

1. Romeo and Juliet

- **Comment on the imagery of 'night-day, black-white' in the poem what purpose do they serve?**

Shakespeare has widely used 'Light and dark' imagery throughout the play 'Romeo and Juliet'. These images of 'night - day', 'black - white' brings out Duality, Moral Dilemma of two star-crossed lovers, who were not destined to be together.

It can be interpreted in many ways. Firstly both Romeo and Juliet see each other as 'light' in 'darkness' that surrounds them. Again Romeo and Juliet's love is a ray of light in the midst of the darkness of hatred, rivalry, enmity around them. Romeo describes Juliet as being like the sun, brighter than a torch, a jewel sparkling in the night, a dazzling diamond in the ear of the 'black' African and a bright angel among dark clouds. Even when she lies apparently dead in the tomb, Romeo says 'her beauty makes this vault a feasting presence full of light'. Juliet describes Romeo as "day in night" and "Whiter than snow upon a raven's back".

This contrast of 'black and white' can be expanded as symbols of contrasting love and hate, youth and age in a metaphoric way. It also brings out the love that emerges between two belonging to the feuding families, which are torn apart between 'loyalty to family' or 'loyalty to love'. Moreover genuine true love and goodness of two true hearts gets unveiled in 'night', while all of the feuding, bloodshed is done in broad 'daylight'. Inner darkness of the family feud is finally outdone by brightness of true love. At the end, all characters of the play recognise their folly in the light of truthfulness and true love and tragic end of Romeo and Juliet. How true love withstands all obstacles, how it has the power and potentiality to transform Night into Day / Black into White is effectively brought out through this imagery.

2. Too Dear

- Leo Tolstoy

- **How do the actions of the kinglet of Monaco establish that he lacks moral scruples?**

Through his short story 'Too Dear', Leo Tolstoy satirically comments upon the loopholes of our judicial system, and the low moral values of the Administrators.

Monaco was a little kingdom near France and Italy. Even this toy kingdom had a 'Kinglet' who totally lacked moral scruples. Even though it was a tiny kingdom, the kinglet spent the public money to maintain 'a palace, courtiers, ministers, a bishop, generals and an army'. The king had his 'coronation', his 'levees'. He spent time on convening councils, rewarding, declaring sentences and pardons.

All that mattered to this kinglet was 'Money'. He was not satisfied with the money that he got from general taxes like those on tobacco, wine, spirits, poll tax etc. He did

not hesitate to earn a special revenue through immoral way. Even though many European countries had stopped running Gaming Houses, the kinglet of Monaco remained with a monopoly of the business of 'Roulette'. The keeper of Roulette or Gaming House would always get a percentage on the turnover, whether the people, who play, win or lose. Out of his profit, he pays a large sum to the kinglet. The kinglet of Monaco knew it was a dirty business. But he strongly believed in the policy 'You can't earn stone palaces by honest labour' without caring for the evil consequences of Gambling on the player and his family, he went on raking in the money.

Moreover, the way the kinglet dealt with the murderer, bears evidence to establish the fact that the kinglet of Monaco was without moral scruples. The king should have had the criminal executed immediately after the verdict. The kinglet was not ready to spend on 'guillotine' or for hiring an executioner. 16,000 francs, which French Government quoted, sounds too high for the kinglet. Later he contacted the Italian Government, which demanded 12,000 francs and that too was rejected by the kinglet as he felt it was an unnecessary burden on the Royal Exchequer. The man who spent lavishly on pomp and show to maintain his 'kingly status', was now considering and re-considering about the much needed legal action to be taken. He failed to understand 'Justice delayed is Justice denied.....'.

Again he made commission, committee, sub-committee to re-consider and finally he reduced Death sentence to Life imprisonment. The kinglet agreed for this proposal just because it would come cheaper. Though there was not a suitable prison, somehow they managed to find a place and placed a guard to watch the criminal and to fetch his food from the palace kitchen. The kinglet later found this expenditure also heavy i.e. 600 francs a year. Moreover as the criminal was a young fellow, there was likelihood of his living for another 50 years. Spending such an amount on a criminal became highly objectionable for the kinglet, who doesn't mind whiling away money of the people for his personal prestige.

Now he convenes the meeting of his ministers and stoops to the extent of dismissing the guard so that the criminal would run away. As against his hope, the prisoner doesn't show any sign of running away. On the contrary, he argues against running away when the Minister openly suggests him. Now the kinglet is left with no option but to offer the criminal a pension of 600 francs. The kinglet accepting this suggestion is a clear evidence for his lack of moral scruples. It is totally unbecoming of an administrator to grudge expenses to punish a criminal or to haggle, make compromise regarding the due punishment to be given to any criminal. This kinglet goes on changing his decisions just to curtail expenses at the cost of justice. His immorality reaches to its height when he even accepts rewarding a criminal by offering him pension instead of administering befitting punishment to the criminal.

Thus Leo Tolstoy, the well known Russian writer, comments upon the administration and judicial system, which fails to understand the necessity of delivering justice and imposing punishment immediately. True administration lies in the fact of deliverance of justice without any delay. It is ridiculous to note some governments do not hesitate to extend royal treatment to the guilty/ criminals instead

of immediately executing the punishment decided by the court. Any amount of cost/price would be too less compared to due justice delivered on right time. Moreover, he gives a message that the leader should not squander the public money to maintain their false prestige. Leo Tolstoy also conveys the idea that no ruler should adopt any immoral means of earning money. Source of revenue should be morally right and socially acceptable.

3. ON CHILDREN

Notes and Comments

- Kahlil Gibran

- Longing : desire
- They itself : Life's desire for continuity takes the form of your sons and daughters. Posterity is personified.
- They come You : The parents are just instrumental in giving birth to children, bringing them to the world and in continuity of life.
- You may souls : You may provide shelter, upbringing and protect their physical bodies. However you cannot have any right / access / right over their inner souls. Neither on their way of thinking, their spirituality or philosophy.
- Their souls dwell ...dreams : The off springs belong to next Generation .
Their thoughts , ideas belong to future.
- Tarry (V) : Stay, remain, lodge in a place, remain stagnant, confined to a moment / place
- Archer : God.
- The Archer stable : In this scheme of life, parents are like bows. The omnipotent Archer bends the bows in such a way that the offsprings who like arrows, may go farthest possible in the path of Infinity. The parents must understand the fact that they must bridge the generation gap, give way to new thoughts, new vision of life. Gladly they must be ready for this compromise, for the bending. God loves equally both his new creations, which he wishes to fly high and the bows (parents) that would remain stable and supportive.
- This wonderful poem is really beyond its times and is a must read for every parents.
- Our children are not our ways and means to get over the imperfections in our own life. They have come through us for a purpose of their own and some of them are very different from their parents.....in thoughts, attitudes and in wishes and the like.....

[For instance, If the Buddha were like his parents, we would not have had him or his teachings to guide us].

