

BRITISH NON-FICTION

UNIT I

The Book of Jonah

The Bible

The main theme of The Book of Jonah is that God desired Jonah to proclaim a message to Nineveh in the hope that they would turn from their wicked ways. God does not desire that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Though the mission of God is the main theme, there are numerous other themes as well that weave their way through this masterful story.

1. God's dialogue with the human soul (Jonah)

An overriding concern is the need to hear and respond to God's word. God addresses Jonah directly, sends a storm and a fish to arrest his attention, challenges his preconceptions, illustrates his challenge with a leafy plant and leaves Jonah with an open question to consider. Jonah's reluctant response to God underlines the cost of being called a prophet. Jonah's initial instincts were to run away and hide. His is a perplexing struggle with God, as his prayers demonstrate. He discovers that he cannot shake God off. The story is an honest appraisal of the ubiquitous human desire to do one's own thing instead of journeying with God.

The relationship between the chosen people and the rest of humanity

In this story the responses of Jonah and the Gentiles are contrasted. Jonah appears not to fear God while the Gentiles show an appropriate fear. Jonah preached only judgment, but the Ninevites received deliverance. Hebrew prophecy often highlights the relationship between God and his people. It seems that the prophetic writer intended that God's people should recognize themselves in the person of Jonah. The whole story then becomes a lengthy prophetic utterance in which the final question is addressed to them. The complexity of God's dealings with Israel exposed the narrowness of Israel's beliefs but also showed that God reveals his saving compassion as he chooses. Ironically, the freedom of God exposes the bondage of his people.

Challenging perceptions of God

While we question some of the features of this story, we too are being questioned by the God who questions Jonah. The narrative reflects back onto the reader a range of theological questions that challenge our perceptions about the merciful nature of God, the omnipresence of God and God's sovereignty over all things. The book concludes with an unanswered question on the lips of God which every reader is challenged to answer: "And should not I pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?"

Repentance

The story's resolution is found in the theme of repentance. The Ninevite king leads his people in repentance and the Lord himself relents. Equally noteworthy is the absence of any penitence or repentance on Jonah's part. He is a self-righteous person with little awareness of his own need of divine mercy. So deeply embedded is Jonah's arrogance that God's faithful commitment to remain with him may be seen as a profound act of divine humility and love.

The relevance of the sign of Jonah

The sign of Jonah signals God's mercy on all penitent sinners – Jew or Gentile, insiders or outsiders. Anybody may turn and be saved. The book of Jonah underlines many of its great lessons – that it is impossible to escape God's presence and that God's compassion means that he is ever willing to offer salvation to whoever truly repents. It is the portrayal of these characteristics of God which grips and absorbs us in the book of Jonah.

A TREATISE ON THE ASTROLABE

CHAUCER

This treatise is divided into five parts and is written clearly in plain English. It is addressed to a son by his father. The father proposes to teach some facts about the instrument in this treatise. No one has good knowledge about the instrument Astrolabe.

Even though the treatise is written in plain English, as it written to his young son whose Latin is not good enough. But the facts remain the same, even though they are expressed in other language. As God Wills, all these details have been completely learned and taught in all these languages. Though they follow different methods, they convey the same truth as all roads lead to Rome. The father begs the readers to forgive his poor editing and superfluous words, as he wants his child to understand the truth by his repetitive use of words. The father confesses that he has merely compiled the brainwork of past astronomers and has translated it into English.

In the first part, he discusses the parts of the musical instrument Astrolabe and the second part deals with the use of the musical instrument. The third part contains various tables of longitudes and latitude of fixed stars for the astrolabe. The fourth part describes a theory to explain the movements of the Celestial bodies and their causes. It contains a table of the moon's mother for every hour. The fifth part is about introduction of the theory of astrology.

The astrolabe has a ring in which he can put his thumb of his right hand when measuring the height of things. The ring goes through a kind of eyelet connected to the body of astrolabe with enough room. So the instrument centre always hangs straight down. The body astrolabe is hollowed out with a cavity that receives the thon plates. The back body is divided by a line that descends from the ring to the bottom border. There is a small cross at the end of this lone which is regarded as the first degree where the sun rises.

There is a circle of the names of the months that is Januarius, Februarius, Marcim, Aprilis, Maius, Julius, and Augustus and so on. Some of the month names come from their properties, some by Arabian lords and others by Roman lords. Then follow the names of the holy days in the calendar.

OF GOODNESS AND GOODNESS OF NATURE

Francis Bacon

Francis Bacon is a popular English essayist who lived in the Elizabethan age. His optimistic style is a distinct character of his essays. He was a prudential and Machiavellian thinker.

Goodness discharge itself in charitable acts or beneficent philanthropy. It is to be distinguished from goodness of nature or inclination or natural kindness of disposition. Goodness is the virtue of beneficence, characteristic of the Divine Nature. It cannot commit mistakes by excess. There can never be too much of it. Philanthropy is the practice of charity to men. Humanity has nearly the same meaning with this slight difference that it may be shown towards men as well as animals.

