ENGLISH
Reading & Literature
Class X

Department of School Education
Ministry of Education and Skills Development
Royal Government of Bhutan
Thimphu

Published by
Department of School Education (DSE)
Ministry of Education and Skills Development (MoESD)
Royal Government of Bhutan
Thimhu

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Toll Free: 1850
Web site: www.education.gov.bt

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This book is compiled and printed for educational purposes exclusively for schools in Bhutan.

First Edition 2005

Revised 2007, 2010, 2021

Revised Edition 2023

Reprint 2024

ISBN 978-99936-0-689-5

Acknowledgments

The Ministry of Education and Skills Development would like to acknowledge the contributions made by the following educational professionals and teachers to the development of this revised text book.

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The School Curriculum Division also sincerely acknowledges the retrieval and use of contents and resources, either in part or whole, from relevant websites and other sources with the assurance that these resources will be used exclusively for educational purposes in Bhutan.

Foreword

Following the advent of modern education in the country, the English language has been given an important place along with Dzongkha, the national language. English has, in fact, been the language of instruction for many school subjects, and it has served our purpose well even outside the curriculum.

The emphasis of the English curriculum is on the improvement of language skills of students, on literature studies written in the contemporary English language, the inclusion of non-fiction writing and changes in the approach to the assessment of students' performance. The curriculum also demands a change in the way in which students are taught, specifically a movement away from the teacher-centred classroom to a gender-sensitive, student-centred learning environment. This means that the teacher is responsible for designing activities that promote active learning while the students play a greater role in their own learning. The teacher will act as a facilitator to allow students to explore and create knowledge.

The selection of texts represents a conscious and rigorous effort to bring to our classrooms an assortment of rich and varied literary experiences presented through different genres which celebrate the dignity of content and the beauty of language.

The plans put forward in the curriculum offer a balanced programme with adequate instructional time to develop the skills in each strand of Reading & Literature, Writing, Listening and Speaking and Language. The goal is to provide adequate time to learn these skills so that students are able to communicate with eloquence and receive the communication of others with respect and clarity.

The Ministry of Education and Skills Development hopes that the English Curriculum will open the doors to new opportunities for our students to improve their English language skills. The learning programmes in the curriculum will ensure that they will acquire the knowledge to continue higher studies and the skills they require to become competent communicators – in reading, writing, listening and speaking as required in the workplace and society.

The Ministry wishes to acknowledge the valuable contributions of the teachers and teacher-educators to the development of the curriculum.

Tashi Delek.

Karma Galay
Director General

Contents

Novel

Foreword to Reading & Literature

I am part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
Gleams that untravl'd world, whose margin
Fades for ever and for ever when I move.

From *"Ulysses"* by Alfred, Lord Tennyson

Like Ulysses, when we read, we become travellers through worlds whose horizons beckon and entice us farther and farther into realms beyond our own daily experiences. We travel from our own world to different places and times, go to a universe beyond our own, a universe in which we meet people who hold ideas and beliefs which confirm, challenge, and elaborate what we know, understand and believe.

Reading is the key to unlocking the vault of the wisdom of the race. To read well is to be in contact with those who have gone before us, and have discovered what it is to be human, and the best ways to organise themselves to achieve happiness.

We do not always read for such exalted reasons. Reading is also something we use to do everyday things at work or at home: things like shopping, reading mail, getting information on topics of interest and getting instructions on how to do things or put things together; also we read to learn the ideas of others on more abstract issues like political thought or religious beliefs. We also read for pleasure and to pass the time. Sometimes, we read our favourite authors simply because we like to read their works. Whatever the reasons we have for doing it, it is making meaning with text in an interactive process that engages the reader, the writer, and the text in a dialogue about the subject of the piece.

Engaging in the dialogue begins when the reader tries to be clear about what the writer or her characters are saying and doing. Frequently, once that has been achieved and is clear, the reader does not want to go further. The knowledge of what has been read is enough. But just as frequently, readers want to move beyond the simple knowledge of a book to levels of dialogue which engage them, the writer, and the text in negotiations about the significance of what has been said or enacted in the piece. It is in this kind of dialogue that the focus shifts to attempts to comprehend what has been read at more profound levels, to delight in possible interpretations, to analyse how the writer achieves the cogency of the piece, and ultimately, the evaluation of the beauty and the validity of what has been said.

Whatever the level of the dialogue, the readers bring to the table not only their knowledge of the text under study, but also their experiences with other texts, the experiences they have

had in real life, or have imagined, and quite likely, sets of beliefs that challenge the point of view of the writer. They need to be taught the strategies to read in these ways and they need time to participate in activities which are planned by the teachers to allow them to practise the strategies.

The literature in the syllabus provides the material to teach students how to read, while at the same time, permitting them to read some of the best literature available in English. Students have to learn how to make meaning by themselves and to appreciate what it means to have met some of the best writers and their works in the course of their studies. If we can build classroom communities where that can be arranged, then, like Ulysses, our readers will be drawn to travel through new worlds of experience whose horizons keep expanding.

Standards for Reading & Literature for Key Stage IV

1) Read different texts to confirm one's own beliefs, points of view and to critique.
2) View and apply the process of reading to analyze text in different media.
3) Analyze two or more texts that address similar themes or topics to build knowledge and to compare the approaches the writers take.
4) Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts when reading.
5) Demonstrate the ability of understanding implied meaning of texts – use of figurative language, word relationships, nuances, and word meanings.
6) Analyse how an author's choices of text structure create effects such as mystery, tension, and surprise.
7) Read different genres of level appropriate literature from Bhutan and other countries to gain insights into the cultural and fundamental values like Truth, Goodness and Beauty.

Learning Objectives for Reading & Literature

Sl No	Learning Objectives	Core Concepts/Topics	Essential Skills
1	Use appropriate reading strategies and skills developed in earlier classes to achieve various reading goals.	Building on to prior knowledge, concepts, and skills	Language and literacy skills: • Apply critical reading strategies to assess lexical and sentence structures in texts • Analyse and evaluate different points of view and arrive at personal conclusion • Use various sources to authenticate information Social, behavioural, and affective skills: • Demonstrate empathy in conduct and speech • Acknowledge and appreciate diversity of cultural traditions, beliefs, and practices Note: Teachers should identify additional appropriate skills based on the lesson plans and learning activities.
2	Read and articulate their understanding of experiences such as separation, love, compassion, loss, and spirituality using situations encountered in literature to support their positions.	Empathy and appreciation, love	
3	Apply close and critical reading and viewing to a variety of texts to enhance their understanding of how lexical and grammatical items are used in context.	Lexical and language structures in various texts and formats	
4	Analyse author's purpose and the style of writing to influence different audiences.	Styles of writing to suite purpose and audience	
5	Analyse and evaluate various sources of information for validity and accuracy.	Triangulation to validate information	
6	Compare and contrast different cultural values, traditions, and beliefs, using situations encountered in the literature they are reading.	Cultural values, traditions, and beliefs	
7	Evaluate the effect of the use of relevant literary devices in a text.	Literary devices and their usage	
8	Respond personally and critically to fiction and non-fiction texts showing an understanding of the structural features of the different texts.	Structural features of different texts	
9	Build vocabulary and use the pronunciation skills to pronounce new words correctly.	Pronunciation of new words	
10	Read, talk, and write about some of major classical and modern writers, including Bhutanese authors, and their works.	Major writers, including Bhutanese authors	
11	Engage in sustained reading and viewing for pleasure, personal development, and learning.	Reading for pleasure and life-long learning	
12	Read at least 40 pieces of fiction and non-fiction texts.	Sustained reading	

SHORT STORIES

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1. He-y, Come On Ou-t! - *Shinichi Hoshi*

Who would have thought that something as simple as a hole in the ground could prove to be so useful?