- Each one is created to chart out one's own path and not any one of us resembles the other. God, Nature are so brilliant that we cannot find even one fingerprint resembling another, so where is the question of life or life paths?
- We parents can offer opinions or choices but free will should always be the way we allow them to grow and transcend what personality we are, no matter how good we may be. They are our future and the future cannot be stagnant with the past. It can

only refer to the past, but not carry baggages of the past. The future can only be better and bright as every new being strives for excellence, for perfection.

- We have to stretch the limits of our thinking and living in order to enable them to move ahead, much beyond what we have.

- According to the prophet, what attitude should parents have towards their children? What does the metaphor bows and arrows signify? What message does the poem convey about upbringing of children? Discuss.

This wonderful poem by Kahlil Gibran is really beyond its time and is a must read for every parent, elders, teachers and the society in general, who are involved in bringing up children.

Many parents are too possessive about their children. They try to impose their ideas on their kids, apparently without even sparing a glance as to what the child actually wants. Many parents deem their children to be their ways and means get over the imperfections in their life. Most of them want their children to achieve what they could not, to become what they could not be. Is that what children are for?

Parents must realise each child is unique. No person truly belongs to another, no child can be replica of the parent. Each person is formed by the era in which birth occurs - 'life's longing' for the future. They have come through the parents for a purpose of their own. They have to be different from their parents in thoughts, attitudes, wishes and the like. Each one of us have to chart out our own paths. God and Nature are so brilliant that we cannot find even one fingerprint resembling another, so where is the question of life pattern or life paths?

Through a series of 'Paradoxical' statements, the prophet Kahlil Gibran makes the parents understand that they cannot own them, they cannot claim their right over them. Parents must only give them love but not their thoughts. Parents can offer opinions as choices, but should allow them to grow with free will. We must allow them to grow and transcend what personality we are, no matter how good we may be. The parents must not try to control their inner souls. Children are the future and the future cannot be stagnant with the past. It can only refer to the past, but not carry baggages of the past. Every parent must accept the starking reality that though the children inherit their genes, they are yet separate from their father and mother. According to the prophet, every parent has to stretch the limits of their thinking, their life - style in order to make their children move beyond, move ahead. The next generation will surely respect any adult, when they feel that the elders deserve it due to their thoughts, ethos, fundamental values that the elders adhere to, which have become a foundation for the Next Gen's character. That is the day that any parent should be proud that the parenting, upbringing of the child has been good.

The prophet Kahlil Gibran, very effectively, has used the metaphors of Archer - bow - arrow in his poem 'On Children'. The prophet strikes a comparison among God - Parents - Children by using these metaphors. The person who casts the arrow, wants it to go to a certain targetted place. The archer cannot make it go unless the bow he holds is stable. The parents are the 'bows' in the hands of archer 'God', the Almighty. The parents, hence, must not get shaken, when they are compelled to pave way for new thought accept new vision/ perspective of life, bend or yield to cater to the modern demands and pressure. They must gladly be ready for this sacrifice, this compromise even though it hurts. The Omnipotent 'Archer' bends the 'bows' in such a way that the off springs like 'arrows', may

go farthest possible in the path of Infinity. The parents must always bear in mind that now their role is to be stable and Supportive. For God loves equally his new creations, which he wishes to fly high and the parents, who gladly bridge the generation gap, as well. Here the poet gives a Message to 'X GEN' i.e. the children that life is a full circle. We must discharge our duties as per the need of the hour. Today's arrows have to be tomorrow's bows. So the children have to be cautious while dealing with parents, elders. They must avoid hurting their feelings, showing disrespect to the elders. They must avert offending the parents and defying the norms as much as possible so that 'the bending' of the 'bows' viz. parents would be more easy and they can extend more support to the children.

4. EVERYTHING I NEED TO KNOW I LEARNED IN THE FOREST _____ VANDANA SHIVA

- What is meant by eco-apartheid? How does the principle of 'Earth Democracy' advocated by Vandana Shiva help to eradicate eco-apartheid?

'Apartheid' means the policy of discrimination. Differentiating between one person and the other on the basis of race is 'Apartheid'. From the days of Abraham Lincoln, Gandhiji to Nelson Mandela, many had fought against this inhuman tendency of depriving others of their right and status. However the prominent South African Environmentalist CORMAC CULLINAN points out that today what we have to fight against is 'Eco-apartheid'.

'Eco-apartheid' refers to the separateness of human beings from nature. We, the human beings regard the mankind as the superior race. We believe that we can do anything from indiscriminate felling of trees to endless killing of other species. We forget the basic truth that the human beings too are an 'inseparable part of the nature'. In our minds and lives, we completely ignore the fact that other living beings too are 'the Rightful Inheritors of the Earth'. This attitude of being superior and damaging our surrounding, causing imbalance in the Natural Cycle is Eco-apartheid.

'Earth Democracy' advocated by Mrs. Vandana Shiva, the environmentalist and social activist, aims at eradicating 'Eco-apartheid'. The Earth University set up by Vandana Shiva at 'Navadanya' in the Doon valley, upholds Earth Democracy. Democracy is equality. Democracy upholds equal rights, social justice, equal status and opportunities to one and all. The 'Earth Democracy' thus means the recognition of rights of other species. It means the belief in the freedom for all species to evolve within the web of life. It teaches us, as members of the Earth family, we must recognize, protect and respect the rights of other living beings. Thus 'Earth Democracy' is a shift from 'anthropocentrism' to 'eco-centrism'. That is to say considering 'the earth' as the most prominent, rather than 'the race of the man'. Life revolves around the 'Nature' rather than 'the men'.

- What does the Nature teach us? How does Tagore's vision and the ancient India's wisdom prove that 'conservation of diversity is crucial for the sustenance of both nature and human society'? Discuss.

Nature, is indeed, the best teacher. Most importantly, it teaches us 'enoughness'. It teaches us to enjoy the gifts of nature without exploitation and accumulation. No species in a forest appropriates the share of another species. They never show the greed of possession. Even a plant or tree uses the fertility of the soil and absorbs the water only in the proportion required

for its survival. The Nature teaches us how to avoid 'greed over the need', how to end consumerism, how to end violence and live in harmony and above all 'the joy of living'.

The Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore in his essay 'Tapovan' briefs how from ancient times, India has realized the significance of forest. The peace of the forest has always helped the intellectual evolution of man. India's best spiritual and philosophical ideas have come when man was in communion with trees and rivers and lakes..... . The unifying principle of life in diversity, of democratic pluralism which the Nature teaches us, became the fundamental principle of Indian civilization.

It is this unity in diversity, which is the basis of both ecological sustainability and democracy. Both Nature and culture depend on unity in diversity. The forest is a unity in its diversity and we are united with nature through our relationship with the forest. Tagore, in his writings, presents the Nature 'as the source of knowledge and freedom, a source of beauty and joy, source of art and aesthetics, of harmony and perfection'. He opines the forest teaches us union and compassion.

