was given suggestions to read the works of the Irish novelist Lady Morgan and Thomas Hope's novel *Anastasius*, which tells the adventurous story of a young Greek who travels through the large and perilous Ottoman Empire at the end of the eighteenth century. But he had not ventured upon reading these recommended works before he started writing this essay. Through this, Hazlitt creates a picture of himself as a bibliophile.

Hazlitt adds his experience of meeting people who are fond of reading books. He shares about a lady who was into reading the novel *Delphine* probably written by Germaine de Stael in 1802. Written in the epistolary form as a series of letters, the book examines the bounds of women's freedom in an aristocratic society. Then Hazlitt quickly derives his thoughts about how women "judge of books as they do of fashions or complexions, which are admired only 'in their newest gloss'." By saying this, he declares that he doesn't fall in this line and brings home the point that a book must not be adjudged by its cover. He further discloses



more about his preferences in choosing books. He says that he doesn't "trouble the circulating libraries much, or pester the booksellers for mail-coach copies of standard periodical publications. I cannot say that I am greatly addicted to black-letter." It is obvious that he is not the one who borrows books rather wishes to have his own and he does not confine himself to reading the heavy-faced, ornamental printing type of books. He chooses the books in such a way that reading them leaves some impact in him and intrigue him. He was fascinated towards the "marble bindings" of Andrew Millar, the Scottish publisher in the eighteenth century who published the works of Thomson and Fielding; Thurlow's *State Papers*, a Russian leather bound publication, which serves as the main historical sources of the Cromwellian period and Sir William Temple's *Essays* with a portrait by Sir Godfrey Kneller.

Hazlitt declares that "I have more confidence in the dead than the living." He favours the books that were written by the writers of the past and the ones that stood the test of the time. Not just he blindly conveys his disinterest for contemporary works rather he has his own reasons to state. He divides the contemporary writers generally into two categories – "one's friends or one's foes." He says that the choice of the books sometimes may be based on the readers' rapport with the writer. If the writer is a friend, then one is compelled to praise the book to the core. If he is a foe, then it results in ignoring the book as ill. "Of the first, we are compelled to think too well, and of the last we are disposed to think too ill . . . ." On the whole, choosing the book with a biased preconceived notion neither gives pleasure while reading nor helps in adjudging the merits and demerits.

Hazlitt tells another problem in approaching the contemporary writers. Sometimes his personal acquaintance with the writer may impact his reading of their books. It happens that if a person who really is a man of genius but has a foolish face, spoils our idea of reading the book. Sometimes a man possesses personal talents and inspires other with the highest respect but he may fail to meet our expectations in his book. "All these contradictions and petty details interrupt the calm current of our reflections." Such contradictions in the writers' nature prohibit Hazlitt to go for the contemporary works. According to Hazlitt, the works of the authors of the past "are still objects of anxious inquiry" and one can judge the book by the words printed on it. It seems here he is in favour of intrinsic approach to the

literature. On the contrary, he says, the extrinsic details about the author or his rapport with the reader interrupt the reading process. Thus he says, “the dust and smoke and noise of the modern literature have nothing in common with the pure, silent air of immortality.” So finding gemstones among the contemporary writers is a hard row to hoe.

Hazlitt reiterates his statements of choosing old books and the books that were read already. It seems he prefers re-reading the books stored in his shelf as he knows what to anticipate in every reading. For him, old book is like eating his favourite old dish and “the satisfaction is not lessened by being anticipated.” But the entertainment of reading an altogether new is compared to selecting a strange dish which involves more thinking to taste it. Even though he has an appetite, he does attempt to taste only a less quantity because he might be doubtful about the composition. Similarly in a new book, he is unacquainted of the content hence demands more time in figuring out the right book that satisfies his mind. “There is a want of confidence and security to second appetite.” He is of the opinion that tasting a new dish cannot promisingly gives good feel and appear in our mind often. Sometimes, there are chances for the food leaving negative impacts in the health. Likewise, the attempt of reading a modern work may leave a good impression creating a craving appetite to go for the next or it may create negative impression so as to not to choose such books anymore. To Hazlitt, reading an old book is to “shake hands with, and look an old, tired, and valued friend in the face, - compare notes, and chat the hours away.” Undoubtedly books are the best friends to the bibliophile but Hazlitt believes that only old books create the best uninterrupted long-lasting relationship.

Hazlitt elaborates on his love towards the old books and the benefits of the same. He states how every book one reads is filled with memories that can be recalled and relished. In this line, the first novel read by him not only gives “the pleasure of imagination and of a critical relish of the work, but the pleasure of memory.” It has left an imprint in his memory and enables him to recollect the “same feelings and associations” in his every reading that he had experienced in the maiden reading of the text. Also old books are the “links in the chain of our conscious being.” They bind together “the different scattered divisions of our personal identity.” They become “landmarks and guides in our journey through

life.” They aid in bettering our personality and become guidance to our life. The old books are “the wardrobe of a moral imagination, the relics of our best affections, the tokens and records of our happiest hours.” Owning old books is like owning the “Fortunatus’s Wishing’Cap” that facilitates to bless us with the best riches and wisdom which transform our lives.

Hazlitt states that every human finds consolation in one or the other art form. His father solaced himself with Bruscambille (also known as Deslauriers), a French actor and comedian who was famous for his farces at the Hotel de Bourgogne theatre during the early seventeenth century Paris. With regard to this genre of comedy, Hazlitt is immediately reminded of Tobias Smollet’s novel *Peregrine Pickle* and Henry Fielding’s *Tom Jones*. He lists out various characters and scenes such as the Memoirs of Lady Vane, the dispute between Thwackum and Square, the escape of Moll Seagrim and so on that remain afresh in his memory. He cherishes reading these every time as he experienced it for the first time. “. . . the whole train of ideas, and sets “the puppets dallying.”” For him reading old books is like sitting in a time machine and venture a trip to his good olden days so as to see himself as a “child again” and enable him to look at the world once again with the eyes of a child. Another thing to be noted here is that these novels are picaresque and comic in nature and Hazlitt enjoys multiple attempts of reading this genre.

Hazlitt then makes a reference to an anonymous “sage philosopher, who was not a very wise man.” The sage passed a remark on young and experienced unaware of the gravity of his words – “he should like very well to be young again, if he could take his experience along with him.” The advantage of being young, according to Hazlitt, is “without the weight of experience,” that is, the shoulders of youth are not to be burdened with loaded experience and over maturity because experience has to come with age and youthfulness to be filled with excitement and ignorance. They have to learn the right things at right age otherwise he will not get a chance to learn even in his late years. So dumping of experience will not work out rather they should be allowed to explore. Hazlitt at the same time considers dropping the experience of old as a privilege so as to travel to one’s youthful days when “ignorance was bliss” and recalls how he first gazed at mankind through the fictional works like wild beasts in a menagerie are gazed at.

Reading old books thus transports one from the present to the past. It not only brings the old ideas of the contents of the work vividly but also helps to reminisce about “the old associations of the faces and persons of those I then knew, as they were in their life-time – the place where I sat to read the volume, the day when I got it, the feeling of the air, the fields, the sky – return, and all my early impressions with them.” He feels happy to recollect the places, the times, the persons and the feelings by retracing the old story rather than choosing to read some fresh sheets “of the last new novels from the Ballentyne press” which is well known for its connection with the contemporary writer, Sir Walter Scott. Hazlitt underscores the same idea again that reading old books “is like visiting the scenes of early youth,” the time he spent in his father’s house running after butter and honey as a little thoughtless child whose only task was to be happy.

The first novel that broke the spell for Hazlitt was Henry Fielding’s *Tom Jones*, which was published once a fortnight in four volumes as part of Cooke’s pocket edition of select novels or novelists entertaining library. He had the opportunity to read in school-books and tiresome ecclesiastical history but reading Fielding’s for him is a different happiness: ““sweet in the mouth,” though not “bitter in the belly”.” Cooke’s edition of the *British Novelists* elevated the essayist’s interest on the subject. The world he found in this edition appeared to him as “a dance through life, a perpetual gala-day.” He found a sort of connectivity with the characters and events narrated in the novel and he held it closer to his heart. Hazlitt’s description of his favourite work is filled with enthusiasm and delight. He recollects how he eagerly awaited the next part of the book and how the writer purposely makes the reader wait at the cliff’s edge. Truly Hazlitt transfers the same happiness and pleasure he derived from reading his favourite books to the readers of this essay through his zealous description.

Hazlitt catalogues his favourite and much anticipated characters and stories thereby revealing his style of reading. He treasures the memory of reading Henry Fielding’s *The History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews and of his Friend Mr. Abraham Adams*, the first full-length work of Fielding. He then lists out the characters from his favourite works such as Tobias Smollett’s *The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle*, Laurence Sterne’s *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*, Miguel de Cervantes’ *Don Quixote*, Alain-Rene Lesage’s *Gil Blas* and

Aphra Behn's play *The Feign'd Curtizans, or, A Nights Intrigue*, a comedy. The recollection of these works and characters "may breathe fresh life into me, and that I may live that birthday of thought and romantic pleasure over again! Talk of the ideal! This is the only true ideal – the heavenly tints of Fancy reflected in the bubbles that float upon the spring-tide of human life." Hence for him, the memories of reading these books are heavenly that fill his mind in delight that "he hung in silence over the page" as the time has frozen. Reading through the lines, one may comprehend that the list suggests that Hazlitt's favourite genre could be picaresque and comedy.

There is shift in the genre when Hazlitt acknowledges that he took a particular satisfaction in reading the British theologian, Thomas Chubb's *Chubb's Tracts*, a work that is considered culturally important. He desires to go through them again because there is a "high gusto of polemical divinity in them." He also tried metaphysical studies with great ardour "so as to make a toil of a pleasure" but found them as wandering mazes where he could not see an end. He arrived at some satisfactory and effective conclusions reading them yet he doesn't wish to continue with the subject. In connection with this, he also refers to Marlow's *Faustus* in particular the line (in the drama) referring to Wittenberg, a place known for the Evangelical Reformation. Next focus of Hazlitt is on his non-preferred type of writers such as Hartley, Hume, Berkeley, Hobbes and Locke and exclaims that reading Locke's *Essay on the Human Understanding* neither gave him pleasure nor profit. He finds these writers, who are mainly philosophers and his contemporaries, powerful at the same time dry and boring that he did not prefer reading them later. He includes a few poets in this list who did not hit his taste. So he clears the air stating that though he is deficient in the faculty of imagination, he was an expert in reading "French romances, and philosophy and devoured them tooth-and-nail."

Hazlitt recollects a dainty repast of reading the part of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's epistolary novel *Julia: Or, the New Elosia, A Series of Original Letters* and how every time he re-reads it, "unspeakable delight and wonder" fill his mind. Besides other works of Rousseau, he also reads his political piece, *The Social Contract* which he "picked up at a stall in a coarse leathern cover." Hazlitt has been much enthralled by Rousseau that he prolonged his interest in reading his autobiography, *Confessions* and describes the enterprise of the self-portrait as "their

beauties are not “scattered like stray-gifts o’er the earth,” but sown thick on the page, rich and rare.” He regrets reading *Emilius* as it did not meet his expectations. With reference to this work, he explains about creating characters with which the reader would be able to relate and treasure. In the same line, he speaks about *Sir Fopling Flutter*, the restoration comedy by George Etherege.

Hazlitt opines that some books have “in a great measure lost their power over me; nor can I revive the same interest in them as formerly.” Such books, though gave him delight at the first reading, they lost their power to create an impression in Hazlitt in the present. He agrees that Bryan Procter’s *Marcian Colonna: An Italian Tale; with Three Dramatic Scenes, and Other Poems* is “a dainty book.” Then he proceeds to share his joy of reading John Keats’ poem “The Eve of Saint Agnes” that filled him with a sense of remorse about aging. He expresses “the reading of Mr Keats’ *Eve of Saint Agnes* lately made me regret that I was not young again” to enjoy the rich feelings that lie between the lines. As he could not relish the same sweetness and access the aesthetics of the work in the present, he says “The sharp luscious flavor, the fine aroma is fled, and nothing but the stalk, the bran, the husk of literature is left.” He finds nothing but “words, words, words” expressing in Lord Hamlet’s style because he feels that the works have “scarce a meaning.” But this was not the Hazlitt of the past, the man who relished and adored every word and every line and who took a dip in the stream of knowledge now regrets of not getting the maximum delight in reading the work of art. He exclaims how immense emotions welled up and tears flooded his eyes on reading the works of German writers, in particular, the epistolary novel of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s *The Sorrows of Young Werther* and Friedrich Schiller’s drama *The Robbers*. In this line, he also cherished Coleridge’s sonnet “To The Author of The Robbers.” It sounds like these books are read once in lifetime yet they wet our eyes with tears out of delight.

Hazlitt believes that his “insight into the mysteries of poetry” commenced with his acquaintance with Wordsworth and his reading of *Lyrical Ballads* and other poets of the Romantic period. He also displays his special liking with the writers like Goldsmith, Pope and also William Congreve (as he made references to the characters from the restoration play, *Love for Love*). Amidst his description of the personal preferences and perspectives, he admits that he is not a plagiarist because

he believes he might not be master of words but he is a man who could make proper “estimate of passages relating to common life and manners.” At the same time, he says “I am just able to admire those literal touches of observation and description which persons of loftier pretensions overlook and despise.” He then shares his understanding of the characteristic sketches of Shakespeare, an artist who could produce art even in “nonsense and poetry” according to him. He cites Sir Humphrey Davy’s remark of Shakespeare as a metaphysician than a poet which he believes the suitable compliment. Hazlitt had started reading the works of contemporary dramatists of Shakespeare and wished he would have known them a little earlier. He says, “I almost revived my old passion for reading, and my old delight in books, though they were very nearly new to me.”