The typhoon had passed and the sky was a gorgeous blue. Even a certain village not far from the city had suffered damage. A little distance from the village and near the mountains, a small shrine had been swept away by a landslide.
"I wonder how long that shrine's been here."
"Well, in any case, it must have been here since an awfully long time ago."
"We've got to rebuild it right away."
While the villagers exchanged views, several more of their number came over.
"It sure was wrecked."
"I think it used to be right here."
"No, looks like it was a little more over there."
Just then one of them raised his voice. "Hey what in the world is this hole?"
Where they had all gathered there was a hole about a meter in diameter. They peered in, but it was so dark nothing could be seen. However, it gave one the feeling that it was so deep it went clear through to the center of the earth.
There was even one person who said, "I wonder if it's a fox's hole."
"Hey-y, come on ou-t!" shouted a young man into the hole. There was no echo from the bottom. Next he picked up a pebble and was about to throw it in.

"You might bring down a curse on us. Lay off," warned an old man, but the younger one energetically threw the pebble in. As before, however, there was no answering response from the bottom. The villagers cut down some trees, tied them with rope and made a fence which they put around the hole. Then they repaired to the village.
"What do you suppose we ought to do?"
"Shouldn't we build the shrine up just as it was, over the hole?"

A day passed with no agreement. The news traveled fast, and a car from the newspaper company rushed over. In no time a scientist came out, and with an all-knowing expression on his face he went over to the hole. Next, a bunch of gawking curiosity seekers showed up; one could also pick out here and there men of shifty glances who appeared to be concessionaires. Concerned that someone might fall into the hole, a policeman from the local sub-station kept a careful watch.

One newspaper reporter tied a weight to the end of a long cord and lowered it into the hole. A long way down it went. The cord ran out, however, and he tried to pull it out, but it would not come back up. Two or three people helped out, but when they pulled too hard, the cord

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parted at the edge of the hole. Another reporter, a camera in hand, who had been watching all of this, quietly untied a stout rope that had been wound around his waist.

The scientist contacted people at his laboratory and had them bring out a high-powered bull horn, with which he was going to check out the echo from the hole's bottom. He tried switching through various sounds, but there was no echo. The scientist was puzzled, but he could not very well give up with everyone watching him so intently. He put the bull horn right up to the hole, turned it to its highest volume, and let it sound continuously for a long time. It was a noise that would have carried several dozen kilometres above ground. But the hole just calmly swallowed up the sound.

In his own mind the scientist was at a loss, but with a look of apparent composure he cut off the sound and, in a manner suggesting that the whole thing had a perfectly plausible explanation, said simply, "Fill it in."

Safer to get rid of something one didn't understand.
The on lookers disappointed that this was all that was going to happen, prepared to disperse. Just then one of the concessionaires, having broken through the throng and come forward, made a proposal.
"Let me have that hole. I'll fill it in for you."
"We'd be grateful to you for filling it in," replied the mayor of the village, "but we can't very well give you the hole. We have to build a shrine there".
"If it's a shrine you want, I'll build you a fine one later. Shall I make it with an attached meeting hall?"
Before the mayor could answer, the people of the village all shouted out.
"Really? Well, in that case, we ought to have it closer to the village."

"It's just an old hole. We'll give it to you!"
So it was settled. And the mayor, of course, had no objection.
The concessionaire was true to his promise. It was small, but closer to the village he did build for them a shrine with an attached meeting hall.

About the time the autumn festival was held at the new shrine, the hole-tilling company established by the concessionaire hung out its small shingle at a shack near the hole.

The concessionaire had his cohorts mount a loud campaign in the city. "We've got a fabulously deep hole! Scientists say it's at least five thousand meters deep! Perfect for the disposal of such things as waste from nuclear reactors."

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Government authorities granted permission. Nuclear power plants fought for contracts. The people of the village were a bit worried about this, but they consented when it was explained that there would be absolutely no above-ground contamination for several thousand years and that they would share in the profits. Into the bargain, very shortly a magnificent road was built from the city to the village.

Trucks rolled in over the road, transporting lead boxes. Above the hole the lids were opened, and the wastes from nuclear reactors tumbled away into the hole.

From the Foreign Ministry and the Defense Agency boxes of unnecessary classified documents were brought for disposal. Officials who came to supervise the disposal held discussions on golf. The lesser functionaries, as they threw in the papers, chatted about pinball.

The hole showed no signs of filling up. It was awfully deep, thought some; or else it might be very spacious at the bottom. Little by little the hole-filling company expanded its business. Bodies of animals used in the contagious disease experiments at the universities were brought out, and to these were added the unclaimed corpses of vagrants. Better than dumping of all its garbage in the ocean, went the thinking in the city, and plans were made for a long pipe to carry it to the hole.

The hole gave peace of mind to the dwellers of the city. They concentrated solely on producing one thing after another. Everyone disliked thinking about the eventual consequences. People wanted only to work for production companies and sales corporations; they had no interest in becoming junk dealers. But, it was thought, these problems too would gradually be resolved by the hole.

Young girls discarded old diaries in the hole. There were also those who were inaugurating new love affairs and threw into the hole old photographs of themselves taken with former sweethearts. The police felt comforted as they used the hole to, get rid of accumulations of expertly done counterfeit bills. Criminals breathed easier after throwing material evidence into the hole.

Whatever one wished to discard, the hole accepted it all. The hole cleansed the city of its filth; the sea and sky seemed to have become bit clearer than before.
Aiming at the heavens, new buildings went on being constructed one after the other.
One day, atop the high steel frame of a new building under construction, a workman was taking a break. Above his head he heard a voice shout:

"He-y, come on ou-t!"

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But, in the sky to which he lifted his gaze there was nothing at all. A clear blue sky merely spread over all. He thought it must be his imagination. Then, as he resumed his former position, from the direction where the voice had come, a small pebble skimmed by him and fell on past.

The man, however, was gazing in idle reverie at the city's skyline growing ever more beautiful, and he failed to notice.

About the Author

Shinichi Hoshi was born in 1926 and lived until 1997. He pioneered the format know as "short short". He is best known as a science fiction writer and also has a taste for fantasy. His work Enushi no Yuuenchi, consists of 31 short stories; 14 of these are included in a compassion volume called A Bag of Surprises, translated in to English by Stanleigh.H.Jones. This original means something like "Mr. N's Play ground" or "amusement park".

Make Connections

1. What evidence can you find in the story to show that the people are superstitious?
2. From this, what can you say about the beliefs of both the young and the old generations?
3. What made the people decide to use the hole as a dumping pit?
4. How is the story a reflection of our actions?

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2. The Imp and the Crust - *Leo Tolstoy*

Rationale

We all have good and bad in us. We generally show only the good to the outside world and try to hide the bad. However, events or situations sometimes force us to reveal our bad side, and when this happens too often, we fall prey to the forces of habit. As a result, a good person becomes a 'beast'. Read the parable of The Imp and Crust and consider what message it has for us.

A poor peasant set out early one morning to plough, taking with him for his breakfast a crust of bread. He got his plough ready, wrapped the bread in his coat, put it under a bush, and set to work. After a while, when his horse was tired and he was hungry, the peasant fixed the plough, let the horse loose to graze, and went to get his coat and his breakfast.

He lifted the coat, but the bread was gone! He looked and looked, turned the coat over, shook it out—but the bread was gone. The peasant could not make this out at all.

'That's strange,' thought he; 'I saw no one, but all the same one has been here and has taken the bread!'

It was an imp who had stolen the bread while the peasant was ploughing, and at that moment he was sitting behind the bush, waiting to hear the peasant swear and call on the Devil.

The peasant was sorry to lose his breakfast, but 'It can't be helped,' said he. 'After all, I shan't die of hunger! No doubt whoever took the bread needed it. May it do him good!'