Thus conservation of diversity is a pre-requisite for sustenance of Nature. Any destruction or damage to the nature, would invariably result in damaging the mankind. Only by being one with the Nature, only by considering ourselves to be a tiny part of the nature, the human beings can evolve a strong culture. It is the duty of every human being to preserve, conserve bio-diversity without which both Nature and human society would perish. The very survival of our culture entirely depends on conservation of bio-diversity.

6. When you are old

- W. B. YEATS (1865-1939)

Notes & Comments:

William Butler Yeats, born in Dublin on June 13, 1865, was an Irish poet. He met the love of his life, an Irish lady MAUDE GONNE. Unfortunately, She did not reciprocate his love and married Major John Mac Bridge in 1903. William Yeats wrote many love - poems which has immortalised his love for Maude Gonne. The present poem too is dedicated to her. The speaker who is younger and is in love, visualises about ageing. He depicts how his love will remain steadfast and stable even when the woman would grow older, her physical beauty vanishes. True love never depends on physical appearance. Permanence, genuinity, purity, divinity and the depth of his intense love is depicted through beautiful images and effective Figures of speech in the poem "When you are old.....".

- **Old and gray** : aged and devoid of beauty. 'gray' indicates dull, gloomy; It also means lacking lustre, brightness, light. The theme of ageing and leading monotonous / sad/ lonely dull life is suggested.
- **Full of sleep** : imagining Gonne as she is close to death.
- **Nodding** : moving head up and down. Here may be because of ageing and weakness.
- **Book** : a metaphor used to refer to old memories. It may also mean a book which he is writing now.
- **Dream..... deep** : The dazzle in her bright eyes which she has now, becomes only a part memory of the past.
- **Slowly read** : Organic imagery - gesture of reading is understood.
- **Glad grace** : majestic beauty, Physical charm, magnetism and charisma of one's personality.

- **When you are Deep** ; Yeats in writing this poem is still a relatively young man who has been rejected by the love of his life. He envisions her reading his book of poems again in her old age. He seems to be teasing (gently / unkind) her about the beauty she will have lost when she reads this in the future.
- **How.... true** : The speaker comments about the numerous admirers, crazy young men who wanted to impress her. There had been many young suitors who had deep feelings / passion for her, lovers who might have nurtured true or false love towards her.
- **The pilgrim soul** : the inner questing soul. The actual inner beauty of her that prevailed upon her heart, soul. Rebellious soul, restless soul, The soul which will be always in quest of something meaningful and worthwhile.
- **Loved the..... face** : In contrast with the ones who loved her looks and charms, he was the only one, who continued to love her as she aged and faced ups and down of life.
- **Bending down beside the glowing bars**: When she turns old she would sit drooping down by the side of the fire place which is full of glowing coal which make the railings or bars of the framework to shine / sparkle. Here Yeats continues the fire imagery used from the beginning of the poem to suggest the flames of Maude Gonne's youth have died down to become only glowing bars.
 - Bar may also refer to this poetry. (bars-measures of yeats' poetry-metre)
 - Murmur : to speak softly, stealthily.
 - How love fled crowd of stars : Yeats personified their love as wandering around mountains and flying out to the unreachable stars, as it is lost forever.
 - Pace upon : Wander around.
 - hid.... stars : love gets immortalized amidst the stars. Love is personified and presented here fleeing away and getting lost (hidden) amidst the stars.

7. THE GARDENER

- P. Lankesh

- What does the story tell us about human nature? How does the reference to Russia and America provide another dimension to the story?

Through the multiple narratives the renowned writer P Lankesh unveils the mystery of human relationships in the story of 'The Gardener'. It is evident that P. Lankesh has succeeded in the challenging task of compressing the complex drama of human life into the small frame of a short story.

The old man narrates the story of Tammanna and Basavaiah. It is nature of human beings to aspire for onething or the other. Man goes on possessing wealth, land, education, comforts, luxuries and so on. Later greed takes over need and the men strat striving for name, fame, reputation, prestige even through abstract forms of art. Unknowingly he takes pleasure in having more and more number of rivals, enemies in pursuit of becoming "Numero Uno". Sometimes, the enmity, vengefulness becomes 'raison-d'etre'- the very reason for existence, when this unending quench for 'One-up-manship' reaches to fever-pitch.

Basavaiah and Tammanna start competing with each other by buying acres of land, making friends and by increasing the number of servants and the like. However their rivalry gets intensified as days pass by and finally there would be no land left in the village. Finally Tammanna becomes the owner of One Thousand acres and Basavaiah owns eight hundred. When Tammanna rejects the feelers sent by Basavaiah to get 200 acres sold, the furious Basavaiah encroaches on Tammanna's land and builds a fence. Equally infurious Tammanna searches a new method to annihilate Basavaiah completely.

Now Tammanna takes his enmity to a higher level from visible to invisible area. He starts composing and singing ballads that convey the cruelty and meanness of Basavaiah. What commences as a deliberate attempt to ignore and look down upon his rival, [Tammanna unknowingly gets so much engrossed in promoting Art that it] becomes now obsession. The writer shows here how the human nature gets mesmerized with the enchanting world of Fine Arts.

On the otherhand, having failed to cope up with the raising reputation of Tammanna as a poet, Basavaiah goes on shrinking in humiliation. He attempts to show off his pelf and power. After having built a palatial mansion, he goes on inviting scholars, poets and musicians to his home. Meanwhile, he derives sadist pleasure when he learns that Tammanna is sick. He feels his spirits would revive now as 'Tammanna's disease was Basavaiah's health'.

At this juncture the writer discloses how enigmatic, how mysterious human nature can be. Tammanna thinks of encashing on his own ill-health to belittle and destroy Basavaia. He thinks of going to the next level by discarding his body to immortalise his poetry and thereby to immortalise his rivalry against Basavaiah. He leaves all his belongings behind and goes away to lead a life of anonymity, obscurity - Basavaiah, whose life's very reason had become rivaling with Tammanna, finds his life meaningless. Unable to bear the vacuum in his life, he passes way. His death leaves Tammanna to be reflective and makes him realize futility of his enmity and how he had wasted all his life, time, energy. He forgets his art and becomes a non-entity.

Thus the story tells us complexity of human nature, how the man goes on living for some revenge / aim or the other, facing one challenge or the other. When a man is obsessed with some passion, be it even hatred towards someone, he is not amenable to any advice. The story also depicts how the poisonous seed of enmity / hatred destroys completely the one who nourishes it and even the one against whom it is nurtured.

The reference to Russia and America provides another dimension to the story. Not only human beings, even many countries too waste their time, energy, money in rivalling against another country, without realising futility of enmity. 'The cold war' between the U.S.A. and the former U.S.S.R. is a classic example of such rivalry and hatred. After the II World War, the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. went on proving their supremacy over other countries of the world. They didn't leave any stone unturned to supercede each other. If one spent on Defence, the other invested heavily on producing arms and ammunities. Both rivalled in the realms of popularising their political principles, possessing nuclear weapons, sending space-ships, supporting chosen third world countries and the like. America didn't even spare the abstract domain of Art. In all earlier James Bond Movies, the villains used to be from Russia. U.S.A. used to project the USSR in bad taste and as the destroyer of entire world. This was almost like Tammanna using 'Ballads'.