One has to guard against the dangers of the insupplication of goodness. In order to prevent the abuse of goodness, one must study the real good of the people whom one wants to do well-their actual requirements in life, not their fancied good. This means that one should discriminate between worthy and unworthy objects of charity. Besides, one must not neglect his duty to his self.

Some men are malign by nature. As individuals, they wish people ill and indulge in evil deeds unscrupulously. But anyway, they make good statesman.

Goodness of nature is exhibited in one's courteous conduct to strangers, sympathy with sorrow, gratitude for petty favours or benefits, spirit of self sacrifice which is the most perfect Christian virtue.

According to Bacon, goodness of nature is the virtue of benevolence which is a natural kindness of disposition as opposed to goodness which is more active and charity should be commensurate with his actual wants and capacities. For example, 'Do not cast your pearls before swine'. The practice of charity should not lead to one's ruin one must be true to his duty. One should be careful lest in the act of decorating a vase, one should not break the thing itself.

Bacon, as a political philosopher and the thinker, is not blind to the necessity of moral integrity. But as a man of action and a pragmatist, he thinks that the higher and nobler virtues will not make for success in life.

In the later part of the essay, Bacon extols goodness in the sense of philanthropy, in particular, the words of St. Paul where he remarks that he would prefer to be exiled in order to work for the salvation of his brothers. In this essay, Bacon admires goodness not for any particular advantage, in life, but for purely moral reasons.

UNIT II

THE MODEST PROPOSAL

Jonathan Swift

The Modest Proposal is an essay written by Jonathan Swift. The full name of the essay is “A Modest Proposal for preventing the children of poor people from being a Burden to their Parents or Country and for Making them Beneficial to the public”. When Swift was writing this essay, Ireland was ruled by England. Swift is one of the ruling class members. Ireland suffers under the colonization of English people. This is an ironical portrayal of the English Colonisers who are callous towards Irish People.

Most of the English colonisers are Protestants. But the people of Ireland are chiefly Catholics. Hence there is a vast gap between these two groups. The English elite group develops an animosity for the catholic citizens and they never take sincere efforts to better the lives of the colonized. The Protestant English make the lives of the Irish very hard by imposing severe laws on them. Ireland, being an overpopulated country, staggers under the crucial issue of poverty.

Jonathan Swift, being an Irish man, wants to reform the situation. He pleads the English Government to take steps to improve the wretched condition of the Irish people. But, he never gets any positive response from the English. This prose is an ironical account to show how serious the problems of the Irish common people are using his skill in satire, he exposes the woes of the people. Swift is angry with the passivity and apathy of the Irish people and wants so awaken them from their indolence.

Swift uses irony in this essay. One can see the change of his moods. He starts the essay with the description of the miserable condition of the beggar women and children wandering and begging in the streets of Ireland. At their point, Swift makes a shocking proposal to tackle this bad situation. He comes up with an idea that poor Irish children can be butchered and eaten. His tone remains totally objective as he supports his claim through various statistics. Thus Swift powerfully attacks the English people who are merciless like cannibals.

Swift pictures the females who are forced to beg for food as they are unable to work. Their children grow up to become thieves or leave for America searching for better future. The

author claims that it is a matter of national concern. He ironically seems to reflect the feelings of the coloniser that these Irish children are burden to the crippled kingdom. Therefore, he argues that if anyone comes up with a plan to turn these beggar children into useful citizens, they are welcome. Moreover, he suggests that the flesh of these young children will taste delicious on the mouths of the English people. Thus Swift exposes the cruel nature of the snobbish English rulers. This proposal can solve the problem of beggar children, as their parents cannot feed these children in the current financial condition. The proposals made by others are not sufficient to solve their problems. The English are ignorant of the ground realities before proposing their proposals.

Swift proposes that a child can easily be fed for the first year of his life. The total cost required to feed a child for the first year is no more than two shillings. Since during the first year, the child requires only breast milk, which is free, he does not need much money. As the child begins to grow, his needs also grow. Hence, the 'modest' proposal gives a solution for one year children. The Irish children, who are left starving on the streets, can be given as food to English gentlemen. Thus the English can have the source of food and clothing. Moreover, this proposal will result in reducing the evils of infanticide and abortions. The Irish mothers can be free from the responsibility of rearing their children. He says that many people are guilty of such wrong practices as they cannot afford to feed their children.