And he went to the well, had a drink of water, and rested a bit. Then he caught his horse, harnessed it, and began ploughing again.

The imp was crestfallen at not having made the peasant sin, and he went to report what had happened to the Devil, his master.

He came to the Devil and told how he had taken the peasant's bread, and how the peasant instead of cursing had said, 'May it do him good!'

The Devil was angry, and replied: 'If the man got the better of you, it was your own fault—you don't understand your business! If the peasants, and their wives after them, take to that sort of thing, it will be all up with us. The matter can't be left like that! Go back at once,' said he, 'and put things right. If in three years you don't get the better of that peasant, I'll have you ducked in holy water!'

The imp was frightened. He scampered back to earth, thinking about how he could redeem his fault. He thought and thought, and at last hit upon a good plan.

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He turned himself into a labouring man, and went and took service with the poor peasant. The first year he advised the peasant to sow corn in a marshy place. The peasant took his advice and sowed in the marsh. The year turned out a very dry one, and the crops of the other peasants were all scorched by the sun, but the poor peasant's corn grew thick and tall and full-eared. Not only had he grain enough to last him for the whole year, but he had much left over.

The next year the imp advised the peasant to sow on the hill, and it turned out a wet summer. Other people's corn was beaten down and rotted and the ears did not fill; but the peasant's crop, up on the hill, was a fine one. He had more grain left over than before so he did not know what to do with it all.

Then the imp showed the peasant how he could mash the grain and distil spirit from it, and the peasant made a strong drink and began to drink it himself and to give it to his friends.

So, the imp went to the Devil, his master, and boasted that he had made up for his failure. The Devil said that he would come and see for himself how the case stood.

He came to the peasant's house and saw that the peasant had invited his well-to-do neighbours and was treating them to drink. His wife was offering the drink to the guests, and as she handed it around, she tumbled against the table and spilt a glassful.

The peasant was angry, and scolded his wife: 'What do you mean you slut? Do you think it's ditchwater, you cripple, that you must go pouring good stuff like that over the floor?'

The imp nudged the Devil, his master, with his elbow: 'See,' said he, 'that's the man who did not grudge his last crust!'

The peasant, still railing at his wife, began to carry the drink around himself. Just then a poor peasant returning from work came in uninvited. He greeted the company, sat down, and saw that they were drinking. Tired of his day's work, he felt that he too would like a drop. He sat and sat, and his mouth kept watering, but the host instead of offering him any only muttered: 'I can't find a drink for everyone who comes along.'

This pleased the Devil; but the imp chuckled and said, 'Wait a bit, there's more to come yet!'

The rich peasants drank, and their host drank too. And they began to make false, oily speeches to one another.

The Devil listened and listened, and praised the imp.

'If,' said he, 'the drink makes them so foxy that they begin to cheat each other, they will soon all be in our hands.'

'Wait for what's coming,' said the imp. 'Let them have another glass all around. Now they are like foxes, wagging their tails and trying to get round one another; but presently you will see

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them like savage wolves.'

The peasants had another glass each, and their talk became wilder and rougher. Instead of oily speeches, they began to abuse and snarl at one another. Soon they took to fighting and punched one another's noses. And the host joined in the fight, and he too got well beaten.

The Devil looked on and was much pleased with all this.

'This is first-rate!' said he.

But the imp replied: 'Wait a bit—the best is yet to come. Wait till they have had a third glass. Now they are raging like wolves, but let them have one more glass, and they will be like swine.'

The peasants had their third glass and became quite like brutes. They muttered and shouted, not knowing why, and not listening to one another.

Then the party began to break up. Some went alone, some in twos, and some in threes, all staggering down the street. The host went out to speed his guests, but he fell on his nose into a puddle, smeared himself from top to toe, and lay there grunting like a hog.

This pleased the Devil still more.

'Well,' said he, 'you have hit on a first-rate drink, and have quite made up for your blunder about the bread. But now tell me how this drink is made. You must first have put in fox's blood: that was what made the peasants as sly as foxes. Then, I suppose, you added wolf's blood: that is what made them fierce like wolves. And you must have finished off with swine's blood, to make them behave like swine.'

'No,' said the imp, 'that was not the way I did it. All I did was see that the peasant had more corn than he needed. The blood of the beasts is always in man; but as long as he has only enough corn for his needs, it is kept in bounds. While that was the case, the peasant did not grudge his last crust. But when he had corn left over, he looked for ways of getting pleasure out of it. And I showed him a pleasure—drinking! And when he began to turn God's good gifts into spirits for his own pleasure—the fox's, wolf's and swine's blood in him all came out. If only he goes on drinking, he will always be a beast!'

The Devil praised the imp, forgave him for his former blunder, and advanced him to a post of high honour.

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About the author

Count Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910) is among the greatest literary figures of Russia as also of the world. He was born in an aristocratic family and so he bore the title of 'Count'. His fame rests mainly on his two novels, 'War and Peace' and 'Anna Karenina'. His novels and stories touch the heart deeply. Tolstoy's philosophy is the philosophy of simple and truthful living. Mahatma Gandhi sought and obtained Tolstoy's advice in his own struggle.

Make connections

1. Why did the Imp steal the peasant's bread?
2. Why did the Imp advise the peasant to brew alcohol from the extra corn?
3. What do the wolf, the fox and the swine symbolize in the state of intoxication?
4. What themes can you discuss from the story?

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3. The Bet – *Anton Chekhov*

Rationale

Chekhov employs a variety of literary devices throughout "The Bet" to create a sense of realism. He distinguishes between the two main characters and propels the plot forward with a concise two-part story structure, abundant metaphors and similes, and frequent foreshadowing. One of his best-known writing techniques is to leave the story's ending open-ended. This story uses a philosophical argument about exploitation, greed, overconfidence, fear, and failure to debate whether a modern society should use the death penalty or life imprisonment as a punishment.

It was a dark autumn night. The old banker was walking up and down his study and remembering how, fifteen years before, he had given a party one autumn evening. There had been many clever men there, and there had been interesting conversations. Among other things, they had talked of capital punishment. The majority of the guests, among whom were many journalists and intellectual men, disapproved of the death penalty. They considered that form of punishment out of date, immoral and unsuitable for the Christian States. In the opinion of some of them, the death penalty ought to be replaced everywhere by imprisonment for life. "I don't agree with you," said their host the banker. "I have not tried either the death penalty or imprisonment for life, but if one may judge a priori, the death penalty is more moral and more humane than imprisonment for life. Capital punishment kills a man at once, but lifelong imprisonment kills him slowly. Which executioner is the more humane, he who kills you in a few minutes or he who drags the life out of you in the course of many years?"

"Both are equally immoral," observed one of the guests, "for they both have the same object - to take away life. The State is not God. It has not the right to take away what it cannot restore when it wants to."

Among the guests was a young lawyer, a young man of five and twenty. When he was asked his opinion, he said:

"The death sentence and the life sentence are equally immoral, but if I had to choose between the death penalty and imprisonment for life, I would certainly choose the second. To live anyhow is better than not at all."

A lively discussion arose. The banker, who was younger and more nervous in those days, was suddenly carried away by excitement; he struck the table with his fist and shouted at the young man:

"It's not true! I'll bet you two million you wouldn't stay in solitary confinement for five years."

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"If you mean that in earnest," said the young man, "I'll take the bet, but I would stay not five but fifteen years."

"Fifteen? Done!" cried the banker. "Gentlemen, I stake two million!"

"Agreed! You stake your millions and I stake my freedom!" said the young man.