However, by 1991, due to economic crisis, internal problems and because of pro-democratic attitude, the countries within former U.S.S.R got disintegrated. Russia completely withdrew herself from rat-race of rivalry. Like Basavaiah, America was suddenly deviod of its very reason to survive. With the emergence of Non- Alignment countries, SAARC etc, America's undue power got weakened. It is an altogether different matter that 'the Big Brother' later started concentrating on strengthening its hold over Gulf-countries and stealthily supporting terrorist outfits, other countries like Pakistan to rival against their so called 'enemy-countries'.

P. Lankesh, through this story of Basavaiah and Tammanna, seems to sensitise the readers, nations against cut-throat competition, destructive enmity, and futility of rivalry. How several countries have been wasting huge amount of money on manufacturing lethal weapons, carrying out their rivalry, waging wars against 'enemy countries' instead of solving immediate burning problems in lieu of addressing the grievances and issues of its citizens - in the name of cold-blooded rivalry - is hinted by the writer. The story draws attention towards nations like North Korea and South Korea, Syria and Lebanon, Iraq and Kuwait, India and Pakistan and many more, who get engrossed in useless hatred, rivalry which would finally annihilate both the rival parties. The story raises the question how ethical, logical and fruitful is this rivalry? What moral right any person or country has to waste all its resources on futile enmity? Can't we make this world - a better place to live in - if we just keep aside our false prestige, differences of opinion, suppress negativity of hatred and jealousy? Why can't the rival nations realise the urgency to live amicably, harmoniously with mutual respect and space for one another.....?

'The Gardner' basically presents how the growing vengeance against his neighbor Tammanna sustains Basavaiah. But when the object of his wrath is gone, the meaning of existence is lost for his rival. However the reference to Russia and America, as shown above, raises the story to another plane, cautioning contemporary rival Countries.

8. TO THE FOOT FROM ITS CHILD

-PABLO NERUDA

- Foot : Different connotations. (surreal poem, wherein a symbol stands for many ideas)
- Bulge: Swell
- Butterfly: insect with colourful wings
- opaque : not transparent
- quartz : a hard mineral / substance.
- Defeated : conquered
- Condemned: doomed
- Petaled : shaped like flower petals
- Calloused : hard and thickened
- Coarsening : growing hard /rough
- respite: a short period of rest
- Childs' toes compared to a flower : Like the petals of some flowers, a child's toes are tiny, soft, rounded, tender, pink(rosy)
- The child's foot..... foot: An infant's foot has no experience of what it means to be a foot.

Comparing and Contrasting (Line 17 to 22)

CHILDS' FOOT	ADULT'S FOOT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not aware it's a foot • Wants to be a butterfly or an apple • Soft nail of quartz • Tiny petaled toes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knows it cannot fly • Knows it can't be a fruit • Nails bunched together / grew hard and changed themselves / into opaque substance. • Hard as a horn • Grew bunched and out of trim

- **Alliteration : (lines 37 & 39) mines, markets, ministries : emphasizes the wide range of daily activities.**
Find out other alliteration : “world on in own way”
 “ hard as horn”
 “knew nothing”
- **Foot: as a metaphor for life. (Soul)**
- **Neruda’s view of life and death – In death, the foot becomes like it was at birth, seemingly full of possibilities. It might now become a butterfly or an apple. Perhaps Neruda is saying that life and death are part of a continuous circle.**
- **Theme : The freedom of childhood is lost when a person becomes an adult and faces a life of constant work and struggle. Life takes away people’s free spirits until they are freed again by death.**
- **Stanza – Vivid images**
- **Imprisonment in a shoe – transformed it from a beautiful form into a warped and ugly one.**
- **Time shift within poem – is, wants, go, can fly, can be, was defeated, fell, was**
- **Authors’ craft : Ordering of images and ideas, choices, rhythm, structure**
- **Literary Elements : imagery, figurative language, theme. Visual and sound devices.**
- **The speaker might be a teacher, philosopher, older man teaching a lesson in ‘life’s harsh realities’.**
- **Written from the perspective of a foot**
- **Theme : Adults, Society and the world sully (damage /stain / discredit) children’s dreams and creativity. Sully (v)= damage purity or reputation**
- **Mood / tone : sad but hopeful.**
- **As and when one grows, an individual gets crushed with weight of customs and traditions. Chained and bowed down by the heaviness of social patterns. Taboos are imposed. Incapacitated –we get jaded. Oppressed by the society. Creativity, Individuality gets suppressed Loss of imagination power, spirit of enthusiasm.**

Notes and Comments for Quick Reference

Notes and Comments:

- **The child... apple: The soul doesn’t know yet how it is to lead be a man’s life. The child is not yet aware of hardships of life.**
- **But in time.... Branch: The spirit, enthusiasm, colorful dreams, imaginative power, vision of a child is taken away by harsh realities of life-its impediments, obstacles, ups and down. Challenges dries down all the probabilities, possibilities of a child’s realizing its dreams.**
- **Then.... In a shoe: How life gets stuck in the social system... how a child’s freedom, fertile imaginative power is crushed.... How a child is doomed to get imprisoned in the social pattern -> imprisonment of a free spirit is depicted.**
- **Bit by.... Blind man: Directionless- aimless life is symbolised. Just like a foot in a shoe without its partner, just like a blind man, we fail to see what we desire to see..... our perception of life is partial and incomplete.**
- **These soft nails of quartzaccept: how sensitivity, softness, tender goodness of a child gets transformed into hard, opaque, distorted evil self.... Images in contrast.**

- But this blind thing..... to stop: unending, tiring way of life.... Chasing one dream after another..... monotony, humdrum of commonplace life.... Never give up attitude..... Journey of life..... till it comes to halt.....
- And then..... An apple: Soul gets released, when the body perishes and gets buried. It hardly comes to know that it is no more confined to the former body (system). At death, once again possibilities of realizing dreams and reaching heights emerge. Now soul (spirit) is free to bloom in any shape, get re-born in any form..... (old, outdated social system has to give way for new pattern). Birth and death are parts of the same cycle. Theme of reincarnation is conveyed.

1. What does the foot want at first?
It wants to be a butterfly or an apple.
2. What defeats the foot, making it a prisoner?
The foot is defeated by earth's roughness and is imprisoned in a shoe.
3. Why does the foot grow coarse and hard?
It toils inside the hard case of the shoe.
4. What does the foot do throughout life?
It walks without stopping.
5. By the poem's end, why has it 'ceased to be a foot'?
When the person dies, the foot loses both awareness and human identity.
6. What immediate effect did life in a shoe have on the foot?
It lost touch with life, became blind.
7. What long-term effects did it have?
It became deformed, coarsened and robotic.