Around 1,20,000 children are born into low income families. Their parents cannot feed them. Hence these kids have no means of survival as they have no employment or land to cultivate their food. They cannot be sold as slaves before the age of 12. All of them cannot become thieves before reaching the age of 6. Out of 1,20,000 only 20,000 can be allowed to live, for the purpose of breeding and maintenance of the population. However a proper ratio of one male to 4 females should be maintained among them. The remaining one hundred thousand children should be allowed to live in order to be sold as a food delicacy. The author suggests different types of dishes that can be prepared with the meat of these children. Their meat is more expensive and so it is available to wealthy landlords of Ireland who have already eaten the majority of the parents of these children. Moreover, their meat will be available at all times. One child can be available for 10 shillings. Their parents will make a profit of 8 shillings. Their skin can be used as leather. Many people in Dublin is eager to conduct the business of butchering

children. Since there is a scarcity of venizers in the tables of wealthy landlords, the Irish teenagers' flesh also can be added to the list.

The Catholics are considered as disadvantageous as they have large families. The author accuses them as the enemy of the state. Unprivileged tenants will be able to clear their debts by selling their children. The economy of the country will improve. A new dish will be added to the cuisine of the landlords. Consequently the business in taverns will shoot up. It will increase the number of marriages. Domestic violence will go down during the period of pregnancy. It will reduce the population which is the goal of the government. Thus Swift makes a powerful satire of the English ruling class.

OMENS

In this essay Omens, Joseph Addison talks about the evil impact superstitious thoughts on human minds. He narrates an incident in his life which disturbs his mind very badly. One day the narrator visits his old friend's family. He is shocked to see the family members in dejection. As he questions them about the reason for their melancholy, the lady tells him that she has had a very bad dream and she expects that some misfortune may fall upon her family. The wife often talks about her dream in which she happened to see a stranger in the candle light. Her little son informs her that he is going to join a new venture on Thursday. Immediately she asks him not to go on Thursday as it is not a lucky day. She instructs him to change the Thursday in Friday. The narrator feels unhappy about her odd thinking. He wonders if everyone is averse towards Thursday, it will amount to lose a day in a week. In the meantime, she requests the narrator to pass her a little salt upon the point of his knife. As he tries to reach her, in a hurry, a pinch of salt spills on the way. She is upset about it and she considers it as a bad omen as it falls towards her.

The narrator feels embarrassment as he fears that he is the cause of the family's misfortune. She comments to her husband that misfortunes never come single. Her husband also is influenced by his wife's sentiments. The wife recalls the collapse of the pigeon house on the way when a careless servant maid spilt some salt. The husband also remembers that due to this, they got the news of battle of Almanza. Feeling uneasy about these sentiments, and comments of the family, the narrator wants to quit their tense as early as possible. In a hurry, he lays the knife and fork across one another upon his plate. But the lady demands him to place them side by side. The narrator feels that these superstitious are absurd. In order to obey the lady, he disposes them in two parallel lines.

The narrator understands that the hostess does not like him and regards him as an odd kind of a man, with an unlucky aspect. In such a view, he walks out of the home. Desperately, he reflects upon the evil effect of such ideas. They subject people to imaginary fears and sorrow. Besides the natural disasters, these superstitious ideas spoil our lives. The shooting of a star is feared as an ill omen. Screeching of an owl is considered a very bad omen. The voice of an insect cricket strikes more terror than the roaring of a lion.

In English society, the number 13 is viewed as an unlucky one. Hence people used to avoid the number 13. Once a team of 13 members has gathered together with noise and joy. Suddenly an old woman announces them that there is going to be a tragedy as they are 13. Hence a few women walked out of the party. A friend informed that there is a pregnant woman in the group and so they are 14. Thus the problem was solved by his subtle answer. Old women are notorious for creating terrors by telling such myths. One day she was terrified by a howling of a dog when she was lying sick of toothache. She associated it with her impending death. It is the duty of wise men to dispel the evils of such absurd superstitious beliefs by enlightening them with reasoning. The narrator is least concerned about such presages. He posits great faith in and who controls every life. He believes that God will look after him, as he has committed his life in his might hands. He hopes that whatever happens, God will either avert them or turn them to his advantage. With an easy mind, he accepts everything. He is assured of his security under God's wings.

On the Instability of Worldly Grandeur

Oliver Goldsmith

“On the Instability of Worldly Grandeur” is an essay written by Oliver Goldsmith. At the outset of the essay, Goldsmith comments upon an alehouse keeper who had lived at the favour of the French King. When there was a war with France, he gave up his old sign and shifted his loyalty in to the Queen of Hungary. Under her blessings, the ale house keeper flourished. But one day his customers disapproved of the Queen of Hungary. Hence the ale house keeper changed the queen and replaced her sign with that of the King of Prussia. Goldsmith observes that this king also would be changed and his place would be usurped by another king, who wins his admiration.

This alehouse keeper actually imitates the great noblemen who shift their favour from one to another. People will be surprised at his change of fortune and eventually his mind. Goldsmith comes out with a truth that the crowd is always pleased with a variety of rulers. They are never content with one and want a variety of kings. At one time, the common people are awed by the achievements of a great personality. Some good men who are happy about people’s applause become corrupt later. In history, such occurrences are frequent. The great leader who has become popular with the admiration of a million, has been fixed upon a pole the very next day itself.