And this wild, senseless bet was carried out! The banker, spoilt and frivolous, with millions beyond his reckoning, was delighted at the bet. At supper, he made fun of the young man and said:

"Think better of it, young man, while there is still time. To me, two million is a trifle, but you are losing three or four of the best years of your life. I say three or four because you won't stay longer. Don't forget either, you unhappy man, that voluntary confinement is a great deal harder to bear than compulsory. The thought that you have the right to step out in liberty at any moment will poison your whole existence in prison. I am sorry for you."

And now the banker, walking to and fro, remembered all this, and asked himself: "What was the object of that bet? What is the good of that man's losing fifteen years of his life and my throwing away two million? Can it prove that the death penalty is better or worse than imprisonment for life? No, no. It was all nonsensical and meaningless. On my part, it was the caprice of a pampered man, and on his part simple greed for money ..."

Then he remembered what followed that evening. It was decided that the young man should spend the years of his captivity under the strictest supervision in one of the lodges in the banker's garden. It was agreed that for fifteen years he should not be free to cross the threshold of the lodge, to see human beings, to hear the human voice, or to receive letters and newspapers. He was allowed to have a musical instrument and books and was allowed to write letters, drink wine, and smoke. By the terms of the agreement, the only relations he could have with the outer world were by a little window made purposely for that object. He might have anything he wanted - books, music, wine, and so on - in any quantity he desired by writing an order, but could only receive them through the window. The agreement provided for every detail and every trifle that would make his imprisonment strictly solitary and bound the young man to stay there exactly fifteen years, beginning from twelve o'clock of November 14, 1870, and ending at twelve o'clock of November 14, 1885. The slightest attempt on his part to break the conditions, if only two minutes before the end, released the banker from the obligation to pay him the two million.

For the first year of his confinement, as far as one could judge from his brief notes, the prisoner suffered severely from loneliness and depression. The sounds of the piano could be heard continually day and night from his lodge. He refused wine and tobacco. Wine, he wrote, excites the desires, and desires are the worst foes of the prisoner; and besides, nothing could be drearier than drinking good wine and seeing no one. And tobacco spoilt the air of

his room. In the first year, the books he sent for were principal of light characters; novels with complicated love, sensational and fantastic stories, and so on.

In the second year, the piano was silent in the lodge, and the prisoner asked only for the classics. In the fifth-year music was audible again, and the prisoner asked for wine. Those who watched him through the window said that all that year he spent doing nothing but eating and drinking and lying on his bed, frequently yawning and angrily talking to himself. He did not read books. Sometimes at night, he would sit down to write; he would spend hours writing, and in the morning tear up all that he had written. More than once he could be heard crying.

In the second half of the sixth year, the prisoner began zealously studying languages, philosophy, and history. He threw himself eagerly into these studies - so much so that the banker had enough to do to get him the books he ordered. In the course of four years, some six hundred volumes were procured at his request. It was during this period that the banker received the following letter from his prisoner:

"My dear Jailer, I write you these lines in six languages. Show them to people who know the languages. Let them read them. If they find not one mistake, I implore you to fire a shot in the garden. That shot will show me that my efforts have not been thrown away. The geniuses of all ages and of all lands speak different languages, but the same flame burns in them all. Oh, if you only knew what unearthly happiness my soul feels now from being able to understand them!" The prisoner's desire was fulfilled. The banker ordered two shots to be fired in the garden.

Then after the tenth year, the prisoner sat immovably at the table and read nothing but the Gospel. It seemed strange to the banker that a man who in four years had mastered six hundred learned volumes should waste nearly a year over one thin book easy of comprehension. Theology and histories of religion followed the Gospels.

In the last two years of his confinement, the prisoner read an immense quantity of books quite indiscriminately. At one time he was busy with the natural sciences, and then he would ask for Byron or Shakespeare. There were notes in which he demanded at the same time books on chemistry, a manual of medicine, a novel, and some treatise on philosophy or theology. His reading suggested a man swimming in the sea among the wreckage of his ship, and trying to save his life by greedily clutching first at one spar and then at another.

The old banker remembered all this and thought:

"Tomorrow at twelve o'clock he will regain his freedom. By our agreement, I ought to pay him two million. If I do pay him, it is all over with me: I shall be utterly ruined."

Fifteen years before, his millions had been beyond his reckoning; now he was afraid to ask himself which was greater, his debts or his assets. Desperate gambling on the Stock

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Exchange, wild speculation and the excitability that he could not get over even in advancing years, had by degrees led to the decline of his fortune and the proud, fearless, self-confident millionaire had become a banker of middling rank, trembling at every rise and fall in his investments. "Cursed bet!" muttered the old man, clutching his head in despair "Why didn't the man die? He is only forty now. He will take my last penny from me, he will marry, will enjoy life, will gamble on the Exchange; while I shall look at him with envy like a beggar, and hear from him every day the same sentence: 'I am indebted to you for the happiness of my life, let me help you!' No, it is too much! The one means of being saved from bankruptcy and disgrace is the death of that man!"

It struck three o'clock, and the banker listened; everyone was asleep in the house and nothing could be heard outside but the rustling of the chilled trees. Trying to make no noise, he took from a fireproof safe the key of the door which had not been opened for fifteen years, put on his overcoat, and went out of the house.

It was dark and cold in the garden. Rain was falling. A damp-cutting wind was racing about the garden, howling and giving the trees no rest. The banker strained his eyes but could see neither the earth nor the white statues, nor the lodge, nor the trees.

Going to the spot where the lodge stood, he twice called the watchman. No answer followed. Evidently, the watchman had sought shelter from the weather and was now asleep somewhere either in the kitchen or in the greenhouse.

"If I had the pluck to carry out my intention," thought the old man, "Suspicion would fall first upon the watchman."

He felt in the darkness for the steps and the door and went into the entry of the lodge. Then he groped his way into a little passage and lighted a match. There was not a soul there. There was a bedstead with no bedding on it, and in the corner, there was a dark cast-iron stove. The seals on the door leading to the prisoner's rooms were intact.

When the match went out the old man, trembling with emotion, peeped through the little window. A candle was burning dimly in the prisoner's room. He was sitting at the table. Nothing

could be seen but his back, the hair on his head, and his hands. Open books were lying on the table, on the two easy chairs, and on the carpet near the table.

Five minutes passed and the prisoner did not once stir. Fifteen years' imprisonment had taught him to sit still. The banker tapped at the window with his finger, and the prisoner made no movement whatever in response. Then the banker cautiously broke the seals off the door and put the key in the keyhole. The rusty lock gave a grating sound and the door creaked. The banker expected to hear at once footsteps and a cry of astonishment, but three minutes passed and it was as quiet as ever in the room. He made up his mind to go in.

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At the table, a man unlike ordinary people was sitting motionless. He was a skeleton with the skin drawn tight over his bones, with long curls like a woman's and a shaggy beard. His face was yellow with an earthy tint in it, his cheeks were hollow, his back long and narrow, and the hand on which his shaggy head was propped was so thin and delicate that it was dreadful to look at it. His hair was already streaked with silver, and seeing his emaciated, aged-looking face, no one would have believed that he was only forty. He was asleep ... In front of his bowed head there lay on the table a sheet of paper on which there was something written in fine handwriting.

"Poor creature!" thought the banker, "he is asleep and most likely dreaming of the millions. And I have only to take this half-dead man, throw him on the bed, stifle him a little with the pillow, and the most conscientious expert would find no sign of a violent death. But let us first read what he has written here ... "

The banker took the page from the table and read as follows:

"Tomorrow at twelve o'clock I regain my freedom and the right to associate with other men, but before I leave this room and see the sunshine, I think it is necessary to say a few words to you. With a clear conscience, I tell you, as before God, who beholds me, that I despise freedom and life and health, and all that in your books is called the good things of the world.