TO THE FOOT FROM ITS CHILD

-PABLO NERUDA

COMPREHENSION II (Page 75)

1. We think of a foot as belonging to a person; but Neruda says 'To the Foot from its child'. Why?

Pablo Nerada uses the word 'Foot' metaphorically to indicate 'life' in this poem. Undoubtedly, foot belongs to a person. However Neruda presents the journey of life from childhood to adulthood from the perspective of a 'Foot' here in this poem. The speaker of this poem, who might be a teacher, philosopher, an elderly person teaches a lesson in 'life's harsh realities'. As every human being is the new form of life, 'a child of life', Neruda has appropriately said 'To the foot from its child' as 'Foot' is used as a metaphor to symbolize 'life'. Neruda unveils the journey of 'soul' or 'life' by using 'Foot' as the metaphor.

3. What contrasting descriptions of the foot does the poem offer? Why?

The two major stages of life i.e. childhood and adulthood is presented by the poet by two contrasting descriptions of the foot in the poem 'To the Foot from its child'.

The poet Pablo Neruda gives the description of a child's Foot at the beginning. He describes the Child's Foot is 'not yet aware it's a foot' denoting the innocence of the child. He says, 'it wants to be a butterfly or an apple' brings out the fertile imagination, immense potentiality, uncountable dreams of a child. Neruda calls the foot of an infant as "soft nails

of quartz" and 'tiny petaled toes' to depict the purity, softness, tenderness, charm of a child.

The above positive imagery is used by Neruda to describe how the foot looks before. These images are in contrast with the negative phrases that the poet uses to compare the child's foot with the adult's foot. Neruda describes an Adult's Foot *'knows it can not fly', 'knows it cannot bulge like a fruit'*. This contrasting description is used to depict how we realize as we grow, that all our dreams can not be realised. We admit the harsh realities of life. Further, the poet describes *'nails bunched together grow hard', 'change themselves into opaque substance' 'hard as horn', 'grow bunched and out of trim', 'take the form of eyeless reptiles with triangle heads like worms'*. These contrasting descriptions are used to portray how the freedom of childhood is lost when a person becomes an adult and faces a life of constant work and struggle - Life takes away people's free spirits and crush the creativity and imaginative powers.

Some other contrasting images used by Neruda are 'foot is defeated', *'fails in the battle', 'as a prisoner condemned to live in a shoe', 'grow callused.. coarsened'....* These descriptions are used to show how an adult gets jaded and oppressed by the society and how he is cursed to lead a suffocated life being imprisoned by the accepted and expected norms of life.

4. At the beginning, the poet says the child's foot is not yet aware that it is a foot. Innocence, Ignorance, lack of knowledge about the harsh realities of life is brought out. Oblivious of one's limitations and potentiality, the soul of the child is full of spirit n vigour. In due course, the imaginative power is lost as the child grows. Life takes away people's free spirits. However, In death, the soul- becomes like it was at birth. The soul for some time, is unaware of the fact that it is freed from the body to which it had been confined. Neruda seems to be saying birth (life) and death are parts of continuous circle. Now the soul can take any form from butterfly to an apple.
5. The foot or soul regains all its earlier potentiality, probabilities. Free spirit is revived at the time of death. Now once again the foot has the capacity to fly freely like a bird or bulge into a fruit like an apple. Hence the poet states that the foot or the 'soul' can become an apple or can fly after the former body or the foot is buried after death.
7. The poet in the last stanza refers to the permanent halt or stop, which transient body finally gets. The man, throughout his life is in the crazy rat-race. We all run behind and chase one dream or the other. Without any respite or rest, we go on toiling and moiling to get our wishes fulfilled one after another. The man gets completely bugged down by day to day challenges, and he gets rest only in the form of death.

As the dead body is burried, it is engulfed by darkness of the grave. However, as the soul is eternal, the body doesn't know in what form the soul will be re-born again.

The body lying dormant underground strikes parallels in the nature too. During winter, seeds with light wings are carried by the wind carefully so as to preserve their germinating quality. The seeds will remain dormant in their dark beds under the earth, like dead bodies in the grave, till the advent of the spring. Then the seeds sprout into plants, which later bear flowers and fruits. The Nature's process of germination and perpetuation is compared to the soul gaining a new form and renewed potentiality.

- Answer for Q1+2+3+4 of Comprehension III [page 75/76]

Pablo Neruda in his surreal poem uses 'Foot' as a key word and presents the journey of 'soul', the journey of 'life'. The poem depicts how childhood dreams are crushed by society and brings out effectively the contrast between colourful dreams and humdrum reality of life. Neruda's poem is a tribute/ salute to the ordinary human being who braves all odds impediments during his journey of life. Neruda has skillfully used the word 'Foot' to convey his ideas of 'life' from the perspective of a foot.

The freedom, potentiality, creativity, imaginative power of the child gets lost, when a person becomes an adult. The constant work and struggle which life offers takes away a person's free spirit. 'stone and bits of glass', 'streets', 'ladders', 'the path in the rough earth' suggest ups and downs, trials and tribulations of life. Thus the foot in adulthood realises 'it can not fly', 'it can't be a fruit'. Neruda effectively portrays how an individual gets crushed under the weight of custom by using the expressions like 'condemned to live in a shoe', 'grow hard as horn'. Suppression of individual creativity, getting jaded / incapacitated and being bowed down by the heaviness of social patterns is brought out by phrases like 'take the form of eyeless reptiles....', 'grow callused', 'coarsening hard to accept' and so on.

The colourful dreams of childhood like 'to be a butterfly or an apple', 'be a fruit bulging on the branch' start getting vanished by monotonous, mundane, humdrum life. The child's foot was once 'soft nails of quartz', 'petaled toes'. These phrases bring out the purity, innocence, potentiality and imaginative power of the child. However the harsh realities of life reduce an adult to feel 'defeated', 'fails in the battle', in the dark like a blind man.....'. How the Adults, Society and the world sully child's dreams and creativity is successfully brought out by the poet Neruda. Though the mood and tone of the poem sounds sad, it is optimistic, it celebrates 'positivity' by paying a salute to the ordinary human being who continues with life braving all odds. Despite all the hardship, impediments, Neruda says, the 'foot' or the man 'walks without respite', 'Never stopping for hour after hour'. The man goes on chasing one dream after another, continuously try to fulfill one wish or the other. Thus the men toil and moil. Whether it is a man or a woman, whether it is an official in 'ministeries' or a labourer in 'mines', whether it is in 'fields' or in 'market', everyone goes on walking, facing challenges of life, without even reciprocating to love, or moments of peace, joy around him.

Neruda says 'the soul' or the 'man' gets rest only when the soul decides to leave the body. Here Neruda presents death and life alike. He states, in 'death', the soul or the 'foot' becomes just like how it was at the time of birth, seemingly full of possibilities. Perhaps Neruda is saying that life and death are parts of a continuous circle, man's free spirits are freed again by death. The soul once again can take any form - 'it could fly... it could become an apple....' Just like at the stage of childhood, once again the soul is full of potentiality, ample possibilities of becoming whatever it wishes to be under the sky.