Hazlitt expands his area of interest to the periodical essayists whose works he read long ago with extreme liking but later he had “no desire to go regularly through them again.” He had read essays from *The Spectator*, *Tatler*, *The Rambler*, *The Adventurer*, *The World* and *The Connoisseur* but he fancied *Tatler* the most. Next is his admiration towards Samuel Richardson, the eighteenth century writer known for three monumental epistolary novels. He was in favour of the longest of Richardson’s novels yet he never felt it was tedious or boring. To quote his words, “I like the longest of his novels best, and think no part of them tedious; nor should I ask to have anything better to do than to read them from the beginning to end.” Hazlitt also reveals his “sneaking kindness” for Henry Mackenzie’s epistolary novel *Julia De Roubigne* and his sentimental novel, *Man of Feeling*.

Hazlitt’s attention next falls on his most favourite poets, Spenser and Chaucer whose works he always read with most pleasure and he can even “wander about in for ever with a sort of voluptuous indolence.” Boccaccio is the only Italian writer to whose works he has least acquainted with and remained captivated. He then records his experiences of reading Milton’s *Paradise Lost* and Burke’s *Reflections on the French Revolution* which he bought in the year 1798 in the neighbouring town, Shrewsbury. He recollects how he dipped into the pleasures of seeing the covers and felt excited as if he “returned with my double prize” preserving this memory “embalmed with odours.” Hazlitt expresses his discontent with German criticism on the depiction of the fallen angel, Satan in Milton’s *Paradise Lost*. The critics are of the view that Milton had an inclination towards the

devil. But according to Hazlitt, Milton had followed the Scriptural account in portraying the devil incarnate, Satan which has to be appreciated rather than criticized.

Hazlitt utters how he took a particular pride and pleasure in reading the works of Burke. He was acquainted with this author in 1796 through an extract from his *Letter to a Noble Lord* published in “a three-times-a-week paper, the *St. James’s Chronicle*.” This first impression appeared best to Hazlitt as he records “this is true eloquence: this is a man pouring out his mind on paper.” Hence the style of all other writers save Burke seemed “pedantic and impertinent” to him. He also compares Burke with Dr. Johnson and Junius and claims that Burke’s style was the best of all and asserts his view that he adjudges an author not by the arguments stated and doctrines delivered rather by the lasting effect the works of art create in him. Hazlitt strongly articulates that Burke is incomparably superior and he could not be compared with anyone. He enunciates “if there are greater prose-writers than Burke, they either lie out of my course of study, or are beyond my sphere of comprehension.”

The author expresses his unwillingness to expand his horizons thus his reverence for Burke remains unaltered ever. To cite his words, “I am too old to be a convert to a new mythology of genius. The niches are occupied, the tables are full.” He then states his reasons for respecting Burke and admits his incapacities in attempting an essay. He says that he had used all his skills and power to write an essay but his attempts ended in vain. At this point, he also ascertains that “I never measured others’ excellences by my own defects; though a sense of my own incapacity, and of the steep impassable ascent from me to them made me regard them with greater awe and fondness.” He further adds though he does not adjudge other writers’ merits with his incompetency, he has a special admiration for prose writers in particular as he is not an expert in drafting the same. Further, he acknowledges that he has spoken about most of his favourite authors and the authors who constitute part of his early studies and some of whom he had criticized at large. Besides the authors who got Hazlitt’s attention in this essay become subjects in his other critical works. He is filled with a sense of gratitude and triumph for reading such works and possesses the memories of reading. He in fact says that nothing prevents him from relooking these works and thus his effort of gaining familiarity



with the works is not an unproductive one. To quote “To have lived it the cultivation of an intimacy with such works, and to have familiarly relished such names, is not to have lived quite in vain.”

In the concluding paragraph, Hazlitt enlists certain authors whose books he has never read but desired to read – “There are other authors whom I have never read, and yet whom I have frequently had a great desire to read.” Among them are Clarendon’s *History of the Great Rebellion*, Froissart’s *Chronicles*, Holinshed and Stowe, and Fuller’s *Worthies*. He is after these works for the fine portraits of the characters depicted in them. He also intends to read all the fifty-two plays of Beaumont and Fletcher though he had already completed “a dozen or fourteen of them.” He agrees with others opinion that *A Wife for Month* and *Thierry and Theodore* are delicious. Hazlitt listens to the suggestions made by his friendly scholars who share a similar liking towards books hence chooses them accordingly. He extends his wish list to the speeches of Thucydides, and Guicciardini’s *History of Florence*, the original version of *Don Quixote*, the *Lives of Persiles* and *Sigismunda* and the *Galatea* of Miguel de Cervantes. Finally, he expresses his desire to add another book to his wish list namely *Waverley*, the historical novel penned by Walter Scott, his contemporary who won the admiration of Hazlitt. It makes the point clear that Hazlitt makes a subtle declaration he does not read contemporary works until it has a subject that interests him. Therefore through this essay, Hazlitt gives a comprehensive picture of his bookshelves allowing the readers to be part of his rumination in tracing his favourites.

### **3.2.5. Critical Observation**

The prominent essayist of the Romantic Era, William Hazlitt, begins his essay with the statement that “I hate to read new books” which may sound surprising. Hazlitt was acquainted with Romantic poets and critics such as Wordsworth and Coleridge and belonging to the same period, he had witnessed the thriving of contemporary literature. Romantic period is considered as the inspiring era in the history of English literature yet Hazlitt abandons the literary hubbub of his day preferring the quiet rumination of the old. He hates to read new books and therefore they occupy only a scanty space in his personal library so as to accommodate only about twenty or thirty volumes. He chooses the new books only

after much deliberation and for instance, he says that only after a long time, he sat down to read Scott's *Tales of My Landlord*. Unlike women who judge the book as do the fashions, Hazlitt prefers old books rather than the one "in their newest gloss."

Hazlitt offers a convincing account of his preference to the old books and how our early reading aids us in varied ways for the rest of our lives. He emphasizes the significance of old books and expresses his greater likelihood for the same. He believes that they are vital to the one's personal development and gives guidance in our journey through life. Despite his philosophical disagreements, he admires the old books and considers worth-reading as they are the examples of literary excellence. Hazlitt is of the opinion that there is no necessity to carry the burden of creating a rapport with the author of the past and express his criticisms about the old book on contrary to the case of the contemporary writers. Reading contemporary writers, for him, invites various petty considerations. The acquaintance with the contemporary writers fills the mind with preconceived notions which influence the reading of the book. For him, the old books remain as objects of anxious inquiry whereas the new books have nothing immortal in common and hence he says, "I have more confidence in the dead than the living." He is least interested to put strenuous effort to grasp the concepts of the new books when he is already familiar with the ideas provided in the old books.

Hazlitt compares old and new books and stresses that there is a sense of calmness and serenity in reading old volumes in contrary to the dusty smoke and noise of the modern literature. He extends his comparison of old books to familiar dish and new books to strange dish which needs to win our confidence and security for the next try. The old volumes are like a trusted old friend from which we can always expect something novel whereas when it comes to new book, choosing the right one itself is a demanding task. He is proud about his familiarity of old books and recounts the pleasure he experienced in reading them. The delight obtained from reading old books, patterns the formation of one's memories and shapes one's self. It is realized from his words, "In reading a book which is an old favourite with me (say the first novel I ever read) I not only have the pleasure of imagination and of critical relish of the work, but the pleasures of memory added to it. It recalls the same feelings and associations which I had in first reading it, and which I can never have again in any other way." Re-reading one's favourite books gives the pleasure

of travelling back to time and the books are like time travel machines through which one can journey into the momentous past by sitting in the present. When a sage philosopher asks the author if he could take back his experience so that he would become young again, Hazlitt expresses his disinterest in revisiting his youth with loaded wisdom of experience as childhood and adulthood is filled with ecstasy and ignorance. Hazlitt recalls his joyful experience in reading Burke when he was young. He believes that his books provide good insight to his mind though he is not in favour of his views on politics - "I did not care for his doctrines. I was then, and am still, proof against their contagion; but admired the author." Hazlitt has great respect on Burke and considers him as a genius. He takes a stand to support Milton by offering response to the criticisms of German critics for Milton's supposed "sympathy for the Devil."

Probably Hazlitt seems to suggest the reader to create a catalogue of favourite authors and texts. Owning one's personal collections of books, especially old volumes and reading and re-reading them is a priceless treasure one possesses. Hazlitt proudly recalls how he obtained the copies of *Paradise Lost* and *Reflections* when he was twenty. According to him, the good old books are aesthetic works of art. As Hazlitt says, "To have lived in the cultivation of an intimacy with such works, and to have familiarly relished such names, is not to have lived quite in vain." Hazlitt does not prefer the works of Romantic age. He is after the restoration comedy and epistolary fictions written by the writers of previous decades. It might be because his contemporaries ignored him largely. Another point to be noted in the essay is that Hazlitt says he does not prefer reading contemporary authors but he ends his essay by referring to his contemporary Walter Scott's *Waverley*. Analyzing critically, the essay contains some contradicting statements like the one state above. Hazlitt states that he bought Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Burke's *Reflections* in 1798. Viewing chronologically, Milton may be considered the old writer but Burke was relatively new as his *Reflections* was published in 1790. Most of his favourite books are not too ancient rather they were mostly written in the past few decades of Hazlitt's period yet he adds them to his favourite old books list.

### 3.2.6. Hazlitt as an Essayist

William Hazlitt is generally regarded as one of the greatest essayists of all time. Most of his well-known essays were penned only in the middle years of his life, that is, though he was born in eighteenth century, his essays belong to the nineteenth century. To carve his niche as a writer, he tried his hands in many forms. As he pursued his careers in philosophy, journalism and politics, he tried writing lengthy non-fiction and later shifted to essay writing and other short critical works which fetched him a huge success. In the beginning, his essays appeared in various periodicals such as *The Examiner*, *Morning Chronicle*, *The Edinburgh Magazine*, *New Monthly Magazine* and so on. The major part of his essays was published between 1812 and 1830 which eventually earned him fame. Some of his writings were published in special editions. The complete works of Hazlitt comprising some twenty volumes was published in the early twentieth century. Therefore Hazlitt is considered as one of the noteworthy essayists of nineteenth century with Charles Lamb and De Quincey. Hazlitt is particularly known for his humanistic essays and also appreciated for his contribution to personal essays like Lamb. His essays are also called discursive essays.

Commenting on Hazlitt's essays, most of his essays are personal and pragmatic. Though he did not try to create any unique style for himself, he is considered as a great stylist and his style is called the 'familiar style' or 'personal style'. His style is free from artificiality and wrote for an easy understanding of his readers. In reference to "On Reading Old Books" his narration sounds natural as if he engages in a conversation with the readers. Though the language appears to be simple, it is effective too. Proportionate paragraph division is not found in the essay yet the spontaneity of ideas is seen. Though the essay is nothing but a discourse of his personal preferences, it is described in a way it wins the readers' interest and attention. In a simple conversational tone, he shares his opinions and choices to the readers as one does to his friend. Even with his natural prose, he tried to present the essay as a well-organised composition. Choice of words is given importance yet the essay does not lack lucidity. The subject matter is simple but the style is impressive and free from ostentation and snobbishness.

“On Reading Old Books” is notable for the author’s honest statements on his favourite books and authors. The essay is a bold and honest expression of an individual’s views. Hazlitt did not attempt to pen a critical writing which analyses and evaluates the merits and demerits of the work of art in order to develop an argument rather he uses his emotional attachment with the books to make his judgements. His views are conveyed with a sense of directness and simplicity at the same time he uses rigid and penetrating tone to express his prejudices. The essay expresses his fondness and sentiments for some preferred works and authors which is fused with the appropriate citing of quotations. Figures of speech such as epigrams, paradoxes, etc are used wherever necessary to emphasize his view points. Hazlitt’s description of his emotional attachments towards the books is marvelous. He takes the readers along with him to his world of excitement. Antithetical statements are used to present the conflicting ideas. At times, Hazlitt uses aphoristic sentences like Bacon. To cite few examples from this essay, “The niches are occupied, the tables are full” and “I have more confidence in the dead than the living.” Though these are short single sentence, they are pregnant with meanings. Sometimes his essay carries complex syntactical structure but it does not hinder the understanding of the meaning.

For Hazlitt, essay is a means of self-expression and in this essay too, he puts himself at the centre and reminisce the past. In this aspect, this essay contains autobiographical elements which disclose his mind and above all his self. The whole essay is tailored with the shades of memory associated with men and matters around him. In a way, he tries to expose the foibles of the people through his prejudices. When he talks about contemporary writers in the essay, he directly points out how one is compelled to think well of the favourite writer and think ill of the non-favourite writer. On the whole, his style is vivid, direct, simple and vigorous. Through this essay, Hazlitt exhibits his scholarship on various genres of literature.

### **3.2.7. Important Questions**

1. Write a short note on Hazlitt’s biography.
2. Comment on Hazlitt’s contribution to the field of essay.
3. What type of essay is “On Reading Old Books?”
4. “I hate to read new books” – Explain the line with reference to the essay.