Goldsmith cites the example of Alexander VI, the Roman emperor. On the day he was defeated by his enemy, his people pulled down the emperor’s statue posited in the market place. His effigy was burnt along with the statue of one of the king from Orsino family, with who he was at war. A man with little worldly wisdom may find such fall of great people incredible. But Alexander was pleased at the people’s zeal. With a smile, he told his son “You see, my son, the small difference between a gibbet and a statue”. This incident shows that the worldly grandeur and men’s applause are quite transient. At any time, a flatterer may turn to be one’s enemy when the man’s fame declines.

Goldsmith aptly calls popular glory a “perfect coquet”. People who are mad after fame work hard for it. After capturing power, men become restless indulge in all activities and then they will be deserted at their fall. True glory can be compared with a sensible woman. No body

has to please her. Her admirers are not anxious, for they are assured of their reward for their merit. Swift who was much hated by the mob, he was happy about it. He was happy that the Lord Mayor loved it.

When one retires from public attention his glory also vanishes. Only true object of admiration gets permanent praise. Duke of Marlborough has won more appreciation than the others who have been in higher order. Since his mild, amiable virtues are superior to the vulgar behavior of the other great ones. He used to turn down every word of flattery, and Goldsmith pays much tribute to him for his humility.

A Chinese traveler, who has studied the works of Confucius, decided to visit Europe in order to notice the customs of the Europeans. While he reached Amsterdam, he visited a bookseller's shop. He asked for the works of Ilixfou. But the bookseller denied the existence of such book. Though the book author was martyr his fame has faded away in Europe. No one in the Europe has known such great men who have written immortal works.

A head of a petty corporation defies the designs of a prince who forces his subjects to save their cloths for Sunday service. There are fake artist in the field of poetry, music and painting who priorities external appearance rather than the real merit. They perform only to appeal to the senses, not to the heart. Their aim is to win so much of crowd after them. The crowd obeys their words. Such fake people are acclaimed as patriots' philosophers and poets, by the crowd. They do not pay attention to the merit. But the future generations will acknowledge such meritorious people.

Goldsmith had seen famous generals who had crowds thronging upon them wherever they went. Such eminent generals were admired by media people also. But such voices are fake and vulgar. But in due course such eminent people have gone into oblivion. There is not even an epitaph left on their grave yards. Recently a herring fishery was established in Grub Street which was a popular discussion in the coffee houses and the sing of every poet. People imagined oceans of gold from the sea and they expected to supply herrings all over Europe. But it was an elusive dream as no one has achieved either fish or gold from the industry. Thus the pomp and glory came to null and void. Here Goldsmith points out the vanity of human pride and the transient nature of man's boasting of his greatness.

UNIT III

My Relations

Lamb

'My Relation' is an extract from Charles Lamb's "Essays of Elia". Here, Lamb shares his personal experience with the readers. This essay reflects Lamb's personality and his outlook of life.

According to Lamb, having both parents with one alive is a great blessing at the age of sixty or seventy. This is the period that one starts forgetting his favourite or beloved faces. Even one neglects his own personal looks Lamb shares his relationship with his aunt who was dear to him. He counts this relationship very crucial as he has been in the good books of the aunt. Whenever he leaves her home, she is upset and uneasy. She sheds tears like a compassionate mother. In order to distract herself from such sad memory, she develops the habit of reading books. Even the books refuse to comfort her. In the morning, she used to go to church even though she is not regular in this practice. She evinces keen interest in religious sermon and worship. She is very witty and shrewd. Lamb's mind is filled with the thoughts about his aunt. On recollecting those days, he feels himself in the very presence of those people.

Since Lamb has no uncles, he may be reckoned as an orphan. He has no brother or sister. He had two cousins namely James and Briget Elia. Both of them were older than Lamb by 12 or 10 years. Hence he does not have much to recollect them.

Of the two cousins, James was wise, naughty and was always ready for war. He used to fabricate new plays and themes. He was by nature a brave and confident boy. James used to teach Lamb the art of bowing and the antique manners. Lamb discovered that he had nothing to do with all these things personally. His thoughts were amazing and wonderful, though they seemed to be impractical. All these ideologies vanished when he was waiting for his meal when it was getting ready. He pretends to be interested in works of art. He buys them only to sell them. He used to give a discourse on patience, but he hardly shows the virtue in his own life.

James was sharp in inventing an argument. In no time, he could advance a wild logic and draw a conclusion of his own choice. On certain occasions, he was constant in negation. His ideas are meant for others. He is an exceptional case in this concern. His scholarly spirit always remained active and he was ready to pounce on foolish prey like Lamb. Sometimes while passing through a street, Lamb found him coming in the opposite direction. He stopped near Lamb and told him “I wish I had fewer holidays in my life”.

James used to live in his own world. He always commented upon old established players and senior comedians. He had different notions about misery. For him, the only misery is physical and all other ideas are just an imagination. He takes sympathetic attitude towards animals especially over-loaded ass. Thus he is a man full of contradictions. The pen pictures of Lamb’s relatives are amusing and humorous.