"For fifteen years I have been intently studying earthly life. It is true I have not seen the earth nor men, but in your books, I have drunk fragrant wine, I have sung songs, I have hunted stags and wild boars in the forests, have loved women ... Beauties as ethereal as clouds, created by the magic of your poets and geniuses, have visited me at night, and have whispered in my ears wonderful tales that have set my brain in a whirl. In your books, I have climbed to the peaks of Elburz and Mont Blanc, and from there I have seen the sun rise and have watched it at evening flood the sky, the ocean, and the mountain-tops with gold and crimson. I have watched from there the lightning flashing over my head and cleaving the storm- clouds. I have seen green forests, fields, rivers, lakes, and towns. I have heard the singing of the sirens, and the strains of the shepherds' pipes; I have touched the wings of comely devils who flew down to converse with me of God ... In your books, I have flung myself into the bottomless pit, performed miracles, slain, burned towns, preached new religions, conquered whole kingdoms ...

"Your books have given me wisdom. All that the unresting thought of man has created in the ages is compressed into a small compass in my brain. I know that I am wiser than all of you.

"And I despise your books, I despise wisdom and the blessings of this world. It is all worthless, fleeting, illusory, and deceptive, like a mirage. You may be proud, wise, and fine, but death will wipe you off the face of the earth as though you were no more than mice burrowing under the floor, and your posterity, your history, and your immortal geniuses will burn or freeze together with the earthly globe.

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"You have lost your reason and taken the wrong path. You have taken lies for truth, and hideousness for beauty. You would marvel if owing to strange events of some sort, frogs and lizards suddenly grew on apple and orange trees instead of fruit, or if roses began to smell like a sweating horse; so I marvel at you who exchange heaven for earth. I don't want to understand you.

"To prove to you in action how I despise all that you live by, I renounce the two million of which I once dreamed as of paradise and which now I despise. To deprive me of the right to the money I shall go out from here five hours before the time fixed, and so break the compact ..."

When the banker had read this, he laid the page on the table, kissed the strange man on the head, and went out of the lodge, weeping. At no other time, even when he had lost heavily on the Stock Exchange, had he felt so great a contempt for himself.

When he got home, he lay on his bed, but his tears and emotion kept him for hours from sleeping.

The next morning the watchmen ran in with pale faces and told him they had seen the man who lived in the lodge climb out of the window into the garden, go to the gate and disappear. The banker went at once with the servants to the lodge and made sure of the flight of his prisoner. To avoid arousing unnecessary talk, he took from the table the writing in which the millions were renounced, and when he got home locked it up in the fireproof safe.

About the Author

Anton Pavlovich Chekhov's (1860–1904) life in the 1880s was hectic as he pursued dual careers. He graduated from medical school and began working as a doctor in 1884. He kept writing and eventually began publishing more serious literary works under his own name, including his first play, Ivanov (1887). The publication of his story "The Steppe," about a young boy in the Russian countryside, in 1888 was a watershed moment in his literary career. He became well-known as an author after winning a major literary award. Chekhov had published over 400 short stories and sketches by the age of 26.

Even though Chekhov is best known for his plays, some critics believe that his stories are more creative and significant. Chekhov's elusive, seemingly guileless writing style—in which what is left unsaid appears to be far more important than what is said—has defied literary critics' effective analysis and effective imitation by other creative writers.

He captured life in Russia during his period using a deceptively simple technique devoid of obtrusive literary devices. He is regarded as the pinnacle of late-nineteenth-century Russian realism. Chekhov was already well-known in Russia before his death, but he did not become internationally famous until after World War I.

"The Bet," one of the many literary pieces, is set during his lifetime in 1889 and serves as a social commentary on the pros and cons of life imprisonment versus capital punishment. He wrote it to express specific themes, particularly those concerning the importance of knowledge and the meaning of life.

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Make Connections

1. What is the main conflict in the story? Explain.
2. Why do you think the banker weeps after reading the letter? (Think of as many reasons as you can).
3. Suggest another suitable title for the story. Why did you choose that?
4. What is the moral of the story? Justify.
5. If you were to choose between a death sentence and life imprisonment, which one would it be? Why?

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4. The White Knight - *Eric Nicol*

Once upon a time there was a knight who lived in a little castle on the edge of the forest of Life. One day this knight looked in the mirror and saw that he was a White Knight.

"Lo!" he cried. "I am a White Knight and therefore represent good. I am the champion of virtue and honour and justice, and I must ride into the forest and slay the Black Knight, who is evil."

So the White Knight mounted his snow-white horse and rode into the forest to find the Black Knight and lay him in single combat.

Many miles he rode the first day, without so much as a glimpse of the Black Knight. The second day he rode even farther, still without sighting the ebony armour of mischief. Day after day he rode, deeper and deeper into the forest of Life, searching thicket and gully and even the tree tops. The Black Knight was nowhere to be seen.

Yet the White Knight found many signs of the Black Knight's presence. Again and again he passed a village in which the Black Knight had struck___a baker's shop robbed, a horse stolen, an innkeeper's daughter ravished. But always he just missed catching the doer of these deeds.

At last the White Knight had spent all his gold in the cause of his search. He was tired and hungry. Feeling his strength ebbing, he was forced to steal some buns from a bakeshop. His horse went lame, so that he was forced to replace it, silently and by darkness, with another white horse in somebody's stable. And when he stumbled, faint and exhausted, into an inn, the innkeeper's daughter gave him her bed, and because he was the White Knight in shining armour, she gave him her love, and when he was strong enough to leave the inn she cried bitterly because she could not understand that he had to go and find the Black Knight and slay him.

Through many months, under hot Sun, over frosty paths, the White Knight pressed on his search, yet all the knights he met in the forest were like himself, fairly white. They were knights of varying shades of whiteness, depending on how long they, too, had been hunting the Black Knight.

Some were sparkling white. These had just started hunting that day and irritated the White Knight by innocently asking directions to the nearest Black Knight.

Others were tattle-tale grey. And still others were so grubby, horse and rider, that the mirror in their castle would never have recognized them. Yet the White Knight was shocked the day a knight of gleaming whiteness confronted him suddenly in the forest and with a wild whoop

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thundered towards him with levelled lance. The White Knight barely had time to draw his sword and, ducking under the deadly steel, plunge it into the attacker's breast.

The White Knight dismounted and kneeled beside his mortally wounded assailant, whose visor had fallen back to reveal blond curls and a youthful face. He heard the words, whispered in anguish: "Is evil then triumphant?" And holding the dead knight in his arms he saw that beside the bright armour of the youth his own, besmirched by the long quest, looked black in the darkness of the forest.

His heart heavy with horror and grief, the White Knight who was white no more buried the boy, then slowly stripped off his own soiled mail, turned his grimy horse free to the forest, and stood naked and alone in the quiet dusk.

Before him lay a path which he slowly took, which led him to his castle on the edge of the forest. He went into the castle and closed the door behind him. He went to the mirror and saw that it no more gave back the White Knight, but only a middle-aged, naked man, a man who had stolen and ravished and killed in pursuit of evil.

Thereafter when he walked abroad from his castle he wore a coat simple colours, a cheerful motley, and never looked for more than he could see. And his hair grew slowly white, as did his fine, full beard, and the people all around called him the Good White Knight.

About the Author

Eric Nicol (1919-), a former long-time columnist for the Vancouver Sun, is one of the Canada's top humorists. He has won the Leacock Medal for humour three times, and was appointed to the Order of Canada in 2001.

Make Connections

1. Identify the symbols used in the story.
2. Can we categorise things or actions as absolute 'good' or 'bad'? Describe why.
3. What lessons can we learn from the story?