5. Why does Hazlitt say that he prefers the dead than the living?
6. Name the two books that Hazlitt bought in 1798 as mentioned in the essay.
7. What is the reason for Hazlitt's admiration towards Burke?
8. What genre of literature is mostly added to Hazlitt's preference list?
9. Comment on the prose style of Hazlitt.
10. What does Hazlitt relate new books to?
11. Describe Hazlitt's feeling of re-reading his favourite old books.
12. What is compared to Fortunatus's Wishing'Cap by Hazlitt in the essay?
13. What is the comment made by Hazlitt on Burke's style?
14. How did Hazlitt refute the German criticism on Milton?
15. List out the works of Cervantes as mentioned in the essay by Hazlitt.
16. Name the last work mentioned by Hazlitt that he preferred to add to his wish list.
17. What was the first book that broke Hazlitt's spell as mentioned in the essay?
18. Name the comedian with whom Hazlitt's father found solace.
19. How does Hazlitt categorize contemporary writers?
20. "It is true, we form dear friendships with such ideal guests" – Explain.
21. Mention the benefits of old books as listed out by Hazlitt in the essay.
22. Comment on Cooke's pocket editions.
23. Name the philosophers Hazlitt mentions in his essay.
24. What is the title of Rousseau's autobiography Hazlitt refers to in the essay?
25. Mention some of the periodicals Hazlitt refers in the essay.

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## **UNIT – 4**

### **LESSON – 4.1: Russell, “An Ideal Individual”**

The fourth unit consists of two essays written by Bertrand Russell and G. K. Chesterton, the twentieth century prose writers. The first essay “An Ideal Individual” by Bertrand Russell is considered as the first lesson of this unit and marked Lesson 4.1. The second essay “Advantages of Having One Leg” by William Hazlitt is considered as the second lesson of this unit and marked Lesson 4.2.

#### **4.1.1. Objectives**

The lessons in this unit help the students develop their critical skills to convey an idea in an essay form. It enhances their literary abilities to deliver a story or an experience in the formal style in the proper suitable language. The essays enable students to grasp the concepts of literature of the twentieth century.

#### **4.1.2. Biographical Note**

Bertrand Arthur William Russell (1872-1970) was a British essayist, philosopher, logician, social critic, political activist, mathematician and historian who is best known for his contributions in mathematical logic and analytic philosophy. He was born on May 18, 1872 at Trelleck, Monmouthshire, England, into one of the influential aristocratic families in Britain. He lost his parents Viscount and Viscountess Amberley at the early age and was brought up by his grandparents. His grandparents were important people. His grandfather Lord John Russell was the great Liberal Prime Minister of England. His grandmother was a strong and liberated woman. She taught Bertrand the *Bible* and he followed “Thou shall not follow a multitude to do evil” throughout his life. As his grandmother was not satisfied with Frank’s educational experience, home tutor was appointed to teach Russell German and French languages and as a result he made a mark in both the languages. Though he was educated in isolation from other children, his home environment helped him to refine his mind better. Also, his strong personal and private education well developed his eloquent writing skills that helped him in his later life. His brother Frank taught Russell his first lessons in geometry. As he spent his early adolescence in isolation in Pembroke Lodge, his entry into crammer school appeared to him like his first excursion into the world and also his experience of



gaining education outside of his home. Later in 1890, Russell got a minor scholarship and took admission in Trinity College, Cambridge. Under the tutelage of Alfred North Whitehead, Russell experienced intellectual challenge which helped him to emerge as a genius. His keenness in philosophy made him achieve first division with distinction and also winning the honour of the title Wrangler. He joined French Embassy in England in 1894 and in 1896 he was selected as lecturer at the London School of Economics and also started delivering lectures in the US at Johns Hopkins and Bryn Mawr.

In 1901, he discovered Russell's paradox. In 1905, he developed his theory of descriptions. Then he was elected as fellow of the Royal Society in 1908. His passion for mathematics at Cambridge became the centre of his life and led to the publication of *Principia Mathematica* (*Principles of Mathematics*). This work established his reputation first as a renowned mathematician and then as a philosopher. Russell's adolescence was very lonely and he often contemplated suicide. He remarked in his autobiography that his keenest interests were in "nature and books and (later) mathematics saved me from complete despondency." This quote indicates how Russell's wish to know more mathematics prevented him from suicide. Later Russell visited Harvard and taught courses in Logic and the theory of Knowledge in 1914 and also met T. S. Eliot. Then he was appointed a professor in Trinity College in 1915. His participation in "No-Conscription Fellowship," a British pacifist organization resulted in fining him 100 pounds and as he failed to pay the fine, his personal library was confiscated. Russell's anti-war writings forced him to leave the post of a professor and also as he was denied a passport so he was unable to lecture at Harvard. He was sent to jail twice for he refused to follow the majority in England. Later he was imprisoned for about five to six months for writing an article in *The Tribune* against the policy of the government. Because of this Russell gained firsthand experience to learn the limits of democratic government. Later, he became the third Earl after his brother's death. Though he became the Earl, he continued to voice his radicalism and as a result remained a controversial personality during his age. Later in 1920, invitation was extended to Russell by the Government of China to deliver lectures on philosophy in Peking University. For his freedom of thought and humanitarian ideals in his number of writings, he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in the 1950 as a sign of

recognition. Besides this, he was the recipient of many numbers of awards for excellence during his long lifetime. In the year 1963, the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation was established by Russell and also launched the International War Crimes Tribunal. Having lived for 98 years, Russell passed away of influenza in 1970 at his home in Penrhynedeudraeth, Merionethshire.

#### **4.1.3. Russell's Literary Contribution**

Russell is considered as one of the popular logicians and important philosopher of the twentieth century. He is an exceptional philosopher and reformer who stresses on the importance of creative attitude. Durant, in his *Story of Philosophy*, divides Russell's life into two periods: the logical period (lasting to the time of the world war) and the reformer (from the world war till his death). In Russell's life we see two sides to his philosophy, the logical and the mystical. He is mainly known for his vital views on education. As a broad-minded educator, he wished the schools to be realistic, empirical and secular. He always had a humanistic and practical approach and was a main supporter of world peace. He is deeply interested in the basic problems of human beings and even sacrificed his life for the wellbeing of mankind. He strongly protested against the use of nuclear weapons and in general wars in the world. Russell implored President Wilson in his letter to stop the vain destruction of the European War using the influence of America for the sake of humankind. Besides his ground-breaking intellectual work in logic and analytic philosophy, he also involved himself in politics. He spoke out often in favour of internationalism. In the beginning, he ran unsuccessfully for Parliament but later even though he stood as an independent, he indorsed the full Liberal platform. He also supported extension of the franchise to women.

With G. E. Moore and his other colleagues, Russell is considered as one of the founders of analytical philosophy. He published his philosophical essay "On Denoting" in the philosophical journal *Mind* in 1905. Peter Ludlow in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, commented that "it is a work of tremendous insight provoking discussion and debate among philosophers of language and linguists for over a century." He wrote *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy* during his days of imprisonment early in the twentieth century. In this book, Russell tries to create a comprehensible introduction to various topics within the foundations of

mathematics. He foresees the modern age through his works which include various miscellaneous articles on social, economic, and political future of the Orient. Regarding this, Russell visited the United States and delivered lectures on various topics addressing world problems like war, peace, ethics and religion and so on. Russell fought against the forces of injustice and his most important and effective weapon is his letters to magazines and newspapers. Most of his writings in this struggle were collected in the volume entitled *Yours Faithfully, Bertrand Russell: A Lifelong Fight for Peace, Justice, and Truth in Letters to the Editor*. Russell exposes the evil of his time and protects the public through his letters and writings from various forces like Fascism, McCarthyism, Vietnam War and British conscription of World War I and so on. Thus through his intelligent letters, his dazzling bravery is evidenced. He fought with the most powerful leaders of his day as well as tried his maximum to make ordinary citizens understand the state of affairs.

Talking about Russell's contributions to Philosophy, some of them are *An Essay on the Foundations of Geometry* (1897), *A Critical Exposition of the Philosophy of Leibniz* (1900), *The Principles of Mathematics* (1903), *Principia Mathematica* with A. N. Whitehead (3 volumes). In these volumes, he attempted to form a system of philosophy using symbols. In *The Problems of Philosophy* (1910), the author attempts to give positive and constructive perspectives on the problems of philosophy. To name some other books, *Our Knowledge to the External World* (1914), *Scientific Method in Philosophy* (1915), *Mysticism and Logic* (1918), *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy* (1918), *Analysis of Mind* (1921), *The A.B.C. of Atoms* (1923), *The A.B.C. of Relativity* (1925) and *Philosophy* (1927). Russell tries to present Philosophy in the terms of modern science.

As a philosopher, his philosophical method gives importance to the weighing of evidence to test the propositions. Russell, writing in a plain language, paved a way for the deciphering of religion because that was the time when people believed that serious discussions about religion required sound knowledge of Latin and Church history. His philosophical analysis and discussions also included arguments in favour of the existence of God. Russell sums up his views about religion quite plainly: "My own view on religion is that of Lucretius. I regard it as a disease born of fear and as a source of untold misery to the human race." *The Problems of Philosophy* (1912) and *A History of Western Philosophy* (1945) are

among Russell's many philosophical best-sellers. These books have done so much in educating and informing generations of general readers.

Russell's works of Social Reconstruction include *German Social Democracy* (1896), *Anti-Suffragist Anxieties* (1910), *Why Men Fight* (1916), *Political Ideals* (1917), *Proposed Roads to Freedom* (1919), *The Problem of China* (1922), *Prospects of Industrial Freedom* (1923), *Icarus, or The Future of Science* (1924), *What I Believe* (1925) and *Education and the Good Life* (1926). In the book *Why Men Fight*, the author focuses on the basis of human nature which compels to indulge in combat and finds the influences which needed attention to escape future battles thus criticizing even the present scenario. *Political Ideals* is a book of thought-provoking critical essays of Russell's views. *Proposed Roads to Freedom* is a stimulating discussion in which the author thoughtfully explains the existing political and economic systems. It is the critical accounts of Anarchism, Socialism and Syndicalism. *The Problem of China* is a study about Chinese affairs from an observer's perspective who expects hope for the development in China. *Education and the Good Life* is an inspiring book which is actually a treatise on the values of intellectual and moral education. Some of his other works include *Sceptical Essays* (1928), *Marriage and Morals* (1929), *The Conquest of Happiness* (1930), *In Praise of Idleness* (1932), *Freedom and Organisation 1814 to 1914* (1934), *New Hopes for a Changing World* (1951), *The Impact of Science on Society* (1952), *War the Offspring of Fear* (1965), *My Philosophical Development* and etc. Thus his famous paradox, theory of types and other works revitalized the study of logic throughout the twentieth century. Philosopher, Expositor of Science, The Analyst of International Affairs and Education, Russell's views expressed in his definitive essays were collected as a comprehensive anthology under the title *The Basic Writings of Bertrand Russell 1903-1959* which was first published in 1961. Since Russell's death, debate has also taken place over the important contributions made by Russell not just to philosophy, but to other disciplines as well.

#### **4.1.4. Analytic Philosophy**

Analytic philosophy is a branch and tradition of philosophy using analysis. Bertrand Russell wrote, "Moore and I rebelled against both Kant and Hegel. Moore led the way, but I followed closely in his footsteps .... I felt . . . a great liberation,

as if I had escaped from a hot house into a windswept headland. In the first exuberance of liberation, I became a naïve realist and rejoiced in the thought that grass really is green.” This important event in Russell’s own intellectual history turned out to bring radical break with early British Idealism and brought a new philosophical tradition, analytic philosophy. Analytic philosophy started when Moore and Russell began to defend the “common sense” or ‘ordinary’ view of the world.

Since early twentieth century, the school of analytic philosophy has dominated academic philosophy notably in Great Britain and the United States. At the turn of the twentieth century, Moore and Russell moved away from the then influential school in the British universities, British Idealism. This led to the birth of Analytic Philosophy and many considered Gottlob Frege as a founder of analytic philosophy in the late nineteenth century. Moore and Russell voiced their alternative to Idealism like they used a linguistic idiom mainly basing their arguments on the “meanings” of terms and propositions. As far Russell is concerned, the grammar of natural language often is philosophically misleading and believed that he has to re-express propositions using the perfect formal language of symbolic logic thus by revealing their logical form.

The history of Analytic philosophy can be divided into five phases based on the internal micro-revolutions it went through. The first phase covers approximately the first decade of the twentieth century (from 1900 to 1910). It is described by the quasi-Platonic form of realism primarily recommended by Moore and Russell as an alternative to Idealism. Their realism involved a turn towards language as it was expressed in the idiom of “propositions” and “meanings.” Around 1910, both Moore and Russell had abandoned their propositional realism. Moore preferred realistic philosophy of common sense whereas Russell preferred logical atomism, a view he developed with Ludwig Wittgenstein. This turn to logical atomism and to ideal language analysis forms the second phase (approximately from 1910 to 1930). Then the rise of logical positivism was evidenced. This forms the third phase which is approximately from 1930-1945. Logical positivism was a view developed by the members of the Vienna Circle and was popularized by the British philosopher A. J. Ayer. The next phase covers approximately from 1945-1965. It is defined by the turn to ordinary language analysis which was developed by the Cambridge and

Oxford philosophers, Ludwig Wittgenstein and John Wisdom, Gilbert Ryle, John Austin, Peter Strawson, and Paul Grice respectively. The 1960s evidenced a variety of philosophical sub-disciplines and the fifth phase, approximately beginning in the mid-1960s, continued even after the end of the twentieth century. It is mainly characterized by eclecticism or pluralism and can be called post-linguistic analytic philosophy which is loosely characterized in terms of its style. Though this philosophy was mistaken for giving emphasis on language, later the real intention and application was understood. Thus the linguistic conception of philosophy was seen as something novel in the history of philosophy and it is not just merely as a revolt against British Idealism but against traditional philosophy on the whole.