On Going a Journey

Hazlitt

On Going on a Journey by William Hazlitt is a masterpiece. It describes the adventure of travel and perks of travelling all alone.

At the outset, Hazlitt expresses his joy in journeying all alone with Nature being his only companion. Hazlitt does not enjoy the company of fellow travelers who keep on chatting and worrying about the world during their travel. Hazlitt loves his loneliness and freedom. According to Hazlitt, journey means liberating oneself from worldly concerns and routine affairs. In order to communicate with nature, one must detach himself from the company of human beings and anxieties of the world. Hazlitt observes that the only way to achieve such union with Nature is through complete freedom of thought.

Hazlitt enjoys the sight of wild flowers and the sweet music of flowing waters. It is much better than the constant repartee with a fellow human being who is occupied with worldly thoughts. In the company of Nature, one does not have to confess his feelings in words or gestures. Moreover, in the company of human being, he is expected to devote his attention to him and accept his opinions. But when one is alone, he can concentrate on his own thoughts and brood over them. When one talks, he has little time to reflect.

When Hazlitt is left alone with Nature, he has to lose all thoughts of collecting and analyzing information. One must experience, and not judge or appraise such experience. When one tries to communicate his experience, they are only hasty words. Moreover, whatever information one wants to pass on to others should be expressed in the way the listener can grasp the idea. This creates anxiety and there is a need to satisfy other people's expectations. Thus one cannot immerse himself in the natural environment around him Hazlitt admires S.T. Coleridge who could experience and narrate such experience at the same time, perfectly. He could translate his enjoyment into exact words. Hazlitt accepts his inability to do the same. He takes time before he puts his thoughts into words.

Only during the lunch time, Hazlitt prefers to have human company on travel. However, the enjoyment of a warm meal at the end of the tiresome journey can be experienced alone. Thus Hazlitt upholds his opinion that the enjoyment of a journey can be had only in solitude. In

solitude, one can sing, dance and be free without being evaluated by others. The unalloyed joy of delicious food and the aroma of the food cannot be wasted over a cheap conversation. When one ignores his fellow being, he ignores his own grievances as well. In such a posture, one is invisible. One can lose his very identity and his own inhibitions, biases and preferences.

Hazlitt recalls his favourite spot which he finds enchanting. Such feelings cannot be shared with others who may not value his admiration. A change of space can alter one's perspective. Thus there is a constant shifting of perspectives. When one moves on to other places, he finds a new world totally. When one re visits old places, he remembers those old memories of the same place. The destination is less important than the journey. When Hazlitt travels to foreign countries, he likes to have familiar human company. Hazlitt feels comfortable when he visits France where none speaks English. Everyone yearns to return to his homestead, no matter how much he enjoys travelling. In the conclusion, he says that if he can travel for life, he would still find another life to find his way back home.

An Earth Upon Heaven

Leigh Hunt

James Henry Leigh Hunt is a popular essayist and his essay 'An Earth Upon Heaven' is an interesting account of his imagined Heaven. The title is derived from his poem "A Heaven Upon Earth".

The writer wants to meet literary people like Francois, Horace, Charles Cotton, Andrew, Sir Richard Steels in heaven. He wants to discuss about their writings. According to him, there is no clear proof about heaven. People assume one can live thousand years in heaven. They can dine with friends and live freely like angel. He has chance to meet Berkely, Shakespeare, Fielding. They can talk about utopia , though Dante and Milton have written about heaven. But their accounts are not enough and so the writer wants to experience heavenly life in person, so that he can have a comprehensive view about heaven.

Heaven is different from the earth. He has no absolute faith in other's account about heaven. Also the writer wonders how he can spend his time in heaven. The writer has a strong faith in the immortality of the soul. Hence he believed that he can live there several years. The author has learnt from other sources that only good people are taken to heaven. But he says that he has no idea about second heaven. Since he has to live in the abode of heaven for many years, he realizes that he needs three things very badly. They are: friends, mistress and books. Also he wishes the weather to be conductive to his mood.

Leigh Hunt wants the company of his friends in heaven also. Only friends can give perfect joy and comfort for him in heaven. Hence he values the companionship of friends very much. Secondly he longs for a mistress. Only a woman can give perfect happiness for him in heaven. Hence he wants an angelic woman as his companion and a mistress. In the earth, keeping a mistress is considered to be a sin. But the writer feels that enjoying the company of a mistress is no longer a sin. Hence he admits such pleasure for himself in heaven also. Also, he expresses his expectation from his mistress in heaven. To him, the mistress must be a perfect beauty without any blemishes. He wants the mistress to share his love moments. Moreover, he wants the lady to roam about the heaven with him. He expects the mistress to be of angelic

character. The author needs a mistress, not for carnal pleasures, but to spend time together happily.