Thus Pablo Neruda depicts the journey of 'life', using 'foot' as a metaphor. From the stage of an infant's petalled foot' which has no experience of what it means to be 'a foot' to the stage of an adult's 'hard foot' when it ceases to be 'a foot', Neruda uses different images to convey his ideas.

9. I BELIEVE THAT BOOKS WILL NEVER DISAPPEAR

- John Luis Borges.

• What value does Borges see in literature? Why will the books not disappear inspite of modern modes of communication? How does Borges explain strange aspects of poetry?

Jorge Luis Borges, the Argentine short-story writer, essayist, poet and translator in his interview with Robert Alifano unveils his views on the importance of literature in general and of poetry in particular.

Borges' encounter with literature began with Grimm's Fairy tales. All books bring us different shades of experience, he says. Borges states that when we read an ancient book, we feel as if we are reading all time that has passed from the past to present. Every book retains

something that is sacred, mortal, something magical and gives us joy. He feels, a book goes beyond its author's intention.

Borges also opines that books will never disappear; as they are the extension of human imagination and memory. All other gadgets, modern means of communication are the extension of one or the other of human physical parts. He firmly believes that Books are the great memory of all centuries. Literature reflects what we have been, what we are and also what we will be. Hence nothing can replace Books. The function of books is irreplaceable. Borges argues that if books disappear, surely history would disappear and so would the entire mankind.

Borges believes that poetry is magical, mysterious and inexplicable. Poetry, according to him is 'the aesthetic act'. Any attempt to define poetry would result in oversimplifying it. Poetry is the intimate and essential poetic act that takes place when the poet writes it, when the reader reads it and it usually happens in a slightly different manner.

Borges brings out the importance of finding the precise words to elicit the emotion in the art of poetry. He quotes the line by EMILY DICKINSON "This quiet dust was gentlemen and ladies.....". He explains how the phrase 'gentlemen and ladies' elevates the poem to a higher level bringing out the message that fame, name, power, pomp would perish with the passage of time.

Borges also throws light on another aspect of poetry i.e. using Metaphors. He lists out 'time and river, life and dreams, death and sleep, stars and eyes, flower and women' as the essential metaphors that existed in all literature from time immemorial. A good poet's task is to discover novel, whimsical metaphors.

- How has Borges proved that humiliation and misfortune can be transmuted? What is the role of his mother and literature in this pursuit?

Borges is an example for the fact that humiliation and misfortune can be transmuted if one has strong determination. He is indomitable spirit personified. Despite losing his eyesight in his early thirties, he could create many masterpieces. It is astounding to note that many of his 'magnum opus' were written after the tragedies of his father's death, his accident and eventually his eye-sight fading away.

Jorge Lewis Borges took his blindness as a way of life. He believes that every person must consider whatever happens to one is a resource. Our misfortunes, humiliations, embarrassments should be converted into 'a blessing in disguise' given to us to nurture our talent, shape our art and personality. He is of firm conviction that everything occurs in our lives with a 'purpose'.

Borges feels that eternal works, great pieces of human accomplishment were made from the miserable circumstances. Discord, misfortune is given to us so that we may transmute and transcend them. Literature helps and guides us in this process. Borges quotes how he got inspired by GOETHE, the German poet and playwright "Alles Nahe Werd Fern"- All that is near becomes far. Goethe refers to life here, how all things leave us one day or the other. So he consoled his mind when he had lost his eye-sight and accepted it as a part of his life. He started enjoying other things which he still had, which he still could do including buying and filling his house with books. Like David Hartman, the first ever blind doctor, he too proved that actual handicapped are those, who do not make full use of their potentiality.

Dona Leonor, Borges' mother played a vital role in Borges' life. She had been a support to him, till she died at the age of 99. She was an extraordinary person and Borges feels that she had been very intelligent and gracious. His only regret is that, like most of us, he too didn't understand her true worth while she was alive and he should have had treated her better.

Borges' steadfastness, optimistic attitude was largely shaped by literature and by his mother.

10. Heaven, It you are not here on earth.

-Kuvempu

➤ How according to Kuvempu, heaven can be created on the earth?

Heaven is often associated with the presence of Gods and angels, divine beauty, happiness, content. It is often believed that Heaven exists above the sky. Kuvempu breaks this myth of heaven in his poem. He argues that we can feel, see, experience heaven on this earth. We Human Beings, Nature and the Poet can create heaven on the earth.

Kuvempu argues that if heaven were not to be on this earth, it can not be anywhere else. Men can turn to be Gods or heavenly nymphs by caring and sharing. If only every human being responds to the call of others, tries to be of help and support to one another, this earth can be transformed into heaven. Kuvempu says by believing in 'Vasudaiva Kutumbakam', by being 'Vishwa Maanava' each man can spread happiness, bring smile on the face of others. It is by exhibiting Godliness in deeds and feelings, we can become Gods. If everyone is being contented, is being cared for, that is heaven.

Again, Kuvempu visualizes heaven in the Nature. Divine beauty is abundant in Nature. In the roaring stream, on the rolling surf at the edge of waves, in the tender sunshine, in the lustrous greenery, in the gentle sun-rays, in the moonbeams, in the splendor of harvest-lies heavenly beauty. The divine pleasure, inexplicable delight one can derive just by watching the Nature's beauty; In the interspersing hues of the Nature-there is ethereal beauty. Paradise can be felt, experienced amidst nature. Nature really makes this earth heaven.

Kuvempu finally throws light on the potentiality of a poet to re-create the heaven on earth. The poet imbibes nectar from the Nature and 'Spills' or spreads it across the millions. By narrating and extoling the beauty of the Nature, the poet also creates 'heaven' on earth. Kuvempu is drawing our attention towards the 'divine bliss' that poetry offers. Thus the good human being, Nature and the poet transform the earth into heaven.

12. THE VOTER

-Chinua Achebe

➤ Roof is an intelligent manipulator. Justify with reference to the story OR How does Roof's dilemma on the day of election reflect that 'To every human being comes a time of reckoning'? OR Explain how Chinua Achebe's short story 'The Voter' is a comment on electoral system and degradation of social and moral values of the society.

Chinua Achebe's short story 'The Voter' unveils the conflict between modernity and traditions and the challenges of the changing society. It also depicts moral dilemma of the protagonist 'Roof' and how moral and social values take a back seat in the modern world. Achebe sensitizes the readers about how corrupt practices reduce the 'election system' and 'democracy' to mockery.

Roof represents the modern youth who is smart enough to merge both modern and traditional culture of the society. Though he proves to be an 'intelligent manipulator' by making a lot of compromises and adjustments, he earns respect in people's eyes. Roof is an example of a young, ambitious and restless person. Even though he has skills for bicycle repairing, instead of getting settled in towns, *he 'gives up a bright future to return to his people to guide them'*. As Roof is optimistic, he accepts a new challenge as an election campaigner. Subsequently, in the villager's point of view he becomes *'a real expert in election campaigning at all levels-village, local government or national'*.