#### **4.1.5. Russell: The Philosopher of Education**

Russell's life and writings exhibit a unique combination in which the logical and scientific attitude is displayed against the mystical strain, giving importance to human values. Russell had a profound interest in education and his interest in education is expressed in his book "*Education and the Good Life*" which was published in 1926. His special interest on education has grown out of his special concern in the education of his two growing children. This even led Mr. and Mrs. Russell to establish an experimental school named Beacon Hill School (1927) for their children. Through this one can understand that they seriously thought about how youngsters might be best educated. Russell also wrote another book titled *Education and the Social Order* in 1932. One can say that these books are outcome of Russell's interest in teaching and learning throughout his life. He wrote about education throughout his career. At least one chapter on the subject of education is found in almost every book of social commentary that Russell produced. *Education and the Good Life* is clearly written and readable enough like the other works of Russell. The book echoes his views on creating the best education for young children. With his experience gained by teaching the young children in his own school, Russell demonstrated a better sense of education in his second volume *Education and the Social Order*. Gradually Russell gained his strength as an educational philosopher. Russell saw the significance of democratic values in education. Thus to understand Russell's philosophy of education, we must first understand his philosophy of life. One of the vital essentials of a good philosophy of education is having a definite notion of what constitutes a good life. For him "the

good life is one inspired by love and guided by knowledge.” Thus, to supply a vision for education is one of the important functions of the philosophy of education.

One must view education in relation to the whole of life mainly to realize the importance of all things and this is the ultimate task for the philosophy of education. Russell possesses faith in the power of intelligence. Using this faith, he tries to reconstruct the world along with the principles of liberty, justice and democracy. His views about education are discussed under various topics and some of them include the aims of education, meaning and purpose of education, discipline and the functions of a teacher. His views on education were quite novel and gained some publicity yet his mathematical philosophy and general philosophical ideas had more impact comparatively. Some even criticized his school and his philosophy of education which is more commonly faced by any writer who voice unpopular and easily unacceptable ideas. He emphasizes the importance of good education in a troubled world and places great value upon the function of a teacher.

Russell’s principles of education are based on his knowledge of child psychology. According to him, the first six years of child’s life are vital from the point of view of development because all the important qualities and traits are developed in these years in children which shape their future personality. Hence Russell feels that intellectual training is must for a child of six years. Seeing from the child’s perspective, teaching should have two purposes: Firstly, to satisfy curiosity because it becomes the basis of the child’s intellectual development and secondly, to impart skills which goes one with the child’s curiosity to experiment things. Therefore, Russell’s view is that only if the child’s curiosity is satisfied, mental development is possible because curiosity develops interest in knowledge and education and thus it is the teacher’s role to provide motivation to develop that interest and curiosity to explore and enlarge the mind.

Aims of education are not fixed and complete and differ from country to country. These aims are framed considering the objective conditions of each country and each community. So aims of Indian education differ from those of American education. Likewise the aims of education in Russia are different from Japan. The aims of education of the Protestants are different from those of the Catholics. Even

every individual's view point would be different in framing the aims of education. Another important thing is the aims of education are influenced by political ideologies also. Russell said, "Welfare of students should be the ultimate aim of education and they should not be used for any other purpose." According to Russell, only if the teacher is affectionate and sympathetic to students, their intellect and character be developed. "No man can be a good teacher unless he has feeling of warm affections towards his pupils and a genuine desire to impart to them what he himself believes to be of value." This can be achieved only when the teacher is filled with welfare spirit for the students because innate sympathy is found in parents for their children but teachers must have sincere sympathy which helps them to adopt various appropriate methods of teaching.

Russell gives importance to logic in education too because he believes that one can realize the basic reality of a thing through logical analysis. He is an educationist logic and it is the keystone of his philosophy. For him, enlargement of mind and heart through knowledge and acquisition of skill are aims of education. Moreover it does not end with an education of an individual. Though education based on individual freedom is required, it should be systematically followed worldwide fostering the essence of international peace and goodwill through education. Russell likes his philosophy to be categorized in logical atomism than idealism or realism. In the book, *Education and the Good Life*, Russell gives distinction between education for knowledge and education of character and advocates that character is the most important aim of education. He also states that the foremost purpose of schooling should be to develop necessary character traits in men as well as in women. Relating to this, Russell identifies four important qualities that must be added in character education and they are vitality, courage, sensitiveness and intelligence.

#### **4.1.6. Short Summary**

In this essay "An Ideal Individual," Russell focuses on the four elements that constitute the foundation for good character development. He says that the character development does not confine with the individual and if the character of individual is not developed properly, no progress will be evidenced in the world. So Russell identified four characteristics – vitality, courage, sensitiveness and intelligence –



which are universally preferred among people and need to be focused too. Vitality is mainly good health and good mind. Courage is the absence of fear which must be developed in children. Sensitiveness to immediate neighbours and surroundings and finally intelligence is the capability to acquire knowledge. So children should be provided with an opportunity to acquire knowledge and to develop these qualities. Hence according to Russell, developing these qualities must be the goal of education which is a key to a new world. He also emphasizes that teachers play a major role in kindle the curiosity to impart skills and to inculcate these values in children. So if curiosity is developed, the mental development of the child is guaranteed. It also helps in the development of the above said virtues automatically.

#### **4.1.7. Detailed Summary**

The essay “An Ideal Individual” is an extract from the second chapter “The Aims of Education” from Russell’s *On Education*. Before going into the detail summary, it is important to go through Russell’s views on education discussed in the precious pages. Russell begins the essay by listing out the four vital characteristics which together form the basis of an ideal character: vitality, courage, sensitiveness and intelligence. According to him, these are not the only essential characteristics of an ideal individual but they can aid in the betterment of human society. He insists that inculcating all these qualities in an individual at a younger age could result in better environment and carry our life in a good way which should be the goal of education also. The author discusses each of the qualities in detail.

The first quality that Russell emphasizes is vitality which is a physical trait than a mental characteristic. He advocates that vitality is present at the optimal level during the younger age and it gradually decreases and disappears during the old age. In Russell’s words, “Vitality is rather a physiological than a mental characteristic; it is presumably always present where there is perfect health, but it tends to ebb with advancing years, and gradually dwindles to nothing in old age.” This energy can be observed in the children before stepping into the school because it will be curbed with the idealisms related to the education system. This dynamic attitude in a person will provide him the “pleasure in feeling alive” even during the adverse situations. He says, “It heightens pleasure and diminishes pains.” Vitality depends completely on a sound health which in turn guarantees sound mind as the Latin phrase goes

*“mens sana in corpore sano* (“a healthy mind in a healthy body).” Russell believes that a man with proper physical health is a man of optimistic thoughts who could take up challenges. Vitality elevates the interests of an individual to accomplish things in life. Russell believes that vitality promotes objectivity and that is an essential quality of remaining sane. Thus vitality though a physical trait, it also shapes our mental state and it is one of the aims of education is to build good health.

Human beings tend to focus on themselves and it is a misfortune as it results only in boredom and sadness. This usually results in nothing productive and it is exceptionally rare if it happens otherwise. The author declares that “vitality promotes interest in the outside world; it also promotes the power of hard work.” This vibrant spirit is a safeguard against envy which is one of the greatest sources of human misery. The life filled with energy and excitement enables one to embrace the positive side of things. Commenting on the positive side of vitality, Russell also deliberately speaks about the bad qualities that are compatible with it. He explains this with the life of Newton, Locke and Leibniz where envy stood as a barrier for scientific developments. These scholars failed to paying importance to ordinary things, ruined further progresses in their respective fields. Thus, Russell, referring to the scholars put forth a message that, vitality provides the energy to enjoy ordinary pleasure and hence it is one of the important qualities that an individual must possess.

The second essential quality that constitutes an ideal character list is courage. Courage according to Russell, “has several forms, and all of them are complex.” It could be perceived as the absence of fear or the power of controlling fear. In other words, it is analyzing about the things and subjects to be scared. Absence of irrational fear and the power controlling fear can make an individual strong. By irrational fear, he means the instinctual reaction that are not dangerous, for instance the loud noises or the fear of mice and spiders or being scared of dark. In Russell’s words, “In its pathological forms, as persecution mania, anxiety complex, or what not, it is treated by alienists. But in milder forms it is common among those who are considered sane.” The essayist suggests that fear is infectious and it spreads from the adult to the children but the latter is usually unaware that he has expressed fear. “Timidity in mothers or nurses is very quickly imitated by children through suggestion.” He also discusses that fear is sometimes a quality that

is stereotyped with specific groups and they are encouraged to be scared of irrational things. He adds, “The harm that has been done by the subjection of women is incalculable.” The author puts forth a question that “can we be content to deal with fear by means of repression, or must we find some more radical cure?”

According to Russell, courage is a cultivatable quality. Men have been trained to build the quality of courage within and it is evident in many aspects. Men are trained to not to run away in battle; they are trained to be proficient in ‘manly’ sports; they must retain self-command and control during fires, earthquakes, shipwrecks; they must avoid showing pale face or reveal trembling and gasping for breath and so on. So traditionally courage is also partially instilled in sexes. It is cultivated only in men and not in women and women are trained to remain cowardly. Thus Russell expresses his wish to see that “courage cultivated in all nations, in all classes and in both sexes.” This courage must not be achieved through repressive methods. To elaborate, advocating aristocracies must not express fear or it is mainly to avoid expressing any sign of being scared even at adverse situations in evil. Shame and disgrace have been used as potent weapons in appearance of courage but it only inculcates conflict of terror. Russell uses a maxim taught to him at school to explain fear is something that an individual can overcome not only through action but also in one’s conscious and unconscious feeling. In Russell’s words, “Always speak the truth except when something frightens you . . . Fear should be overcome not only in action, but in feeling; and not only in conscious feeling, but in the unconscious as well.” Russell also states how “the whole system of oppression and cruelty by which dominant castes seek to retain their ascendance.” To explain this, he states an example of British officer’s action in Shanghai who ordered a number of unarmed Chinese students to be shot in the back without warning justifying his actions as expressing firmness and strict.

Terms related with courage and fear are fragile and when they are not channeled in proper ways, it can cause serious problems in humankind. Russell explains this with the help of psychology and physiology, which suggests “fear and rage are closely analogous emotions.” Hence, courage or the absence of fear has to be closely monitored because when misguided, it can become the tool for destruction. If an ordinary men and women are educated properly, certainly they shall be able to live without fear because education helps an individual to build up

courage. According to Russell, fear should be conquered through vitality and self-respect and this quality can be developed only through “practice and skill in dangerous situations.”

Russell explains the difference between self-respect and humility. He suggests that men and women who blindly obey the words of others “can never have true courage: they must have admiration, and are haunted by the fear of losing it.” Children are made to learn unreasoning submission but Russell rather says “no one should learn how to obey, and no one should attempt to command.” One must not be forced to do anything through command and forcibly imposed decision. Therefore the highest courage requires an impersonal outlook on life. With his ideas about courage, Russell clarifies that he doesn’t mean one has to renounce self. This idea of being selfless can be celebrated at multiple levels but it comes with a lot of negative emotions. Hence, he advocates to accept the self, enjoy the existence and to look beyond it. At the same time, there are certain things in human nature like love, in particular, parental love, which is beyond Self and through this quality, one can embrace the whole human race. According to Russell, courage is knowledge, an art and an instinct hence “the perfection of courage is found in the man of many interests.” To achieve this highest courage, one’s intelligence must be active. Thus Russell insists on building up positive courage which is instinctive and not negative and repressive. It is this positive courage that Russell emphasizes as one of the major ingredients of a perfect character.

The third characteristic of an ideal character is sensitiveness. Russell talks about sensitiveness as a remedy to courage. The courage that fails to apprehend dangers is considered foolish and sensitiveness helps us to avoid irrational courage that is foolish. So Russell uses the term ‘sensitiveness’ to denote the emotions of humankind. He elaborates with a theoretical definition as, “a person is emotionally sensitive when many stimuli produce emotions in him.” Sensitiveness or the emotional reaction has to be appropriate. Russell explains “sensitiveness” at different stages of human life. As a baby, the pleasure is derived from food and warmth. Later, one experiences the “pleasure of social approbation,” the desire to be accepted and appreciated by the community. This becomes the only focus of the child at the younger age and it gradually develops at different phases of life. Thus, “every child loves praise and hates blame” and as a result, the yearning to be well-

thought in the society becomes the dominant motive of life. The next stage in the development of sensitiveness is sympathy for the fellow human beings. It can happen at two levels. One is a physical sympathy where one witnesses a person suffering and is emotionally aroused to help another human being or feel pity for his situation. For instance, a child cries because his brother or sister is crying.

Second, the abstract sympathy where one worries and relates to something that is not sensible present at the moment. For instance, reading a good novel where the suffering is portrayed in detail which creates an effect on the reader. Russell gives an example of cancer patient. Everybody is deeply moved if the dear one suffers from disease and some are moved while hearing the sufferings of the unknown patients in hospitals. Still when one hears about the death-rate from cancer, the sympathy is only momentarily personal. Another example taken by the author is war. People realize the dreadfulness of war only when their family member is mutilated whereas even when million people are harmed, the sympathy of the people would be only momentary failing to realize that it is million times dreadful. The sympathy for others is always less compared to the dearest and the nearest. As far Russell is concerned, abstract sensitiveness might help in solving many prevailing vices of the modern world if seen as a remedy. Russell declares, in today's world, "Science has greatly increased our power of affecting the lives of distant people, without increasing our sympathy for them." To explain this, the author takes a case study of a busy shareholder who has invested in cotton manufacturing in Shanghai. He follows only financial advice but neither is bother about Shanghai nor cotton but only about his dividends. Likewise the shareholder is not worried about the innocent children and people who are toiling behind his dividends because he has never seen the children at all. This lack of sympathy is the fundamental reason behind the cruelty in the large-scale industrialism. With this, he makes the readers realize how every human is far removed from another human, how the entire kind has started to look at fellow being only as a product or as an object that could provide profit or elevate his economic condition. According to the author, "an education producing sensitiveness to abstract stimuli would make such things impossible" and wipe out the existing evils in the society. Thus education creates abstract sensitiveness in the minds of the children and in an individual.