Next, Leigh Hunt being an intellectual and a creative writer wants books in heaven also. If there are no books in heaven, some literary men should come forward to write more books. Then the writer wants to have delicious breakfast in heaven. He needs a cup of tea in his breakfast in order to invigorate himself. But he wonders if he can have sugar to sweeten his tea. He raises doubts about the availability of sugar since none works in sugar fields. Everyone is free and so there is no possibility of manufacturing sugar. But he feels that there will be cow milk available in heaven since cow may be available in heaven. The writer imagines a lot of meadows in the landscape of heaven. Hence there may be cows in heaven. Thus the narrator is assured of happy and healthy life in heaven.

UNIT IV
LITERATURE AND SCIENCE

Arnold

“Literature and Science”, the two terms present in the Matthew Arnold’s essay are extremely diverse in their explanation. But Arnold, through the work tries to bring in a logical relation between them. He focuses in the gap between Science and Humanities in the 19th century when the industrial age had set in and the humanities did not matter to anyone.

In a practical world, philosophy does not have a strong grip. It is always termed as unpractical and impracticable. Having a minute observation of the essay we come to know that Arnold supports not only rational thinking as a part of education but also emphasizes on the knowledge of nature. He believes that the knowledge of nature is interesting to all men since the result of the scientific investigations of nature had a bearing on human life. At the very outset of the essay, Arnold seems to be supporting the practical people against the philosophies of Plato. Later on, he attempt to highlight the concept that the notion of the practical people is not worth supporting as all branches of knowledge are important and undoubtedly humanities are not an exception in this regard.

Supporting an unrestricted and objective criticism, Arnold implies that the prosperity of a society is dependent upon its intellectual life which is free from personal, political and practical considerations. From this implication of Arnold, a fact comes to light that intellectual attitude is not only sufficient but is should be rational as well as liberal. This fact undoubtedly proves that literature and science are internally like two sides of the same coin despite being different in external sense.

Arnold is totally against the idea of the practical people giving the sole importance to “Natural Sciences”, as the core of education. According to Arnold, “all knowledge is interesting and the concept of supporting natural science as the core of education can never be accepted. He pinpoints that the human life is built around powers (power of conduct, intellect, beauty, social life and manners) of which one has the need for giving more importance on humane letters

Arnold stresses that science discredits religion. Further, he adds that it is hard to show the relation between powers and humans without Belles letters.

To strengthen the connection between science and humanities / religion, he refers to a fine example of an egg and a chick. He says, “It is very interesting to know, that, from the albuminous white of the egg, the chick in the egg gets the materials for its flesh, bones, blood and feathers; white, from the fatty yolk of the egg, it gets the heat and energy which enable it at length to break its shell and begin the world”. To be more specific, the albuminous white of the egg refers to the knowledge of natural science and on the other hand the fatty yolk of the egg refers to the knowledge of nature. It establishes a clear cut concept of balancing science and humanities in a highly remarkable way.

To sum up, Arnold feels that humanities cannot in any way lose its position in the leading educational system despite repeated oppositions. According to Arnold literature or humanities is the base for “knowing the world and ourselves”. Moreover it would be incorrect to say that Arnold is strictly not in favour of natural science. Defending the significance of natural science, Arnold forwards a comment that to know the best of a modern nation does not mean just knowing their belles letters but we must acquaint ourselves with what has been done by Copernicus, Galileo, Newton, Darwin and so forth. Hence, Arnold feels that to cater humans with knowledge in true sense the connection between literature and science is undisputable.

ROOTS OF HONOUR

Ruskin

'Roots of Honour' was an essay written by John Ruskin. Here he deals with the idea that whether code of social action may be decided irrespective of the impact of social affection. He discusses about the ideal relationship between masters and workers. He rejects that notion that social affections are accidental and disturbing elements in human nature.

Though Stuart Mill, an exponent of political economy, advocates liberty, he observes that public opinion and law should work against increase in population. Ruskin agrees with Malthus who viewed the relation of population to means of subsistence. He opines that the former must out run the latter. Ricardo also agrees with the theory of Malthus.

These self styled political economists are rejected by Ruskin. These political economists believe that social affections are accidental. Desire of progress and avarice for material things are constant elements. These economists think that the inconstants should be removed and human being is to be conceived as a covetous machine. In order to obtain wealth, one should examine what laws of labour, purchase and sale operate in a society. These laws will allow each individual to introduce disturbing affections as he chooses. Thus he will be able to decide the impact of the new conditions.

Ruskin counters these economists on two grounds. First Ruskin thinks that the behavior of a man should be identified under constant condition. The causes of variations should be decided later. Elements of social affections do not function mathematically, but chemically. Unlike the other economists, Ruskin protests against the thought that human beings are machines. He argues by using images taken from chemistry and human anatomy. The use of pure nitrogen is not a manageable one. When one deals with its fluorides, it can create danger to us. Likewise, progress at the cost of the negation of a soul is dangerous. Ruskin views that human issues cannot be dissolved by mathematical precision. This theory cannot be applied to the problem of the workers.