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SUPPLEMENTARY

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1. Lawley Road - *R.K.Narayan*

The Talkative Man said: For years people were not aware of the existence of a Municipality in Malgudi. The town was none the worse for it. Diseases, if they started, ran their course and disappeared, for even diseases must end someday. Dust and rubbish were blown away by the wind out of sight; drains ebbed and flowed and generally looked after themselves. The Municipality kept itself in the background and remained so till the country got its independence on the fifteenth of August 1947. History holds few records of such jubilation as was witnessed on that day from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin. Our Municipal Council caught the inspiration. They swept the streets, cleaned the drains and hoisted flags all over the place. Their hearts warmed up when a procession with flags and music passed through their streets.

The Municipal Chairman looked down benignly from his balcony, muttering, 'We have done our bit for this great occasion.' I believe one or two members of the Council who were with him saw tears in his eyes. He was a man who had done well for himself as a supplier of blankets to the army during the war, later spending a great deal of his gains in securing the chairmanship. That's an epic by itself and does not concern us now. My present story is different. The satisfaction the Chairman now felt was, however, short-lived. In about a week, when the bunting was torn off, he became quite dispirited. I used to visit him almost every day, trying to make a living out of news reports for an upcountry paper which paid me two rupees for every inch of published news. Every month I could measure out about ten inches of news in that paper, which was mostly a somewhat idealized account of municipal affairs.

This made me a great favourite there. I walked in and out of the Municipal Chairman's office constantly. Now he looked so unhappy that I was forced to ask, 'What is wrong, Mr Chairman?' 'I feel we have not done enough,' he replied. 'Enough of what?' I asked.

'Nothing to mark off the great event.' He sat brooding and then announced, 'Come what may, I am going to do something great!' He called up an Extraordinary Meeting of the Council and harangued them, and at once they decided to nationalize the names of all the streets and parks, in honour of the birth of independence. They made a start with the park at Market Square. It used to be called the Coronation Park—whose coronation God alone knew; it might have been the coronation of Victoria or of Asoka. No one bothered about it. Now the old board was uprooted and lay on the lawn, and a brand-new sign stood in its place declaring it henceforth to be Hamara Hindustan Park.

The other transformation, however, could not be so smoothly worked out. Mahatma Gandhi Road was the most sought-after name. Eight different ward councillors were after it. There were six others who wanted to call the roads in front of their houses Nehru Road or

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Netaji Subash Bose Road. Tempers were rising and I feared they might come to blows. There came a point when, I believe, the Council just went mad. It decided to give the same name to four different streets. Well, sir, even in the most democratic or patriotic town it is not feasible to have two roads bearing the same name. The result was seen within a fortnight. The town became unrecognizable with new names. Gone were the Market Road, North Road, Chitra Road, Vinayak Mudali Street and so on. In their place appeared the names, repeated in four different places, of all the ministers, deputy ministers and the members of the Congress Working Committee.

Of course, it created a lot of hardship—letters went where they were not wanted, and people were not able to say where they lived or direct others there. The town became a wilderness with all its landmarks gone.

The Chairman was gratified with his inspired work—but not for long. He became restless again and looked for fresh fields of action.

At the corner of Lawley Extension and Market there used to be a statue. People had got so used to it that they never bothered to ask whose it was or even to look up. It was generally used by the birds as a perch. The Chairman suddenly remembered that it was the statue of Sir Frederick Lawley. The Extension had been named after him. Now it was changed to Gandhi Nagar, and it seemed impossible to keep Lawley's statue there any longer. The Council unanimously resolved to remove it. The Council with the Chairman sallied forth triumphantly the next morning and circumambulated the statue. They now realized their mistake. The statue towered twenty feet above them and seemed to arise from a pedestal of molten lead. In their imagination, they had thought that a vigorous resolution would be enough to topple down the statue of this satrap, but now they found that it stood with the firmness of a mountain. They realized that Britain when she was here, had attempted to raise herself on no mean foundation. But it made them only firmer in their resolve. If it was going to mean blasting up that part of the town for the purpose, they would do it. For they unearthed a lot of history about Sir Frederick Lawley. He was a combination of Attila, the Scourge of Europe, and Nadir Shah, with the craftiness of a Machiavelli. He subjugated Indians with the sword and razed to the ground the villages from which he heard the slightest murmur of protest. He never countenanced Indians except when they approached him on their knees.

People dropped their normal occupations and loitered around the statue, wondering how they could have tolerated it for so many years. The gentleman seemed to smile derisively at the nation now, with his arms locked behind and his sword dangling from his belt. There could be no doubt that he must have been the worst tyrant imaginable: the true picture—with breeches and wig and white waistcoat and that hard, determined look—of all that has been hatefully familiar in the British period of Indian history. They shuddered when they thought of the fate of their ancestors who had to bear the tyrannies of this man.

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Next, the Municipality called for tenders. A dozen contractors sent in their estimates, the lowest standing at fifty thousand rupees, for removing the statue and carting it to the Municipal Office, where they were already worried about its housing of it. The Chairman thought it over and told me, 'Why don't you take it yourself? I will give you the statue free if you do not charge us anything for removing it.' I had thought till then that only my municipal friends were mad, but now I found I could be just as mad as they. I began to calculate the whole affair as a pure investment. Suppose it cost me five thousand rupees to dislodge and move the statue (I knew the contractors were overestimating), and I sold it as a metal for six thousand . . . About three tons of metal might fetch anything. Or I could probably sell it to the British Museum or Westminster Abbey. I saw myself throwing up the upcountry paper job.

The Council had no difficulty in passing a resolution permitting me to take the statue away. I made elaborate arrangements for the task . . . I borrowed money from my father-in-law, promising him a fantastic rate of interest. I recruited a team of fifty coolies to hack the pedestal. I stood over them like a slave-driver and kept shouting instructions. They put down their implements at six in the evening and returned to their attack early the next day. They were specially recruited from Koppal, where the men's limbs were hardened by generations of teak cutting in Mempi Forest.

We hacked for ten days. No doubt we succeeded in chipping the pedestal here and there, but that was all; the statue showed no sign of moving. At this rate, I feared I might become bankrupt in a fortnight. I received permission from the District Magistrate to acquire a few sticks of dynamite, cordoned off the area and lighted the fuse. I brought down the knight from his pedestal without injuring any limb. Then it took me three days to reach the house with my booty. It was stretched out on a specially designed carriage drawn by several bullocks. The confusion brought about by my passage along Market Road, the crowd that followed uttering jokes, the incessant shouting and instructions I had to be giving, the blinding heat of the day, Sir F.'s carriage coming to a halt at every inconvenient spot and angle, moving neither forwards nor backwards, holding up the traffic on all sides, and darkness coming on suddenly with the statue nowhere near my home—all this was a nightmare I wish to pass over. I mounted guard over him on the roadside at night. As he lay on his back staring at the stars, I felt sorry for him and said, 'Well, this is what you get for being such a haughty imperialist. It never pays.' In due course, he was safely lodged in my small house. His head and shoulders were in my front hall, and the rest of him stretched out into the street through the doorway. It was an obliging community there at Kabir Lane and nobody minded this obstruction.

The Municipal Council passed a resolution thanking me for my services. I wired this news to my paper, tacking onto it a ten-inch story about the statue. A week later the Chairman came to my house in a state of agitation. I seated him on the chest of the tyrant. He said, 'I have bad news for you. I wish you had not sent up that news item about the statue. See these

. . .' He held out a sheaf of telegrams. They were from every kind of historical society in India, all protesting against the removal of the statue. We had all been misled about Sir F. All the present history pertained to a different Lawley of the time of Warren Hastings. Frederick Lawley (of the statue) was a military governor who had settled down here after the Mutiny. He cleared the jungles and almost built the town of Malgudi. He established here the first cooperative society for the whole of India, and the first canal system by which thousands of acres of land were irrigated from the Sarayu, which had been dissipating itself till then. He established this, he established that, and he died in the great Sarayu floods while attempting to save the lives of villagers living on its banks. He was the first Englishman to advise the British Parliament to involve more and more Indians in all Indian affairs.