Russell also discusses about cognitive sensitiveness which is connected to intelligence and observation and deliberately avoids discussing the aesthetic sensitiveness. Throughout the essay, the author gives importance to intelligence: “I will therefore pass on to the last of the four qualities we enumerated, namely, intelligence.” Russell begins this part of the essay with a comparison of how the Greeks and the men in Church perceived intelligence. Intelligence is not about abandoning the actions labeled as ‘sin’ or to abide the artificially constructed ‘virtue.’ Human beings have to develop the consciousness of understanding the necessity and adopt ethical values only when it does not cause any harm. To cite Russell’s words, “One of the greatest defects of traditional morality has been the low estimate it placed upon intelligence. The Greeks did not err in this respect, but the Church led men to think that nothing matters except virtue, and virtue consists in abstinence from a certain list of actions arbitrarily labeled ‘sin’. So long as this attitude persists, it is impossible to make men realize that intelligence does more good than an artificial conventional ‘virtue’.”

By intelligence, Russell means both actual knowledge and receptivity to knowledge. “Ignorant adults are unteachable” This is because learned men stay approachable and are ready to absorb and change, whereas the ignorant have stiffened their habits with an unchangeable mind. The ignorant have never been requested to change their way of behaviour and as a result, the most simple things that has to be taught and assimilated by the lot becomes unattainable. The simpler things like information about hygiene or diet or even what science has to offer them the ignorant will find it hard to absorb. From their position, they stop questioning things that matter whereas they expect answers for those that can be accepted without doubts. Russell strongly suggests that without imparting information, intelligence cannot be instilled in an individual. One will not get trained to gain intelligence “and without intelligence our complex modern world cannot subsist; still less can it make progress.” Thus Russell regards the cultivation of intelligence as one of the major purposes of education to confront the frightening problems in world.

The author attempts to define intelligence in detail saying that intelligence demands an alert curiosity and in turn curiosity is inspired by a genuine love of knowledge. Without curiosity, there is no intelligence and certain technique should

be adopted for the acquisition of knowledge because education creates a chain for intelligence with all other qualities to develop with. Acquiring knowledge is an exercise that requires effort and one could witness growth by proper training. Intelligence signifies “An aptitude for acquiring knowledge than knowledge already acquired.” Thus, intelligence is training the mind along with imparting information and the best possible methodology to acquire knowledge can be done through proper educational methods. Children must be provided with opportunities to enhance their power of thinking. Finally, Russell emphasizes that character includes intelligence too.

Russell after discussing the four characteristics of an ideal character strongly suggests that education of young children would be difficult without the good opinion of their parents. The opinion should be given by wise people because “the average man’s opinions are much less foolish than they would be if he thought for himself: in science, at least, his respect for authority is on the whole beneficial.” The author gives an example of the appreciation given to a woman. Men, in general, admire women only when others admire her but in the choice of a wife, a man should have his own independent feelings than reflecting the feelings of the society. The same thing is applicable in other things too. A farmer should obtain suggestions from others but the decision should be made by him to the capacities of the fields. An economist should form an independent judgement on currency related matters but an ordinary person should obtain scholars’ suggestions or follow the authority. Thus Russell says that where “there is special competence, there should be independence.”

Russell concludes his essay “An Ideal Individual” by emphasizing that all the four qualities are essential to develop the character of an ideal individual. The ultimate aim of education should be to develop these qualities in children or an individual so that he may easily adopt himself to the society. “A community of men and women possessing vitality, courage, sensitiveness and intelligence, in the highest degree that education can produce, would be very different from anything that has hitherto existed.” To conclude, as people are trained in a way traditionally with negative qualities, education also instills in us bad qualities like “laziness, cowardly, hard-heartedness and stupidity” but education must teach the opposite virtues. If education inculcates good virtues like vitality, courage, sensitiveness and

intelligence, then the society can have good individuals and the society would also be completely different than that existed before. Finally to sum up, education is the key to the new world and it ought to feed the interest and aptitude of individuals.

#### **4.1.8. Summing Up**

According to Russell, education helps in self-development of an individual and this self-development can happen only in and through society. Only in individual's development lies the society's development. "The cultivation of the individual mind is not, on face of it, the same thing as the production of a useful citizen," said Russell. So to cultivate a good useful citizen, elements such as vitality, courage, sensitiveness, intelligence and other virtues are to be cultivated with education. This also include according to Russell, other aims of education like the enlargement of the mind and heart. The prevailing education system focuses on the development certain kinds of skill than being holistic. Russell said, "it is one of the defects of modern higher education that it has become too much a training in the acquisition of certain kinds of skill, and too little on enlargement of the mind and heart." Another vital goal of education is to impart a spirit of friendliness and harmony because nowadays individuals are devoid of these feelings and are narrow-minded. If human civilization needs to survive, then education ought to inculcate these values. The duties of teachers also form the part of aim of education because the teachers should also work towards imparting the basic qualities to shape the character of an individual. Russell said, "The education we derive for our children must depend upon ideals of human character and our hopes as to the part they are to play in community." Hence character development ought to be the affirmed aim of education.

#### **4.1.9. Critical Observation**

Bertrand Russell is considered as one of the great masters of English prose. He is credited for introducing and revolutionizing the subject matter and the mode of expression too. Though his subject matter includes serious themes and may appear difficult, his way of expression is clear and simple. He did not write like other literary writers but his contributions on education, philosophy, ethics and in general subjects of human interest and so on form great portion of literature. His works contain good literary qualities and his style mainly appeals our intellect than



our emotions and feelings. Russell's works are free from artificiality in style as well as the themes. One can evidence Bacon's terseness in the essays of Russell. Sometimes he ironizes the thoughts of the modern minds and also reveals rationalistic approach towards life. His essay proves his balanced personality because his thoughts are very steady. His subject matter is explained in a logical manner and logical style and it is evidenced in "An Ideal Individual" where he discusses the four vital characteristics that help in the development of children or individual. Russell when talks about his own method of writing, he says, "If I were to write upon some rather difficult topic, the best plan is to think about it with very great interest – the great intensity of which I am capable – for a few hours or days, and at the end of that time give orders, so to speak, that the work is to proceed underground. After some months, I return consciously to the topic and find that the work has been done. Before I had discovered this technique, I used to spend the intervening months worrying because I was making no progress, I arrived at the solution none the sooner for this worry and the intervening months were wasted, whereas now I can devote to other pursuits" (*The Conquest of Happiness*, 50).

Speaking about the syntactical construction in his essay, his sentences are lengthy yet there is no deviation in the expression of ideas. Unity of thought is evidenced in Russell's style. He begins his arguments with well-established assumptions and then proceeds to the logical end of his arguments thus most of his works are argumentative in nature. His diction is perfect and it is free from obscurity. One can even say that he has hardly untouched problems of the humanity like dangers of war, alarming population rate, invention of hazardous weapons, draining of natural resources and so on. He also highlights human follies and hardships and remained optimistic in providing solutions to the same. Thus Russell is acknowledged as a great writer and great philosopher who produced abundant works on varied subjects with great confidence and style.

#### **4.1.10. Important Questions**

1. Write briefly about Russell's childhood and education.
2. What is the contribution made by Russell to the field of philosophy in general?
3. Comment on Russell's literary contribution.

4. Discuss Russell as a founder of analytic philosophy.
5. List out some of the philosophical works of Russell.
6. Mention some of Russell's works on Social Reconstruction.
7. Write about the five phases in Russell's analytic philosophy.
8. Discuss Russell as the philosopher of education.
9. What are Russell's views on education?
10. What did Russell begin to focus on education and its role in shaping the children?
11. What is the focus of Russell in the essay, "An ideal Individual?"
12. What are the four characteristics that are required to shape an ideal individual according to Russell?
13. How is vitality important in shaping one's individuality?
14. How is courage important in developing one's character?
15. How is sensitiveness vital in developing the character of an individual?
16. What is the role played by intelligence in shaping one's personality?
17. "Vitality is rather a physiological than a mental characteristic" – Discuss.
18. How is courage a cultivatable quality?
19. What is the role played by teachers in shaping the mind and personality of children?
20. How is modern education helpful in creating an ideal individual?
21. Discuss the prose style of Russell.
22. Write the summary of the essay "An Ideal Individual."

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## LESSON – 4.2: G.K. Chesterton, “An Advantages of Having One Leg”

The second essay in this unit is titled “Advantage of Having One Leg” written by G. K. Chesterton.

### 4.2.1 Biographical Note

Gilbert Keith Chesterton (1874-1936) was born in Campden Hill in Kensington, London as the son of Marie Louise, nee Grosjean, and Edward Chesterton. He was educated at St Paul’s and the Slade School of Art and became an illustrator. He also attended some classes in literature but did not complete his graduation in either subject. Chesterton was fascinated with the occult in his very young age itself and experimented with Ouija boards along with his brother Cecil, as his autobiography speaks. He identified himself as an orthodox Christian and converted himself to Catholicism from High Church Anglicanism. In the year 1901, he tied knot to Frances and the marriage was a successful one with no children of their own. Edmund Clerihew Bentley, the inventor of the clerihew (a whimsical, four-line biographical poem of unequal length) was Chesterton’s friend from schooldays. Chesterton himself attempted writing clerihews and also illustrated his friend’s collection of poetry, *Biography for Beginners*, published in 1905. This poetry collection can be considered as a seminal work in popularizing the clerihew form. Chesterton became godfather to Nicolas, Bentley’s son and even began his well-known novel *The Man Who Was Thursday* with a poem written to Bentley.

Chesterton had great interest in and talent for art. Through his writings, he expressed his artistic vision. He fused abstract ideas in concrete images which are memorable. In the same line, one could find hidden parables in his fiction. Chesterton often engaged in friendly public discussions with men such as Bernard Shaw, H. G. Wells, Bertrand Russell and Clarence Darrow expressing his interest in debate. Lot more details about Chesterton’s life is known from his autobiography. Chesterton and Shaw acted as cowboys in an unreleased silent film. He also played the role of judge while Shaw acted as foreman of the jury. Chesterton was invited by BBC in 1931 to deliver a series of radio talks and delivered number of talks until his death. His talks were so popular that later he was motivated to make improvisations on the scripts. After Chesterton’s death, A BBC official remarked

that “in another year or so, he would have become the dominating voice from Broadcasting House.” Anthony Berkeley founded Detection Club in 1930 and Chesterton was an active member of this society of British mystery authors. He served in the post of President of the society from 1930 to 1936 till he was succeeded by E. C. Bentley. Later Chesterton died of congestive heart failure in 1936 at Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire and was buried at Beaconsfield Roman Catholic Cemetery.

#### **4.2.2 Chesterton’s Literary Career**

Tracing Chesterton’s literary career, his contribution to literature is enormous. A versatile writer, Chesterton wrote around eighty books, nearly two hundred short stories, several hundred poems, thousands of essays which appeared mostly as newspaper columns, biographies and some plays too. He is a journalist, essayist, poet, novelist, philosopher, theologian, apologist, literary, social and art critic, historian, playwright, debater and mystery writer. He began his career writing for various journals and magazines. In 1895, Chesterton worked for the London publisher George Redway and remained for over a year. In 1896, he worked for the publishing house, T. Fisher Unwin until 1902. During this period, he involved himself in focusing on freelancing art and critical works. In 1900s, he contributed to the *Daily News* and wrote reviews of books on art for the journal *The Bookman*. Chesterton’s contributions to this journal made him a famous figure of his age. In 1905, he wrote informal essays for about thirty years to *The Illustrated London News* and to his own paper, *G. K.’s Weekly*.

In the year 1908, he published *Orthodoxy* which depicts his accepted doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church and in 1922 became a member of the same communion. He wrote many works and his works can be categorized under different genres such as fantasy, essays, Catholic and Christian apologetics, mystery and poetry. In most of his writing, Christian themes and symbolism appear. His views and writings on distributism were propagated through *The American Review* in the United States. He invented Father Brown, the best known fictional priest-detective who appeared in his short stories. Though in the beginning, his works were not recognized, his popularity was evidenced through his works such as *Orthodoxy* and *The Everlasting Man*. *The Everlasting Man* inspired C. S. Lewis to convert to

Christianity and Lewis comments that the book was “the best popular apologetic I know.” Chesterton is even considered as a successor to Victorian authors such as Matthew Arnold, Thomas Carlyle, John Henry Newman and John Ruskin by some biographers.

Chesterton’s nonfictional work *Charles Dickens: A Critical Study* published in 1906 received appreciation. After the publication of this biographical work on Dickens, the age evidenced a popular revival for Dickens’ work and also critics and scholars began their serious reconsideration of the works of Dickens. Chesterton is recognized for his essays. *Tremendous Trifles*, originally published in the *Daily News*, contains some of the best essays ever wrote by Chesterton. The book includes the classic essay “On Lying in Bed” and other essays “The Advantages of Having One Leg,” “The Dragon’s Grandmother,” “What I Found in My Pocket,” “A Piece of Chalk” and “The Twelve Men” and so on. With the quality and quantity of essays produced, Chesterton stays top among the twentieth century essayists. Chesterton’s hymn “O God of Earth and Altar” was published in *The Commonwealth* which was later included in the *English Hymnal* in 1906. Chesterton faced allegations of anti-Semitism during his lifetime because he admitted in his book *The New Jerusalem* (1920) that it was something “for which my friends and I were for a long period rebuked and even reviled.” Chesterton dedicated a chapter in this book to express his views on Jews. Even his works from early twentieth century, his fictional work contains caricatures of Jews depicting them as avaricious, cowardly, unfaithful and communists. He pictured them as not only religiously and culturally different but also racially as well. In *The Truth about the Tribes* Chesterton criticized German race theories stating that “the essence of Nazi Nationalism is to preserve the purity of a race in a continent where all races are impure.” His works namely *The Crank*, *The Heresy of Race*, *The Barbarian as Bore* contain the concept of racial superiority and criticized pseudo-scientific race theories.