All the major economists are silent about the relationship between masters and employees. Nobody reconciles these two opposite parties. Ruskin believes that there is no

antagonism between them. 'Balance of Justice' can create a cordial relationship between them. It means an emotional relationship between them. The motivating power of a worker in his soul which is an invisible one. This motivating force involves the spirit of a man. It gains strength by its own proper feeling. He sums up his argument saying that their relationship be based on affection, as there is no hostility between them.

Ruskin advocates equality of wages. Wages should not be fixed on terms of their nature of work. A master must choose a good worker. A bad worker should not be allowed to take the place of a good worker. He rejects competition for the sake of insufficient sum. Good worker should get satisfaction, but not feel proud in his higher wages.

In every society, one can find the soldier, the pastor, the physician, the lawyer and the merchant. All these professionals are expected to play their roles honestly. The merchant should supply pure commodities to the citizens. He wonders what social pressure can be exercised against a dishonest person.

A society can be changed only when an individual changes. Personal honesty leads to social honesty. Ruskin's theory is based on ethical code of life. Ruskin does not turn down individual's right to run industries. He wants an ethical code as a core of all social and financial endeavours.

UNIT V

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

A.G. Gardiner

A.G. Gardiner's essay on George Bernard Shaw highlights the unique characteristics of Shaw and his personality. Shaw is noted for his gibes and cynical remarks.

Shaw's speech was like the hurry of a wind, keen as a razor. Both his body and mind are trained to gallop. Gardiner compares him to a hurricane on two legs. His satires are like that of a scorpion's bite. Though his plays are mostly satirical, people enjoy them. Shaw is an ascetic by temperament. A.G. Gardiner once invited Shaw and Shaw does not take meat. He never smoked and drank alcohol. According to Shaw, competitive commerce is greedy and merciless. He considers religion as an 'organised hypocrisy'. Justice based on revenge is called punishment. Any empire is based on violence. He is an atheist and he criticized the social system.

Gardiner observes that Shaw has the gift of being unpleasant. People cultivate the art of polite falsity as they do not like to give pain to others. People displease others only at their back, not in front of them. Shaw is happy in giving pain to others as it does well for others. He never complimented anyone except himself. In the Fabian society, he expresses his displeasure whenever he listens to the boring speech at anyone. He is frank and open minded; "It cleans the air. It tears away the cloak of shams and confronts us with the naked realities", He loves to be feared, like that of a old maiden. Shaw insists on order and discipline. Hence he cannot tolerate the dull, unimaginative English who are full of illusions and false sentiments.

Though Shaw is similar to Jonathan Swift, another English satirist, Shaw is never a hater of mankind. Shaw scorns all their follies, sentimentalities and superstitions. He has no respect for established social norms and religion practices. Shaw wants to promote an age of pure reason as he believes intellect shall remove all the tangles in life and men. He trusts in Science and utility system. Shaw give priority to materiality to spirituality. Shaw finds everything sharp and clear and without atmosphere. His satires are pungent and chilling like the east wind.

While there is a 'terrible smile' in the face of Swift, Shaw has a smile of 'sardonic sanity'. Shaw can see through all cherished hypocrisies and he can freeze up all emotions by his

sarcasm. He targets all English snobbishness and smug self satisfaction, and blind superstition. There is a serious purpose behind his iconoclasm. In order to present the reality, he breaks the false illusion. Shaw claims himself greater than Shakespeare. He does not acknowledge the superiority of the English society. He wishes the free air of a common life blow over everywhere.

Shaw's concern is not limited to any particular home, but it is expanded to city. He has strong faith in socialism. According to Shaw, poverty and illness were the only punishable crimes. Shaw believes that money is the most important thing in the world. For him, money represents honour, health and strength. Poverty means weakness, meanness and ugliness. Poverty is the root of sin. He attracts people with his jest and then he preaches his sermon with satire.

Shaw is able to laugh at his own self. He owns up his poverty during his childhood days. He lived on his parent's income and then he married his wife for money. Gardiner describes his wit as swift as a lightning. At the same time, it is happy as a bird's song. He accepts any criticism from his audience for his plays. Shaw has worked a revolution in the field of drama. He has made the English drama the vehicle of ideas. He is against romantic love because of his asceticism. He condemns the law due to his passion for justice. He holds the social system responsible for sickness of mind. Shaw's prefaces are powerful political writings.

Gardiner describes Shaw's writings as 'the tonic of his time'. Though it tastes bitter, it clears the confused minds. Shaw depends in his intellect. He is more assertive of his opinions. A.G. Gardiner observes that Shaw must have a sensitive heart behind that scornful smile. But Shaw is ashamed to reveal that side. It is evident in his fine words: "I want to be thoroughly used up when I die, for the harder I work, the more I live".