In one of his dispatches, he was said to have declared, 'Britain must quit India someday for her own good.'

The Chairman said, 'The government have ordered us to reinstate the statue.' 'Impossible!' I cried. 'This is my statue and I will keep it. I like to collect statues of national heroes.' This heroic sentiment impressed no one. Within a week all the newspapers in the country were full of Sir Frederick Lawley. The public caught the enthusiasm. They paraded in front of my house, shouting slogans. They demanded the statue back. I offered to abandon it if the Municipality at least paid my expenses in bringing it here. The public viewed me as their enemy. 'This man is trying to black-market even a statue,' they remarked. Stung by it, I wrote a placard and hung it on my door: STATUE FOR SALE. TWO AND A HALF TONS OF EXCELLENT METAL. IDEAL GIFT FOR A PATRIOTIC FRIEND. OFFERS ABOVE TEN THOUSAND WILL BE CONSIDERED. It infuriated them and made them want to kick me, but they had been brought up in a tradition of non-violence and so they picketed my house; they lay across my door in relays holding a flag and shouting slogans. I had sent away my wife and children to the village in order to make room for the statue in my house, and so this picketing did not bother me—only I had to use the back door a great deal. The Municipality sent me a notice of prosecution under the Ancient Monuments Act which I repudiated in suitable terms. We were getting into bewildering legalities—a battle of wits between me and the municipal lawyer. The only nuisance about it was that an abnormal quantity of correspondence developed and choked up an already congested household.

I clung to my statue, secretly despairing how the matter was ever going to end. I longed to be able to stretch myself fully in my own house.

Six months later relief came. The government demanded a report from the Municipality on the question of the statue, and this together with other lapses on the part of the Municipality made them want to know why the existing Council should not be dissolved and re-elections ordered. I called on the Chairman and said, 'You will have to do something grand now. Why not acquire my house as a National Trust?'

'Why should I?' he asked.

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'Because,' I said, 'Sir F. is there. You will never be able to cart him to his old place. It'll be a waste of public money. Why not put him up where he is now? He has stayed in the other place too long. I'm prepared to give you my house for a reasonable price.'

'But our funds don't permit it,' he wailed.

'I'm sure you have enough funds of your own. Why should you depend on municipal funds? It'll indeed be a grand gesture on your part, unique in India . . .' I suggested he ought to relieve himself of some of his old blanket gains. 'After all, . . . how much more you will have to spend if you have to fight another election!' It appealed to him. We arrived at a figure. He was very happy when he saw in the papers a few days later: 'The Chairman of Malgudi Municipality has been able to buy back as a present for the nation the statue of Sir Frederick Lawley. He proposed to install it in a newly acquired property which is shortly to be converted into a park. The Municipal Council have resolved that Kabir Lane shall be changed to Lawley Road.'

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2. God Sees the Truth, but Waits - *Leo Tolstoy*

In the town of Vladimir lived a young merchant named Ivan Dmitrich Aksionov. He had two shops and a house of his own. Aksionov was a handsome, fair-haired, curly-headed fellow, full of fun, and very fond of singing. When quite a young man he had been given to drink and was riotous when he had had too much; but after he married, he gave up drinking, except now and then.

One summer Aksionov was going to the Nizhny Fair, and as he bade goodbye to his family, his wife said to him, "Ivan Dmitrich, do not start to-day; I have had a bad dream about you.

" Aksionov laughed, and said, "You are afraid that when I get to the fair I shall go on a spree." His wife replied: "I do not know what I am afraid of; all I know is that I had a bad dream. I dreamt you returned from the town, and when you took off your cap, I saw that your hair was quite grey."

Aksionov laughed. "That's a lucky sign," said he. "See if I don't sell out all my goods, and bring you some presents from the fair."

So, he said goodbye to his family and drove away.

When he had travelled halfway, he met a merchant whom he knew, and they put up at the same inn for the night. They had some tea together and then went to bed in adjoining rooms.

It was not Aksionov's habit to sleep late, and, wishing to travel while it was still cool, he aroused his driver before dawn, and told him to put in the horses.

Then he made his way across to the landlord of the inn (who lived in a cottage at the back), paid his bill, and continued his journey. When he had gone about twenty-five miles, he stopped for the horses to be fed. Aksionov rested awhile in the passage of the inn, then he stepped out into the porch, and, ordering a samovar to be heated, got out his guitar and began to play.

Suddenly a troika drove up with tinkling bells and an official alighted, followed by two soldiers. He came to Aksionov and began to question him, asking him who he was and whence he came. Aksionov answered him fully, and said, "Won't you have some tea with me?" But the official went on cross-questioning him and asking him. "Where did you spend last night? Were you alone, or with a fellow merchant? Did you see the other merchant this morning? Why did you leave the inn before dawn?"

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Aksionov wondered why he was asked all these questions, but he described all that had happened, and then added, "Why do you cross-question me as if I were a thief or a robber? I am travelling on business of my own, and there is no need to question me."

Then the official, calling the soldiers, said, "I am the police officer of this district, and I question you because the merchant with whom you spent last night has been found with his throat cut. We must search your things."

They entered the house. The soldiers and the police officer unstrapped Aksionov's luggage and searched it. Suddenly the officer drew a knife out of a bag, crying, "Whose knife is this?"

Aksionov looked, and seeing a blood-stained knife taken from his bag, he was frightened.

"How is it that there is blood on this knife?"

Aksionov tried to answer, but could hardly utter a word, and only stammered: "I-- don't know--not mine."

Then the police officer said: "This morning the merchant was found in bed with his throat cut. You are the only person who could have done it. The house was locked from the inside, and no one else was there. Here is this blood-stained knife in your bag and your face and manner betray you! Tell me how you killed him, and how much money you stole?"

Aksionov swore he had not done it; that he had not seen the merchant after they had had tea together; that he had no money except eight thousand rubles of his own, and that the knife was not his. But his voice was broken, his face pale, and he trembled with fear as though he went guilty.

The police officer ordered the soldiers to bind Aksionov and put him in the cart. As they tied his feet together and flung him into the cart, Aksionov crossed himself and wept. His money and goods were taken from him, and he was sent to the nearest town and imprisoned there. Enquiries as to his character were made in Vladimir. The merchants and other inhabitants of that town said that in former days he used to drink and waste his time, but that he was a good man. Then the trial came on: he was charged with murdering a merchant from Ryazan and robbing him of twenty thousand rubles.

His wife was in despair and did not know what to believe. Her children were all quite small; one was a baby at her breast. Taking them all with her, she went to the town where her husband was in jail. At first, she was not allowed to see him; but after much begging, she obtained permission from the officials, and was taken to him. When she saw her husband in prison dress and in chains, shut up with thieves and criminals, she fell down and did not come to her senses for a long time. Then she drew her children to her and sat down near him. She told him of things at home and asked about what had happened to him. He told her all, and she asked, "What can we do now?"

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"We must petition the Czar not to let an innocent man perish."

His wife told him that she had sent a petition to the Czar, but it had not been accepted.

Aksionov did not reply, but only looked downcast.

Then his wife said, "It was not for nothing I dreamt your hair had turned grey. You remember? You should not have started that day." And passing her fingers through his hair, she said: "Vanya dearest, tell your wife the truth; was it not you who did it?"

"So, you, too, suspect me!" said Aksionov, and, hiding his face in his hands, he began to weep. Then a soldier came to say that the wife and children must go away, and Aksionov said goodbye to his family for the last time.

When they were gone, Aksionov recalled what had been said, and when he remembered that his wife also had suspected him, he said to himself, "It seems that only God can know the truth; it is to Him alone we must appeal, and from Him alone expect mercy."

And Aksionov wrote no more petitions; gave up all hope, and only prayed to God.