To mention some other noteworthy works are *The Napoleon of Notting Hill* (1904); *The Club of Queer Trades* (1905); *The Man who was Thursday* (1908); *Manalive* (1912); and the Father Brown detective stories which include *The Innocence of Father Brown* (1911), *The Wisdom of Father Brown* (1914), *The Incredulity of Father Brown* (1923), *The Secret of Father Brown* (1927), *The Scandal of Father Brown* (1935) and so on. These works were considered a

landmark in the history of detective stories. The fictional character, Father Brown is a priest and the protagonist of the stories. The character was based on a priest whom Chesterton has met and the priest had good deep understanding of human evil by listening to confessions. Father Brown first appeared in *The Innocence of Father Brown*. Chesterton took a break from the routine detective fiction form by inventing the character Father Brown whose intuitions have solved several mysteries. This is also the character of Chesterton himself who is the investigator of the mysteries of the ordinary.

As a critic, he focused on the Victorian period and wrote works such as *The Victorian Age in Literature* (1913) and the biography of Dickens in 1906. Chesterton believed that Dickens had a rare talent and mystical balance in his works which is actually a drive for social reform. His biography of Dickens achieved tremendous success and made both Chesterton and Dickens popular. Chesterton is famously related with his close friend Hilaire Belloc and Bernard Shaw coined the term “Chesterbelloc.” Both Belloc and Chesterton put forth their criticisms on socialism and capitalism. Chesterton even wrote the introduction for Sheen’s book *God and Intelligence in Modern Philosophy; A Critical Study in the Light of the Philosophy of Saint Thomas*. The author of more than fifty books, Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen identified Chesterton as the stylist and admitted that Chesterton had the greatest impact on his writing. In Sheen’s autobiography *Treasure in Clay*, he states “the greatest influence in writing was G. K. Chesterton who never used a useless word, who saw the value of a paradox, and avoided what was trite.”

Influences of Chesterton are evidenced on a large number of twentieth century writers. The Irish Republican leader Michael Collins was inspired by his novel *The Man Who Was Thursday*. His column writings in the *Illustrated London News* had a deep effect on Mahatma Gandhi. Grew up reading Chesterton’s stories since school days, the author Neil Gaiman stated that *The Napoleon of Notting Hill* influenced in writing his own book *Neverwhere*. Gaiman’s character Gilbert from the comic book *The Sandman* is modeled on Chesterton.

#### **4.2.3 Short Summary of Chesterton’s “Advantages of Having One Leg”**

Chesterton's essay "Advantages of Having One Leg" is about the worries that one carries or one claims to carry. He makes reference to a personal incident that forms the core idea of the text. To make the reader understand the intensity of his ideas of seeing positive and optimistic aspect of life, Chesterton explains the pessimistic side of the life. He is grateful for his injured leg that helped him realize the strength and beauty in the other and for giving him the experience of understanding the division between one of his feet and the other. To elaborate on this idea, he cites many examples to make the reader realize the importance of single entity. Finally Chesterton closes the essay with a message that in order to understand the true value of something it has to be placed in isolation or the absence of the object makes an individual to reflect on its worth.

#### **4.2.4 Detailed Summary**

Chesterton's essay "Advantages of Having One Leg" is taken from the collection *Tremendous Trifles*. The essay is about the worries that one carries or one claims to carry and seeing the other positive side even in small things. It is because the smallest worries and problems seem to be the most taunting. Chesterton begins the essay with a reference to a personal incident that becomes the core idea of the text. To make the reader comprehend the intensity of his ideas and thoughts, Chesterton explains the negative side of the life. The first few lines of the essay is a record of conversation between two people who believe that little worries are most wearing compared to great sorrows. "I think one can live through these great sorrows and even be the better. What wears one is the little worries." This piece of thought may not be accepted by any and might ignore this as an erroneous statement. But if one thinks deeper, little worries are more in number when compared to the greater worries. One who experiences both big and small troubles certainly finds smaller ones the more bitter.

Chesterton elucidates this with examples and emphasizes the idea that small problems are the most bitter. When one's back is bowed down under unbelievable loads, even the slightest addition is overburdening. To a giant holding up the earth and all its creation, even a small grasshopper will be an additional burden. Also one day, even the tiniest creatures possible grow into the biggest botheration to the world. To the ones who don't believe and doubt the maxim that "smallest worries



are the worst” is or abused by people because the author believes that they will have nothing but the very smallest worries. The author again explains two situations where people could react to smallest problems and live with the hard ones without complaining. First instance is that a lady who excuses herself for despising the crumpled rose leaf wears the crown of thorns to maintain the dignity when there is a necessity to do. Second instance is a man who permits himself to curse the dinner stating that he would behave better when he is in starvation. There is a situation where a person keeps swaggering that he could stand the storm when he is certain that there is nothing to be bothered about. It is like a man finding the grasshopper on his shoulder as a burden and it may be considered but a person who keeps talking constantly about using elephant to carry loads being in the country where elephant doesn’t live at all. Chesterton is trying to highlight that rather than complaining about what one doesn’t have, one should be grateful for what actually has. Even if a person has more than those who lead a poor life, he is not satisfied at all so one must learn that one man’s trash is another man’s treasure. Now reflecting on the idea discussed before, even if small issues create confusion and worries, one has to ask if it was the last hope that got broken or the first one which prevented the individual to look at the brighter side of life. Citing author’s example, a straw may break the camel’s back but certainly it would not be the first one rather it would be the last one.

Next, the author details on the act of grumbling for relief. If one has bigger problems and worry about them, it might be burdening because it makes the individual realize that there is no light at the end of the tunnel and only darkness waits exemplifying the hopeless situation. On the other side, sane people grumbles over one or the other troubles explaining that the person is unaffected by the real trouble. Rather if one reasonably talks about one’s mistakes, then the person is letting the problems go off his head. There are also occurrences where people grumble over every petty issue when there are big problems that demand serious attention. That is, the person has often “flesh full of thorns” and he worries about “crumpled rose leaf.” This might be sometimes because big issues make a person numb but smaller ones fill his mind with a ray of hope. If a person is leading a clear and happy daily life then may be the person is of a kind who “shall not make mountains out of molehills.” There is also another side of grumbling. Sometimes

small invisible things cause more annoyances and have evil in them. The disturbances caused by small changes create bigger impacts in life. Serious matters are built something out of thin air. There are chances for creating big problems out of such small annoyances and also one can create chaos and grief by grumbling over a smaller thing for a long period of time.

“Small annoyances have this evil about them, that they can be more abrupt because they are more invisible; they cast no shadow before, they have no atmosphere.” There are instances like the death of William III who died by tumbling over a molehill and it could be different if he were standing on the top of a mountain because he would have been cautious. So usually people are not concerned that petty things create enough disorders and confusions until they demand our attention after experiencing bitter incidents. At times, there are situations when such pain could teach an individual to celebrate small things. Certainly the experiences gained from painful occurrences sometimes help us take positive decisions in life. By this, the author does not mean “positive pain or positive poverty” but his focus is on the “innumerable accidental limitations that are always falling across our path.” It is not about celebration in silence that is unheard by others rather it is about small incidents and accidents which spoil our attitude for the whole day. These accidental limitations as mentioned by Chesterton are “bad weather, confinement to this or that house or room, failure of appointments or arrangements, waiting at railway stations, missing posts, finding unpunctuality when we want punctuality, or, what is worse, finding punctuality when we don’t.” Chesterton states that there are “poetic pleasures to be drawn from all these.” At this juncture, he reveals his experience of experimenting in the poetic pleasures which enabled him to look at life through new lens. This happened once when he had sprained foot and at this point he compares himself to a stork (deliberately chosen poetic simile) which stands on one leg thereby implying that he has been experimenting and documenting the advantages of having one leg.

According to Chesterton, “to appreciate anything we must always isolate it.” To understand the concepts that revolve around a house or to understand the value of it, it must be a house in some uninhabited landscape. To study the nature of a human, the individual has to be put either alone in desert or on dark sea sand. He is more real when in isolation and understands the meaning of humanity as long as he

is solitary. He can become the perfect definition of humanity, human society, sociability and comradeship until he is accompanied by another human. All these qualities gradually change and with another human added to the picture it becomes less human. In author's words, "one is company, two is none. With this statement, the author goes on to elaborate that certain things have significance only because they are unique or it is always a single entity by citing many examples: "One sun is splendid; six suns would be only vulgar. One Tower of Giotto is sublime; a row of Towers of Giotto would be only like a row of white posts." There is only one splendid sun which lights the whole world. Likewise, he mentions the Tower of Giotto, one of the greatest expressions of the Florentine Gothic architecture of 1300. It is a splendid synthesis of sculpture and faith. These two will lose their value if they are more in number. He declares that the stunning piece of architecture will only look like a "row of white posts" if it was more than one. In the process of elaborating this view, Chesterton believes that singular subjects become the source of poetry and says that he finds poetry in single things like art in beholding the single tower, seeing nature in single tree, love in following the single woman, worshipping the single star and so on. Likewise he finds poetry in standing on a single leg because of his sprained leg. The value of something is perceived only in the presence of its opposites. For instance, the beauty of black is understood in the presence of white. He quotes Ibsen, "the strongest leg is that which stands most alone" and declares that he finds solace in looking at the world by standing on a single leg.

Chesterton compares his lonely leg to the Doric column, an architectural element from ancient Greece. Viewing it from architectural point of view, "the only legitimate use of a column is to support weight." Similarly, the author feels content that his column fulfills its legitimate purpose and it also supports weight. The dislocation or helplessness of the one leg has enabled him to celebrate the "strength and classic beauty of the other leg." The author uses his secondary imagination and describes a situation. If he meets the character, Mrs. Mountstuart Jenkinson from Mr. George Meredith's novel, *The Egoist*, she would comment him for standing like a stork: "He has a leg." The author uses this allusion as a supporting statement to his viewpoint that multiple subjects can be confusing but singular subjects help in proper conclusions.

Chesterton's believes that everything happens for a reason which is similar to Leonard Cohen's "there is a crack in everything / that's how the light gets in." He is grateful for his sprained leg that helped him realize the strength and splendiddness in the other. He says, "All surrender of life, all denial of pleasure, all darkness, all austerity, all desolation has for its real aim this separation of something so that it may be poignantly and perfectly enjoyed." The author is grateful for his sprain for giving him the experience of understanding the division between one of his feet and the other. He concludes the essay with a message that in order to understand the true value of something it has to be placed in isolation or the absence of the object makes an individual to reflect on its worth. It is important to look at life with a different perspective to realize and celebrate the "splendid vision of all visible things." Thus in author's words, "if you wish to realize how fearfully and wonderfully God's image is made, stand on one leg." Therefore to conclude, this essay "Advantages of Having One Leg" helps the reader see the life from different perspective, in particular, to look for the optimistic view.

#### **4.2.5 Critical Analysis**

Chesterton in general handles serious themes but not overtly serious. "Advantages of Having One Leg" is narrated in a mild satirical tone to make the reader understand Chesterton's thoughts. To make his views clear, the author gives his personal experience of staying with sprained leg with some illustrations. It is the most interesting aspect of his essays in general. Chesterton uses rhetorical devices impressively. Sometimes his thoughts are expressed in an epigrammatic manner and his use of paradoxes is brilliant. His paradoxes are often inverted maxims. The author has used the first person narration to speak to the reader. He advices or cautions the reader with a friendly ironical attitude. In this essay, the author's states the life lesson to the readers. He says that when his one leg sprained, he could see the beauty of both legs. Likewise he realizes that he could see God's beautiful creation in the image of man.

Talking about his paradoxes, even his use of ordinary and everyday things are most fascination and amazing. He makes the accepted notion upside down and offers it in an understandable way. To him, even ordinary jokes have underlying meaning in them. He attempts mainly to understand the trivial and simple aspects.

Chesterton's writings are noted for his paradoxes hence he has been called the Prince of Paradox. Even while dealing with serious subject matters such as economics, politics, and government and so on, he deployed paradox. His writings are filled with wit and a sense of humour. Best example is he enjoys great fun in mocking the Victorian detectives such as Sherlock Holmes. Sometimes his paradoxes sound in Kafka-esque tone which is absurd. He has evidenced different movements in his life time like he spent his youth in the late Victorian age, his adulthood before and after the World War I, his middle age during the Jazz Age and finally his old age during the Great Depression. This is the reason he finds paradoxes in human behavior and thought. He could observe paradoxes in them daily in politics, manners, entertainment, customs, fashions, literature and technological changes. Chesterton used paradox more like a weapon to justify and to defend his own doctrine. Even his paradoxes became clichés for some conservatives, famously known as Chestertonians like certain liberals were called Shavians. Chesterton is often referred to as the "Prince of Paradox." *Time* magazine observed of his writing style: "Whenever possible Chesterton made his points with popular sayings, proverbs, allegories – first carefully turning them inside out."