A.G. Gardiner's essay on Bernard Shaw is very illuminating and informative. He brings out all the positive and negative aspects of a great personality G.G. Shaw. It is a psychological study of a genius who has many unique qualities.

A Day in the Life of a Tramp

Orwell

‘A Day in the Life of a Tramp’ is an essay by George Orwell, which exposes the hopeless life of tramps.

Orwell attempts to subvert the common misconceptions about tramps. There are many myths associated with the life of tramps. One such myth is that tramps are inherently dangerous people. Usually school children are taught by their parents to keep distance from tramps, as they are conceived to be blackguards. Orwell observes that there is no truth in such myths. People develop such misconception as they believe that vagrancy is an odd phenomenon.

Orwell makes a relevant question here. He asks why tens of thousands of people migrate to other parts of countries when there are ample chances for jobs and shelter in their own countries. Vagrancy is not due to laziness or abstinence. It is due to the law. In England only men are allowed one night stay. It means they have to keep moving on, day after day, night after night for no valid reason.

Orwell’s arguments may seem clear on the surface level, but the fact that he has to make them all at all levels how entrenched misconceptions about the poor really are. This myth regarding tramps continues unquestioned till their adulthood. Then these adult pass on these misconceptions to their progeny. Thus they ensure their generations grow up with misconceptions about the poor. Orwell’s aim is to deconstruct such misconceptions about the poor.

The stereotypes surrounding tramps do not hold up to the most shallow of inquiries. Most people trust that tramps are monsters. If they were dangerous, would casual wards admit them by the hundreds every night? Orwell argues that tramps are timid, broken spirited creatures. They can be easily bullied by the casual wardens. Moreover, tramps are not drunkards. Alcohol is too expensive for them to drink. Besides, they neither are nor hardened moochers. They are deeply ashamed of their impoverished condition. Most of them change their residence with working class people if they are physically able. Orwell defends the tramps by stating that they are ordinary people brought to such unfortunate condition due to their bad luck and circumstances.

A tramp is doomed to life of hunger and celibacy. Tramps remain bachelors as no woman is attracted to him because of his poverty or purposeless life. Since he has no wife, he can aspire for a prostitute by paying her. Sexual starvation runs the psyche of a tramp, as lack of food. Deprived of the chance to start a family, the tramp becomes abnormal. Eventually, he often resorts to homosexuality and rape in order to satisfy her sexual urges.

Orwell points out that men tramp outnumber female tramps. Unlike men, women always have the option of improving their financial status through marriage.

English Snobbery

Aldous Huxley

In 'English Snobbery' written by Aldous Huxley he discusses the interesting subject of snobbery. This essay does not have any moral principle, but it familiarises with a new subject in applicable to many people in the world. Huxley was an intellectual and a pioneer of modern thought and philosophy.

There are all kinds of people and all kinds of snobberies so that there is nothing in the world about which people cannot be snobbish. It is impossible to find a leprosy snob as none wants to suffer from it. There is a good number of people who are diseased snobs. There are examples of young men and women who are T.B. Snobs. They think that it would be quite romantic if he dies of tuberculosis while they are in the prime of their youth.

The sad part of it is that the end of these T.B. Snobs is not as romantic as they imagine. There are rich people who seem to conceive the idea that they suffer from many disease. Consequently, they run to many doctors to cure their imaginary diseases. The author comments that these snobs have no diseases, but over-eating. They eat more than they can digest and so they feel that they are suffering from many ailments.

The author identifies many fashions in snobberies also. Old snobberies become out dated and in its place, there comes new ones. In the previous period, people used to be snobbish about their family and ancestry. But now, that trend is declining. New culture snobbery has emerged, though it is resisted by subalterns. Quite recently, there is booze snobbery and mostly youths from 15 to 70 are found drunk in private parties. France is known for fine wines and its fine flavor. But the low class people influenced others and so the taste for fine wine is being replaced by strong alcoholic drinks.

One cannot say that modernity snobbery is a new phenomenon as it has existed in the past also. Modernity snobs discard old things and purchase the new arrivals in the market. These new things are created by machines. These snobs are the best friends of the modern industry producers. The factory owners manufacture new latest things that cannot last for long period. This modernity snobbery is much prevalent in our times.

Huxley points out yet another snobbery that is art snobbery. These art snobs can be classified into two types. They are platonic, and the unplatonic. The platonic snobs admire artistic work and never purchase art objects. But the unplatonic snob buys the artistic work in order to keep it as a status symbol. For them it is a commodity which shows their wealth. These snobs are modernity snobs as well. They boast themselves as patrons of modern art. Without understanding the value of the art object, they simply possess them. In a way, these modern snobs are a great source of revenue for the new art painters.

As for the value of snobberies, it depends largely on the altitude of its practitioners. If they consider that the entire world is but an illusion, then all snobberies are meaningless. It depends upon one's attitude. But many people strike a balance between these two extremes. Those who value some

snobberies as good, they can promote such snobberies. Every snob is a promoter of one snobbery or the other.

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