Soon the energetic and enthusiastic Roof becomes the right hand man and the prominent election campaigner of Marcus Ibe, local chief and the outgoing Minister of Culture belonging to People's Alliance Party (PAP). He has the challenge of wooing and winning the local people of Umuofia who had become slightly radical and had understood how the elected representative go on getting honour, benefits degrees, wealth, name and fame. So the villagers have decided *'not to give their votes free of charge' and 'to take all the firewood they need when they climbed the iroko tree'* and they are well aware of the fact that *'today is our day'*. So Marcus Ibe had to give his speeches *'in the day'* and to conduct *'whispering campaigns'* in night. Roof becomes *'the most trusted of these campaigners'*.

Here Chinua Achebe comments about how both the political parties and the voters ignore the basic principles and values of 'Democracy'. The leaders are to buy vote by throwing *'a few hundred pound converted into shillings'*. On the other hand, the voters are more than willing to *'sell their votes for meagre amount of firewood'*. The elected candidates go on accumulating wealth, property and care only for their selfish gains. They don't have any value for the welfare of the people, welfare of the society. The voters undermine the importance and value of 'franchise', their voting rights and want to encash the 'Election Days' for their individual benefit rather than caring for the 'national interest'. The entire success of Democracy lies in free and fair election and in the modern days, election system has become so weak and faulty what with 'buying and selling votes' through cash or kind.

Roof also believes in the policy of 'Make hay while sun-shines'. He gets 'rich robes' of Marcus, has the lenience of 'pulling out fifth bottle of beer from the Marcus' refrigerator. He wins a land case because he arrives to the disputed site by the personal car of Marcus, that too being driven by personal chauffeur(driver) of his master Marcus. Thus Roof reflects hundreds of modern youth, who do not feel any moral compunction, while resorting to immoral or illegal means of earning profit.

To what an extent immorality or corruption reaches, how down the political leaders and the voters can stoop to - is very well depicted in the scene, where in the leader of the opposite campaign team representing rival party Progressive Organization party(POP) comes to offer Five pounds to Roof on the previous night of election. This bears an evidence how unethical our Election System may turn to be. Roof is pretty flexible when it comes to his own interest. When 'POP' leader offers him money, without any second thought, he changes his mind. He forgets about the loyalty to his own party PAP and its head Marcus, from whom he had got maximum benefit. His eyes *'never left the red notes on the floor'* and he starts dreaming about *'The cocoa farmer harvesting his crops'*. This scenario shows how easily he sells himself to the other group. It reflects the perversion of values in the modern society.

Surprisingly inspite of being a modern person, Roof also has tremendous belief in tradition. He is scared of 'iyi' and swears by 'iyi' to vote for "POP". He decides he will not betray it. However it is not easy for him to betray his master either. Just like 'how there comes a time of reckioning to every human being', the Election Day proves to be crucial to Roof. His mental dilemma is well brought out by Chinua Achebe. His spirits fall. He sidles in

and the symbols 'car' and 'the head' spin around his eyes. How could he betray Marcus even in secrecy? Roof also knew that it was impossible to return Five pounds. Moreover, he had sworn on that 'iyi'. The face of his master Marcus, red notes... the cocoa farmer....iyi.... all started revolving..... hovering around.... He was feeling being torn apart....There seemed to be no way out.....

Finally he takes a decision. He folds the ballot paper and tears it into two pieces and puts one half in each box. He takes the precaution of putting the first half into Maduka's box and confirms it by announcing loudly that 'he voted for Maduka'. Roof makes a surprising decision of ripping his paper, despite knowing it would be an invalid vote. For an outsider, his decision looks 'wrong'. However being trapped in such a situation, he could not have had done anything better either. May be, he followed the policy of '*Do what you think is right*' in that particular situation. But outside observers may not be able to think Roof was 'right'. Roof has the satisfaction that he abides by the traditional and modern belief. As a result he continues to be a good person in everyone's eye including his own.

Thus Chinua Achebe brings out conflict of values in a changing society at one hand, and the mental dilemma of an individual on the other, through his short story, 'The Voter'. The themes modernity Vs traditional culture, loyalty Vs temptation or corruption, ethical values Vs practicality - are depicted. The story mirrors the loopholes of Democracy and how the 'Voter' fails to understand the value and sanctity of votes. In a satirical tone, through the responses of the public at various situations, Achebe comments on the electoral system and degrading social values. It also unveils the selfish politicians, who exploit the innocence of the masses, and stoop very low to achieve their vested interests / selfish gains.

13. Where There is a wheel

--- P. Sainath.

➤ How does P. Sainath show that cycling brings about changes beyond economic gains? How could cycle become an instrument of social change and progress?

Palagummi Sainath, the grandson of former President of India Sri.V.V.Giri, is a renowned journalist, photo journalist and an author. This recipient of Ramon Magsaysay Award mainly focuses on social problems, rural affairs, poverty and the like. 'Where there is a wheel' is a chapter from Sainath's book 'Everyone loves a good drought', in which he describes incredible social change and progress that was brought in PUDUKOTTAI, a rural district of TamilNadu.

Pudukottai is one of India's poorest districts. Nobody could ever dream that thousand of rural women would hit out at their backwardness, claim for emancipation and express their defiance and willpower to break free through Cycling that turned out to be a social movement.

The whole phenomenon was conceived by the District collector, Sheela Rani Chunkath in 1991. The district's vigorous Literacy drive was in momentum, led by the 'Arivoli Iyakkam'. The DC wanted to train female activists in cycling so that literacy would reach women in the interior parts too. She also included 'mobility' as a part of the literacy drive, as lack of mobility or free movement among women was a major reason behind their undermining their confidence. Now, every 'neo-literate' woman aspired to be 'neo-cyclist' woman too. The vast majority, who have just become literate, saw a direct link between cycling and their personal independence.

As shared by N. Kannammal, Arivoli Central co-ordinator, the cycling movement instilled a new wave of confidence among women. It reduced their dependence on men. Women agricultural workers, quarry labourers, village health nurses, balwadi and anganwadi workers, gem cutters, school teachers, - all began to learn cycling and got addicted to it. Entire district slowly was swept away by cycling.

Initially, the women had to face bitter experience, many obstacles. Nasty comments on their character, filthy remarks did not deter these rural women. Many young women came back to help and train new learners- sheer passion for cycling later led to a wide-spread perception among them that 'all women ought to learn cycling'. It gradually emerged as a wayout, a break from the enforced routines around male-imposed barrier. First the activists learned cycling. Then neo-literates wanted to learn. Eventually every woman wanted to learn. Thus cycle became an instrument of social change and progress. Even when there was shortage of 'Ladies' cycles', women started using 'Gents' cycles'. The women started enjoying their newly gained freedom and the sense of self-respect.