Based on the evaluation of some critics, Chesterton's writings contain the influence of writers such as Dickens, Oscar Wilde and George Bernard Shaw whom Chesterton knew well. These writers are well known satirists and social commentators. Even though Chesterton was influenced by some writers, he had his own style and focused more and more on Church. He preferred the rough language of his ancestors. He tries to see all pessimism through optimistic perspective. Best example would be his experience of pain as a result of sprained leg has been taken as the best opportunity to look the world through different lens. To support his optimistic view, he gives more examples highlighting the uniqueness of being a single entity and of being alone.

To sum up, his essays are interesting that it can be considered for more reading.

#### **4.2.6 Important Questions**

1. Write a short bio note of Chesterton.
2. List out the contributions made by Chesterton to the English essay.
3. Write about Chesterton's contribution to the field of journalism.
4. What is the name of the fictional detective character created by Chesterton?
5. What is the contribution made by Chesterton to the detective genre?
6. How did Chesterton become the reason for increased attention on Charles Dickens' works?
7. Comment on Chesterton's ideas discussed in the introductory paragraph.
8. "Little worries are most wearing" – Discuss.
9. Mention the examples given by Chesterton to support his statement "the smallest worries are the worst."
10. Discuss Chesterton's views on grumbling as an act for relief.
11. What are the examples given by the author to the act of grumbling?
12. How do small annoyances end in big accident according to Chesterton?
13. List out the examples given by Chesterton to prove how small incidents spoil the attitude of the whole day.
14. What is the personal experience that Chesterton discussed in this essay?
15. "To appreciate anything we must always isolate it" – Discuss with reference to the essay.
16. What does Chesterton try to say using the 'sun' as an example?
17. What is the allusion made by Chesterton to refer to his sprained leg?
18. Why does Chesterton compare his lonely leg to the Doric column?
19. "If you wish to realize how fearfully and wonderfully God's image is made, stand on one leg" - Discuss.
20. What is the idea discussed in the concluding paragraph of the essay?
21. Write the summary of the essay "Advantages of Having One Leg."
22. Discuss the prose style of Chesterton.
23. Discuss the use of paradox in the essays of Chesterton.
24. Why is Chesterton referred to as the Prince of Paradox?
25. Chesterton tries to perceive the world through the positive perspective - Discuss.

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## **UNIT – 5**

### **LESSON – 5.1: Orwell, “Sporting Spirit”**

This unit consists of one essay titled “Sporting Spirit” by George Orwell.

#### **5.1.1. Objectives**

The objective of this lesson is to make the students aware of Orwell’s contribution to literature and society. Reading the lesson develops aesthetic sense and critical perspective of the students. Students should be able to grasp the literary concepts and relate them to their everyday experience.

#### **5.1.2. Biographical Note**

Eric Arthur Blair (1903-1950) is well known for his writings under the pseudonym George Orwell. Orwell was born in Motihari, Bengal, in India to Richard Walmesley Blair and Ida Mabel Limouzin. His father worked as a civil servant of the British Government. Orwell had two sisters. Though he was born in India, Orwell grew up in England with his mother and sisters. His birthplace in Motihari, also an ancestral house is now a historical monument. As his family could not afford the fees for Orwell to have a public school education, he was sent to a convent school which was a Roman Catholic convent. Orwell’s maternal grandmother lived in Burma so he chose to work there. He joined the Indian Imperial Police in Burma and was appointed as Assistant District Superintendent on probation. While many of his friends and contemporaries were still at university in England, Orwell felt happy and earned considerable responsibility working as an imperial police. Thereafter he worked in different parts of Burma from 1922 to 1927. As he contracted dengue fever in 1927, he went to England on leave. Instead of returning to Burma after his leave duration, he resigned from the Indian Imperial Police to become a professional writer. After facing rejections in the publication of his articles, he did menial jobs and then became a teacher in a school in West London. Finally, in 1950, Orwell died in a London hospital after suffering from tuberculosis.



### 5.1.3. Orwell's Literary Contribution

Orwell is well known for his journalism, essays, reviews, columns in magazines and newspapers. After his return to England from Burma, Orwell wrote the novel *Burmese Days* in 1934 based on his experiences in Burma and the essays "A Hanging" (published in *Adelphi* in 1931) and "Shooting an Elephant" (1936). Orwell began exploring the poorer parts of London and noted his experiences of the low life in "The Spike". This was Orwell's first published essay in England and in the second half of his book, *Down and Out in Paris and London* in 1933. After moving to Paris, Orwell tried his hands in writing novels which included his early version of *Burmese Days*. Orwell was successful as a journalist and he published articles in a political and literary journal titled *Monde*. His stay in hospital following his sickness formed the basis of his essay "How the Poor Die" which was published in 1946. After facing many rejections in his attempt of publication, Eric Blair chose the *non de plume* George Orwell and published *Down and Out in Paris and London*. This work described a period of poverty in Paris and London and it achieved moderate success and was appreciated for his "clarity and good sense." Even the characters of this work were compared to the characters of Dickens by *The Time Literary Supplement*. Then Orwell authored *Clergyman's Daughter*, the work based on his life experiences as a teacher in Southwold.

Drawing upon his experiences with the Westropes and his stay in Warwick Mansions in Pond Street, Orwell wrote the novel *Keep the Aspidistra Flying* in 1936. At the same time, he also wrote reviews for *The New English Weekly*. His work *The Road to Wigan Pier* describes the class division in general and living conditions of the poor people in northern England in particular. Orwell is well known as novelist to the modern readers because of his two most successful works *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. *Animal Farm* is a political allegory and satire depicting the rise of Stalinism and the degeneration in the Soviet Union after the Russian Revolution. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* describes the life under totalitarian rule. This work is often compared to Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*. These two dystopian novels became quite famous and are widely read even today. Both the works were honoured with Prometheus Award in different times. His last novel before World War II is the pessimistic novel *Coming Up for Air*. His essay "The

Sporting Spirit” first appeared in the *Tribune* in 1945. It is an interesting expression of Orwell’s opinions on competitive games.

#### **5.1.4. Short Summary**

Before reading the essay “The Sporting Spirit” it would be useful to know the background of the essay in which Orwell wrote the same. The war time alliance of British-Soviet was shattered into pieces after the World Wars and only hostility remained. In order to develop Anglo-Soviet relations, the Dynamo football team visited England once the World War II ended in 1945. But their visit ended in a month’s time. Orwell wrote the essay “The Sporting Spirit” for the *Tribune* in the month of December of the same year following the ending of the Dynamo tour. In this essay, Orwell views sports from a different angle by expressing his opinions with the effectiveness of the tour. He expresses his disagreement about nationalism and the hatred developed in the name of sports.

#### **5.1.5. Detailed Summary**

World War – Millions of people lost their lives and the cities and towns were ruined. Even months after the gruesome battle, much of Europe were still didn’t turn to normalcy and that was the time when no one could hardly think about the games. But in November 1945, clubs from Britain decided to host matches involving Dynamo team of the Soviet Union. However the political tensions did not come to an end at that time. Cold war pressures were already at peak as Josef Stalin’s Communist Rule was occupying most parts of Eastern Europe. That was the time the former Prime Minister Winston Churchill denounced the Soviet Union’s imperialistic policies in Europe. So seeing from these perspectives, organizing sports at this juncture would certainly take on political overtones. While the British fans were eager, authorities were least interested to accommodate the Dynamo team. Finally everything has been decided and four games were scheduled against London clubs Arsenal, Chelsea, Welsh side Cardiff city and Glasgow Rangers (the Scottish team). The Dynamo players were also under pressure to represent the Soviet Union which would use sports to demonstrate the apparent dominancy of the Communist regime over the coming decades. The football match was considered a very serious business. One can sense that, from the beginning, sport and politics were entangled. Thus it could be called a political football.

Orwell begins this essay by explaining the brief visit of the Dynamo football team, i.e., the arrival and departure of the team to and from Britain. The admiration and appreciation for various sports or the sporting spirit among the players and the viewers are torn into pieces by Orwell in the essay. He discusses how instead of considering sports as an exercise or a relaxing therapy, it is politicized and commercialized and kindles hatred in the minds of the public. He says, “Sport is an unfailing cause of ill-will” and the whole argument in the essay bears testimony to this view. Orwell begins his essay by focusing on the arrival and departure of the Dynamo football team and the after-effects in the Anglo-Soviet relations. Dynamos visit to Britain carried political and social significance. It was the time of the World Wars and Civil War and because of the World Wars, sports were disrupted too. Another thing is that the tripartite alliance between the UK, USA and USSR had not yet broken up at that time. This was an unusual time in European History. England’s football league weren’t ready to hold matches yet the English people’s enthusiasm and eagerness for the football game least reduced. However, their expectations as well as demands were met by the autumn tour of Dynamo’s team, though not completely, atleast partially.

To bring back the comradeship threatened by the Allied victory in the World War, Britain invited Russian football team. Dynamo football team was not the one that travels much and was the lesser known team at that time. But they exhibited their good show attaining impressive victory. Crowds thronged to see British team facing foreign opposition. This occasion of Dynamo’s entry into London and its victory against England became the subject of this essay. British people’s initial perception about the Dynamo team was different. *The Evening Standard* London newspaper wrote, “Don’t expect much from Dynamo. They are only beginners, blue-collars, amateurs.” As believed by all, the first few days of the tour did not go well and even the media was completely unconcerned about the game and the talent of their visitor cum guest players from Russia. Even Dynamo Moscow was of the opinion that, as England was the motherland of football, English football team was the best in the world. In Soviet Russia, English football was revered. But in a few weeks’ time, British football fans began reconsidering their long held self-perception as the world’s best footballing country. When Dynamo won in the beginning, England’s national prestige was at stake. *The Daily Mail* reported then

that “This was one of the most exciting games 54,000 people never saw.” As already mentioned in the overview of the historical perspective of the event, it is clear that the opinion and mindset of the public as well as the people have changed about Dynamos. Nobody expected that they would be an able opponent to the English clubs. Likewise, Dynamos’ view that English as the only best team in the world also was shaken after they themselves exhibiting a thunderous game. They returned home undefeated leaving imprints in the minds of the spectators of their style of playing games and the quality.

Orwell opines that “sport is an unfailing cause of ill-will” and the whole essay bears testimony to it. The essay tries to focus on this aspect by making references to famous historical matches. Expectedly the matches did not help to attain the smooth relations between Britain and USSR hence Orwell expresses his pessimistic note, “it could only be to make them slightly worse than before.” The worst of it was that even newspapers couldn’t fabricate the matches as pleasant one. “They couldn’t conceal the fact that at least two of the four matches played led to much bad feeling.” Orwell expresses his personal opinions in this essay as the narrator by explaining the situation at two different matches. He takes two matches played out of four to state how unpleasant and farcical the matches were. At the Arsenal match, both teams had to put up with plenty of crude charges and some sportsmen even hit each other. The referee showed them a warning card and the crowd booed the referee. The Glasgow match was, though ended in draw, not seriously taken from the beginning and it was a free-for-all match from the start. This was followed by sudden controversy which led to the various disturbances in the game.

Even if the newspapers tried to project it positively, it would have ended in affectation as the matches were evidenced by the large mass of crowd and the incidents were imprinted in the minds of the spectators. The problem began with the Dynamo’s complain about the composition of the Arsenal team. Their accusation was that the team was all-England team for which England’s claim was that they were just a league team. The main reason for this was absence of players on the match as they were still detailed in the war. So the team was compiled with players from various clubs and so Soviet suspected that it would be the compilation of best players of England. So the Russians claimed that it was all-England team but the

British strongly objected this and called them a mere league team. So within a month's time, Dynamo was summoned back to Moscow. The composition of Arsenal team is in a way cheating in order to prove their nation's strength. May be England would have thought not to lost face to a foreign team and if it happens then England's pride would be at stake. Supporters of the team might agree with this idea because in their eyes, it is better to win by any means than lose with dignity as it is remembered ever through the pages of history.

Orwell is of the opinion that the doubts and uncertainties in the formation of the team could be the reason behind the Dynamos ending their tour abruptly to avoid playing an all-England team. Also he remarks that these controversies are "typical of our nationalist age." Though too many doubts arise in the minds of players and spectators, any question that arises is usually answered according to the "political predilections." Though not everyone, but majority will look through political perspectives. From his observation over this controversy, he states how "the sporting correspondent of the Russophile *News Chronicle* took the anti-Russian line and maintained that Arsenal was not an all-England team." Whatever the truth may be, these unanswered controversies and cooked up answers will "echo for years in the footnotes of history books." Orwell grieves at this juncture that sports though appears to unite people of different communities, it has always been the source of "fresh animosity" among the countries. Dynamo's visit to England did not make any difference in the British-Soviet relations. It might be the pessimistic view of Orwell to claim that the tour had created "fresh animosities on both sides." Instead of strengthening the bond, it has worsened the Anglo-Soviet relations.

Orwell deploys an analogy of comparing sports field to a war field. He says that he is surprised to hear "people saying that sports creates good will between the nations, and that if only the common people of the world could meet one another at football or cricket, they would have no inclination to meet on the battlefield." It is believed that if people from different countries could have good game on the playground then there would be no necessity for people to lose lives on the battlefield. But actually the truth is otherwise and sports field is considered as battlefield. He makes reference to the 1936 Olympics Games as a concrete example to contradict this idea and prove that "international sporting contests lead to orgies of hatred, one could deduce it from general principles." The 1936 Berlin Olympics,

also called Nazi Olympics was hosted by the Nazi party which was in power at that time. The party attempted to tangle politics and sports. Its racist policies steered international debate about the boycott of games, racist issues, religious strife and other issues. The Nazi party and Germany viewed the Olympic Games as a right tool to mete out brutal treatment to their political opponents, the Jews. The removal of Jewish athletes was obvious defilement of Olympic rules. Jews and Blacks were denied accommodation from athletics clubs and some hotels too facing discrimination. The International Olympic Committee had to intervene to conduct the games smoothly and also dreading a mass boycott, it forced the German government to make certain that the talented Jewish athletes to be part of the German team and also would not use games to promote Nazi ideology.