Undoubtedly cycling had some economic gains too. It boosted their income. Some women, used to sell agricultural and other produces in neighbouring villages. The bicycle cut down on time, as they no longer wasted time in waiting for limited buses. They could now focus more on promoting the sales. They could cover more areas. It gave them extra leisure time too. They could cover multiple tasks(chores) easily. However cycling became more popular as women wanted to feel that goodness, that independence .

P. Sainath observes, in Pudukottai many women even in remote roads, can be seen carrying pots of water hung across the back and cycling towards work or home, child on the bar, products on the carrier. Pudukottai remains unique among Indian districts for the amazing number of women, who had taken to cycling. Even UNICEF was so impressed by this movement that it sanctioned 50 mopeds for Arivoli women activists of Pudukottai. For the uneducated and illiterate women, who had remained suppressed by the dogmas of conservative male- dominated society for years together, learning cycling was indeed a Himalayan achievement. As P. Sainath remarks cycles were not mere cycles for thousands of neo- literate women of Pudukottai district, but they became instruments, symbols of social change and progress.

➤ Why does P. Sainath describe the Arivoli 'cycling training camp' as an unusual experience?

Pudukottai is an economically and educationally backward rural district of Tamilnadu. For the illiterate rural women cycling was like flying an aeroplane. The journalist P. Sainath visited 'cycling training camp' organized by Arivoli, Literacy drive organization and amazed to see enthusiasm.

P. Sainath says all the prospective learners had come in their Sunday best. The neo-literates who had been already trained turned out in large number to help the learners. These 'master trainers' worked free of charge. The literacy movement and cycling complemented to each other in enabling the women to enjoy their newly gained freedom, self-respect and the result was wide-spread perception that all women had to compulsorily learn cycling. The sheer passion for pro- cycling movement was stunning. Sainath was wonder -struck, how a humble vehicle like cycle could become a metaphor for freedom among thousands of rural women and hence calls it 'unusual' experience.

14. WATER

- Challapalli Swaroopa Rani.

➤ How does the poem demonstrate the disparity and discrimination in our society using Water as a symbol? Trace water's journey from ancient times as a symbol of purity to the age of multinational market where it has become a commercial commodity.

Challapalli Swaroopa Rani began to write about her experience, having been born in a downtrodden caste. Her moving from personal to the social, attained her writing a special place. In the present poem 'Water', she uses 'Water' as a symbol, to give expression against century old discrimination based on caste and community. The present poem 'Water' gives ventilation to the grievances, atrocities inflicted on the so called lower caste and unveils inhuman side of the Indian Society.

Swaroopa Rani presents water as a silent spectator to the injustice, disparity and discrimination which persisted in our society for generations together. She says, water is well aware of the fact 'untouchability' in Indian Society is as inseparable as the '*dampness on the well's edge*'. This kind of indiscrimination is universal. Water must have had witnessed how a woman from Samaria refused to give water to Jesus Christ on the ground that he was a Jew. From those days of the past to the present, Swaroopa Rani states water has been a witness to the oppression, suppression made in the name of castes and subcastes.

Here Swaroopa Rani draws the attention of the Reader towards the ironical fact that 'Varna' or Caste System prevails even among the Dalit or Scheduled Caste and Community. A 'Panchama', who is at the lowest rung of social hierarchy, has to wait for hours together for the arrival of a 'shudra' to get a pot of water.

Swaroopa Rani feels water must be knowing the intensity of pain and humiliation of girls born in the so called 'low caste'. The so called higher caste men keep at bay 'the Dalit Waada girl' even while pouring water into their pots. However, there is always someone from the Upper caste waiting to use her body. They don't bother about caste while misusing the body of downtrodden. At that moment, they don't care about maintaining distance. Actually, such a 'dalit' girl feels 'polluted' by the contact of so called upper caste man.

Water has also witnessed the righteous anger and protest of a Dalit woman Suvarathamma of Karamchedu village in Andhra Pradesh. The Zamindaars of 'Kamma' caste were about to beat a Dalit boy near a water tank. Suvaratha's lifting the vessel just to protect the boy and in self-defence led to the most heinous and ghastly attack (by the Kammas) on the Dalit people.

By using water as a tool, Swaroopa Rani further narrates the discrimination. The dalits or downtrodden communities had to wait for hours together for a glass of water, where as the upper caste 'bathed luxuriously twice a day'. Swaroopa Rani recollects how taking bath once a week in her community was celebrated as if it were a festive luxury. Water is not just a chemical substance 'H₂O' for her people. It was/is the very symbol for their fight for survival. Here Swaroopa Rani mentions about the first ever battle of Dalit liberation, which too revolved around 'water'. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar led the 'Mahad Satyagraha' on March 20, 1927 and made the Dalits to drink the from Cavdor tank at Mahad. It was not a fight for just water, but for claiming liberty, equality and fraternity. These kinds of attempt to end the old inhuman caste society and to reconstruct society had led to bloodshed. Swaroopa Rani says, 'though the 'Dalits' never got the right to drink water, their blood 'flowed like streams'.

Swaroop Rani recalls the 'Malapalle' massacre, when Venkateshwarul of Chundur, a rebellious leader took refuge in Malapalle village. The so called Uppercaste people, Kammas burnt down the entire village and put an end to Mala and Madige caste people. She states that the water had ignited many disputes, strife between several states, various communities.

Swaroop Rani traces the journey of water as a symbol of purity from ancient times to the age of globalization where it is reduced as a commodity. The water, which is the very source of life, had been a silent witness to the disparity and discrimination which men showed towards one another. It had also been a witness for rapid modernization, in the name of urbanization, how men went on tampering with the nature and contaminating water. It is the fury of the Nature, anger of the water that causes disasters like Tsunami, flood, opines Swaroop Rani. However she feels sad to notice that again it is the weaker section, the down trodden, the poor, who will be the worst hit people during these natural calamities, be it flood, drought or Tsunami. Water, she complains, reduces the poor people into playthings, puppets.

Swaroop Rani observes the same water which refuses 'to quench the thirst of parched throats', sits so innocently like a puppet in the hands of a few. She comments how the capitalists reduce the water into a mere commercial commodity and how surreptitiously, water is forced to be labeled as 'mineral water'. Water has no more remained as an ordinary element, but became a 'multinational market commodity' now. She associates her personal memories with the water. She recalls how the same water used to make them walk miles together to make them 'many a circus feat', to cause 'the muscles and veins on their necks straining and bursting'. How her community craves for a glass of water whole day thirstily and so on...

Thus Swaroop Rani unveils the history of mankind, the journey of civilization through the journey of water, using 'water' as a symbol, as a silent witness. She concludes this saga of discrimination by stating 'the water is omniscient... it contains the world'. She feels that water knows everything and it contains the entire ups and down of the world, the whole history of the mankind including the ugly, dark inhuman side of the so called civilized modern world.

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