Next Orwell explains how the definition of sports and games changed gradually from seeing it as exercise to prestige and viewed as an unfailing cause of ill-will. He explains the gradual shattering of the sporting spirit along with the changing definition of games. Almost all the sports practiced today are competitive. The ultimate aim of today's sports is only to win. The players put their utmost efforts to create the winning moment in the games whereas the same becomes meaningless if victory is not attained. At the International level, sport is literally viewed as a kind of war between the countries. Orwell highlights how the games are considered in villages: "where you pick up sides and no feeling of local patriotism is involved." Villagers take sport as sport and consider it as fun and a healthy practice to bring people together. They don't exhibit the feeling of patriotism in the games so they don't create ill-will rather they promote healthy relationship. But even there, when fun element is replaced with prestige, the enmity is created. "It is possible to play simply for the fun and exercise: but as soon as the question of prestige arises, as soon as you feel that you and some larger unit will be disgraced if you lose, the most savage combative instincts are aroused." When the sport is open for larger audience, the ultimate motive is to win and the game is reduced to nothing but competition. The enmity not only kindles ill feelings in the individual but also it becomes competition involving various people. It involves money and violence too. Players instead of playing for fun, develop hatred towards each other because they become representative of some larger unit where losing becomes disgrace. Another thing is that once the combative spirit is kindled and if a player loses in the match

then he is worried about the disgrace he has to face with and the humiliation he has to face from various people. Thus every esteemed quality that is associated with sports is shattered to pieces.

Orwell declares, “At the international level sport is frankly mimic warfare.” Orwell made a timely comparison of international sport to the warfare which involves various countries. Even though the players carry the sporting spirit in them, it is completely absent among the spectators. The spectators look at the game as a war and the players as the soldiers. Each and every move associated with the sport like running, jumping, kicking a ball and so on is manipulated to ‘tests of national virtue’ and the sense of conflict is automatically aroused among the common people. Orwell doesn’t confine this raging attitude to football rather it is also obvious in game like cricket which demands “grace rather than strength.” Orwell cites an example of Australian cricket team that visited England in 1921. Australia won the Ashes series in 1921 held in England after an eight-year break due to the First World War. Yet there were controversy “over body-line bowling and over the rough tactics of the Australian team.” In games like football, “everyone gets hurt and every nation has its own style of play which seems unfair to foreigners” and the problems that arise along with it are far worse. The pressure to win makes the players choose wrong paths resulting in controversies and shame ending in hatred.

The worst of all games is boxing, according to Orwell especially when there is slight inclination of racism in the boxing ring. Racism in the games is the horrible sight. The fight between white and coloured boxers before a mixed audience has always been disgusting. In this regard, the behavior of women especially is even more horrible as they get too emotional. Though a female spectator is passionate about the sport, there is no logic behind getting too emotional. An awful behavior of women had resulted in banning them to attend the contests. To explain the intensity of this situation, Orwell cites an instance from his experience in the army. That is, when Home guards and regular troops were holding a boxing match, he was placed on guard at the door to keep women out of the boxing tournament.

Orwell, after commenting about the bad obsession of sports and nationalism in country like England, he refers to the condition of sports in the young countries “where games playing and nationalism are both recent developments. In countries

like India or Burma, the playgrounds are filled with security forces to prevent the spectators from invading the field or interrupting the game. "It is necessary at football matches to have strong cordons of police to keep the crowd from invading the field." Orwell provides two incidents where the feelings of rivalry exceeded. The first example is the match in Burma where he witnessed the supporters of a particular team "break through the police and disable the goalkeeper of the opposing side at a critical moment." The second example is a big football match played in Spain resulting in an uncontrollable unrest. Taking cue from these two examples, Orwell observes that "rules always vanishes." Rules are laid in the games to make it interesting to the players as well as to the spectators. But once the strong feelings of rivalry are stirred, rules become nothing; they disappear completely. It is human nature to idolize one's favourite team or favourite sporting hero but it is a great disappointment over people who intervene or cheat to make their native team top forgetting that it is meaningless because the victory of one team and the humiliation of the other ultimately result only in the hatredness. There is also another type of spectator who though doesn't intervene physically, "they try to influence the game by cheering their own side and "rattling" opposing playing with boos and insults." Orwell expresses his perspective that serious games are far away from 'fair play'. According to him, sport is "war minus the shooting" because it is always "bound up with hatred, jealousy, boastfulness, disregard of all rules and sadistic pleasure in witnessing violence."

Next Orwell expresses his disinterest in talking about the "clean and healthy rivalry" in sports and the attempt of Olympic Games in bringing together the nations. Rather he feels that it would be more useful to inquire the history and development of the modern cult of sports. He begins his discourse on this aspect by saying that games are of ancient origin. That is, the sports we play today are not anew rather an extension or renewal of what have already existed. But such sports were not seriously considered between Roman times and the nineteenth century. Even in public schools, the games cult began only during the twentieth century. Orwell cites the words of Dr. Arnold who is regarded as the founder of the modern public school. The latter looked on games "as simply a waste of time." Only in the later years, games were viewed as business. In particular, England and United States perceived sports as "heavily-financed activity." Once sports became business, it



started attracting vast crowds rousing wild passions and it gradually spread throughout the world like the infection. The more violent the games are, the wider it spread. Thus games like football and boxing, the most combative and violent, gain the most attention and it marked the beginning of finding pleasure associating with a nation in the name of nationalism. Orwell says, “With the lunatic modern habit of identifying oneself with large power units and seeing everything in terms of competitive prestige.” Thus the combat and enmity was aroused without effort.

Understanding sports at different levels or with respect to hierarchy, it is nothing but a human pleasure. The spectators of the organized game are the urban communities who cannot engage themselves in ‘creative labor’ and lead only a sedentary life confined to the routine. Hence, they decide to stay put and discuss about sports. The people in the rustic community engage and involve in activities like “walking, swimming, snowballing, climbing trees, riding horses and by various sports involving cruelty to animals, such as fishing, cock-fighting and ferreting for rats.” England and other countries witnessed costly games and so their wild passions were stirred. Sports in a big town and cities are not seen as a group activity to develop a bond between people like in villages whereas it is seen only an “outlet for one’s physical strength or for one’s sadistic impulses.” Orwell emphasizes the point that the games cult began with the aim to relax. Though games were taken seriously in countries like London and New York and in Rome and Byzantium and even in Middle Ages where games were played involving much physical brutality, the games were not combined with politics and nationalism. But in the later days, in the name of nationalism, games have become a cause for group hatred. It has ruined the purpose and motive of sports.

Sports can become the source of ill-will and might cause international rivalry. Orwell suggests that a series of football matches between Jews and Arabs, Germans and Czechs, Indians and British, Russians and Poles and Italians and Jugoslavs, can bring enough enthusiasm at the same time hatred among the nations than any other actions. Because these matches are watched by the mixed audience of atleast 100,000 spectators and these matches pave way to nationalism and hatred as well. It does not mean that sports cause rivalry but big sports involving big business and money cause hatred and international rivalry. The eleven member team becomes the representative of the nation and if they win the battle, they are labeled

as national champions and are celebrated but on the other hand the lost team has to lose face.

Orwell thus concludes the essay with an ardent appeal for good sportsmanship. He suggests that football board must not follow up the visit of the Dynamos by sending the British team to the USSR as they left without any prior notice. In case if the board has to send a team to the USSR, he suggests to send a second-rate powerless team to deliberately lose the match so that it will put an end to the violence and hatred. He emphasizes as the concluding statement that “there are quite enough real causes of trouble already, and we need not add to them by encouraging young men to kick each other on the shins amid the roars of infuriated spectators.” Thus this way, sports will not promote violence and hatred. Therefore every player should have the qualities of good sportsmanship to go a long way and to promote the sporting spirit between countries. The author tries to make it clear to the reader the importance of exhibiting sportsmanship and the real need for sports.

#### **5.1.6. Critical Analysis**

George Orwell in “The Sporting Spirit” tries to break the myth that sports are vital to create friendly relations between countries. In today’s competitive world, each and every player is supported by his nation and he finds gaps in the law to bend rules according to him to win the game in some means. “Serious sport has nothing to do with fair play. It is bound up with hatred, jealousy, boastfulness, disregard of all rules and sadistic pleasure in witnessing violence; in other words it is war minus the shooting.” The above quote best exemplifies the proposition that is explained throughout the essay. Sport has both good and bad implications too. The impacts of games on relations between different countries as well as common public are emphasized. Sports teams are generally believed to bridge a gap between countries concerned and erase the enmity existing but is not achieved unless the real sporting spirit is found in the players and the spectators.

The essay highlights the themes such as passion, pride, nationalism, jealousy and hatred. Passion for the game is not wrong but it should not be coated with jealousy and enmity. One nation taking pleasure in making another nation lose will ultimately increase the chaos. People should understand that involving a group activity is essential for the venting up of physical and mental stress and fatigue. An

element of savagery and excessive pride for one's own team spoils the game fostering hatred. The author makes the appeal to everyone involved in the sports including players, fans, and trainers and so on. The crux of the essay is to tell the world what actually the sport is and what actually sport does for the world. After the World Wars, the world is so immersed in conflict and hate that the countries fail to view sports as a source of fun. Instead of considering the goodness in the sport, the countries are waging war in the sports field. So the essay is a kind of warning to all nations and individuals who use sports to fix political relations as sport may produce the opposite effect than the expected one. No positive outcome can be evidenced once sports bring division among players and countries. Such division cannot be defined in the name of friendly rivalry. The sport has become really serious and dangerous. It is a pressing need to instill good sportsmanship and sportsman spirit in the mind and heart of all individuals to spread peace and goodwill through sports.

The essay is written in a pessimistic and disdainful tone. This tone is coloured with negative diction. The author is cynical towards the effect sport create on the society and in the minds of the spectators. The friendly football matches played between club teams from the Great Britain and Soviet Union after the World War II are cited as instances to put forth the view that sport is actively creating and escalating tension between two teams. The Ironic thing to be considered relating to this point is some people's opinion that sport creates goodwill between the nations and also if people get a chance to meet on the playground there is no necessity for them to meet on the battlefield. But actually this belief is completely opposite of the actual consequence. So the author is scornful in his view that instead of viewing sport as something meant to be used for good, it develops conflict. The title itself is ironical reiterating the above said point. Thus the deployment of irony in handling the historic event makes the reader of all time to revisit the history and rethink the perspective the sport is being seen.

The essay is written in the typical essay structure with the format of having an introduction where the author introduces his ideas followed by the main part of the essay and conclusion. The author conveys his points and ideas directly using short and precise sentences. Sometimes his arguments sound quite harsh in particular in the end of the paragraphs like "any result, will have been to create fresh animosity on both sides." Orwell has made rare use of conjunction and deployed

commas to connect ideas. He has used chosen diction to portray the bitterness created by sport. His vocabulary is not difficult and the language is comprehensible.

Although Orwell puts forth his opinions in the essay, his narration is in such a way that the readers are lured to second his opinions. The essay sounds emotional and expresses displeasure towards the behavior of spectators as well as the players. The author tries to teach the readers the actual purpose of sports and how sport has been used by the self-centred people as a business and kindle nationalism. Even though sport causes hatred and enmity among the players and teams, the humanity is so fond of it. Just because the nature of competition instills hostility, the world is more prone to battles. In the essay the author deviates himself from the common opinion shared by other English people in supporting the Arsenal team as well as politicizing the games. To emphasize this view, he cites historical examples highlighting the negative sentiments impelled. Orwell has deployed figures of speech wherever necessary. Metaphor is used to compare sports field to the battlefield and sports to war and players to soldiers. Once the fun element is replaced with competition then the game is compared to war. Thus the essay is the critique of nationalism and the political purposes behind the sport.

#### **5.1.7. Important Questions**

1. Write a short note on Orwell's biography.
2. What does the title "The Sporting Spirit" mean?
3. What is Orwell's opinion about the lack of sporting spirit?
4. What is the occasion that led to the writing of the essay?
5. When was the essay first published?
6. Name the two important novels of Orwell.
7. Comment on the tone used by Orwell to put forth his views?
8. Discuss in detail the result of the matches played by Soviet Union and England teams?
9. What is the accusation laid against the composition of Arsenal team?
10. How does sport become the reason to create fresh animosity on both sides?
11. Why did Orwell cite 1936 Olympic Games as an example?
12. What happens when prestige replaces fun in sport?

13. How did media picture Dynamos' tour?
14. Media kindles sensationalism and nationalism – Discuss.
15. Why does Orwell say that sport is a mimic warfare at the international level?
16. According to Orwell, why is Boxing worst of all games?
17. What is the reason given by Orwell for not permitting women to attend Boxing matches?
18. How are games viewed in recent times?
19. Do games really create nationalism? Explain.
20. The interference of the spectators create rift between the teams and players – Discuss.
21. What is the variation observed in the attitude of village people and city people in playing games?
22. Group activities are an outlet for one's physical strength – discuss.
23. Explain the main concern of Orwell that is expressed in this essay regarding sports.
24. Comment on the prose style of Orwell.
25. What is your opinion about the sports? Do you believe that sports develop friendly relations between countries?

#### **5.1.8. References**

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