Aksionov was condemned to be flogged and sent to the mines. So, he was flogged with a knot, and when the wounds made by the knot were healed, he was driven to Siberia with other convicts.

For twenty-six years Aksionov lived as a convict in Siberia. His hair turned white as snow, and his beard grew long, thin, and grey. All his mirth went; he stooped; he walked slowly, spoke little, and never laughed, but he often prayed.

In prison, Aksionov learnt to make boots and earned a little money, with which he bought The Lives of the Saints. He read this book when there was light enough in the prison, and on Sundays, in the prison church he read the lessons and sang in the choir; for his voice was still good.

The prison authorities liked Aksionov for his meekness, and his fellow prisoners respected him: they called him "Grandfather," and "The Saint." When they wanted to petition the prison authorities about anything, they always made Aksionov their spokesman, and when there were quarrels among the prisoners, they came to him to put things right, and to judge the matter.

No news reached Aksionov from his home, and he did not even know if his wife and children were still alive.

One day a fresh gang of convicts came to the prison. In the evening the old prisoners collected around the new ones and asked them what towns or villages they came from, and what they were sentenced for. Among the rest, Aksionov sat down near the newcomers and listened with downcast air to what was said.

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One of the new convicts, a tall, strong man of sixty, with a closely-cropped grey beard, was telling the others what he had been arrested for.

"Well, friends," he said, "I only took a horse that was tied to a sledge, and I was arrested and accused of stealing. I said I had only taken it to get home quicker and had then let it go; besides, the driver was a personal friend of mine. So, I said, 'It's all right.' 'No,' said they, 'you stole it.' But how or where I stole it, they could not say. I once really did something wrong, and ought by right to have come here long ago, but that time I was not found out. Now I have been sent here for nothing at all... Eh, but it's lies I'm telling you; I've been to Siberia before, but I did not stay long."

"Where are you from?" asked someone.

"From Vladimir. My family are from that town. My name is Makar, and they also call me Semyonich."

Aksionov raised his head and said: "tell me, Semyonich, do you know anything of the merchants Aksionov of Vladimir? Are they still alive?"

"Know them? Of course, I do. The Aksionovs are rich, though their father is in Siberia: a sinner like ourselves, it seems! As for you, Gran'dad, how did you come here?"

Aksionov did not like to speak of his misfortune. He only sighed, and said, "For my sins, I have been in prison these twenty-six years."

"What sins?" asked Makar Semyonich.

But Aksionov only said, "Well, well--I must have deserved it!" He would have said no more, but his companions told the newcomers how Aksionov came to be in Siberia; how someone had killed a merchant and had put the knife among Aksionov's things, and Aksionov had been unjustly condemned.

When Makar Semyonich heard this, he looked at Aksionov, slapped his own knee, and exclaimed, "Well, this is wonderful! Really wonderful! But how old you've grown, Gran'dad!"

The others asked him why he was so surprised, and where he had seen Aksionov before, but Makar Semyonich did not reply. He only said: "It's wonderful that we should meet here, lads!"

These words made Aksionov wonder whether this man knew who had killed the merchant; so, he said, "Perhaps, Semyonich, you have heard of that affair, or maybe you've seen me before?"

"How could I help to hear? The world's full of rumours. But it's a long time ago, and I've forgotten what I heard."

"Perhaps you heard who killed the merchant?" asked Aksionov. Makar Semyonich laughed, and replied: "It must have been him in whose bag the knife was found! If someone else hid the knife there, 'He's not a thief till he's caught,' as the saying is. How could anyone put a knife into your bag while it was under your head? It would surely have woken you up."

When Aksionov heard these words, he felt sure this was the man who had killed the merchant. He rose and went away. All that night Aksionov lay awake. He felt terribly unhappy, and all sorts of images rose in his mind. There was the image of his wife as she was when he parted from her to go to the fair. He saw her as if she were present; her face and her eyes rose before him; he heard her speak and laugh. Then he saw his children, quite a little, as they: were at that time: one with a little cloak on, another at his mother's breast. And then he remembered himself as he used to be--young and merry. He remembered how he sat playing the guitar on the porch of the inn where he was arrested, and how free from care he had been. He saw, in his mind, the place where he was flogged, the executioner, and the people standing around; the chains, the convicts, all the twenty-six years of his prison life, and his premature old age. The thought of it all made him so wretched that he was ready to kill himself.

"And it's all that villain's doing!" thought Aksionov. And his anger was so great against Makar Semyonich that he longed for vengeance, even if he himself should perish for it. He kept repeating prayers all night, but could get no peace. During the day he did not go near Makar Semyonich, nor even look at him.

A fortnight passed in this way. Aksionov could not sleep at night, and was so miserable that he did not know what to do.

One night as he was walking about the prison, he noticed some earth that came rolling out from under one of the shelves on which the prisoners slept. He stopped to see what it was. Suddenly Makar Semyonich crept out from under the shelf and looked up at Aksionov with a frightened face. Aksionov tried to pass without looking at him, but Makar seized his hand and told him that he had dug a hole under the wall, getting rid of the earth by putting it into his high boots, and emptying it out every day on the road when the prisoners were driven to their work.

"Just you keep a quiet, old man, and you shall get out too. If you blab, they'll flog the life out of me, but I will kill you first.

" Aksionov trembled with anger as he looked at his enemy. He drew his hand away, saying, "I have no wish to escape, and you have no need to kill me; you killed me long ago! As to telling of you--I may do so or not, as God shall direct.

" Next day, when the convicts were led out to work, the convoy soldiers noticed that one or other of the prisoners emptied some earth out of his boots. The prison was searched and the tunnel was found. The Governor came and questioned all the prisoners to find out who

had dug the hole. They all denied any knowledge of it. Those who knew would not betray Makar Semyonich, knowing he would be flogged almost to death. At last, the Governor turned to Aksionov whom he knew to be a just man, and said: "You are a truthful old man; tell me, before God, who dug the hole?"

Makar Semyonich stood as if he were quite unconcerned, looking at the Governor and not so much as glancing at Aksionov. Aksionov's lips and hands trembled, and for a long time, he could not utter a word. He thought, "Why should I screen him who ruined my life? Let him pay for what I have suffered. But if I tell, they will probably flog the life out of him, and maybe I suspect him wrongly. And, after all, what good would it be to me?"

"Well, old man," repeated the Governor, "tell me the truth: who has been digging under the wall?"

Aksionov glanced at Makar Semyonich, and said, "I cannot say your honour. It is not God's will that I should tell! Do what you like with me; I am in your hands."

However much the Governor! tried, Aksionov would say no more, and so the matter had to be left.

That night, when Aksionov was lying on his bed and just beginning to doze, someone came quietly and sat down on his bed. He peered through the darkness and recognised Makar.

"What more do you want of me?" asked Aksionov. "Why have you come here?"

Makar Semyonich was silent. So Aksionov sat up and said, "What do you want? Go away, or I will call the guard!" Makar Semyonich bent close over Aksionov, and whispered, "Ivan Dmitrich, forgive me!"

"What for?" asked Aksionov.

"It was I who killed the merchant and hid the knife among your things. I meant to kill you too, but I heard a noise outside, so I hid the knife in your bag and escaped out of the window."

Aksionov was silent and did not know what to say.

Makar Semyonich slid off the bed-shelf and knelt on the ground. "Ivan Dmitrich," said he, "forgive me! For the love of God, forgive me! I will confess that it was I who killed the merchant, and you will be released and can go to your home."

"It is easy for you to talk," said Aksionov, "but I have suffered for you these twenty-six years. Where could I go now?... My wife is dead, and my children have forgotten me. I have nowhere to go..."

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Makar Semyonich did not rise but beat his head on the floor. "Ivan Dmitrich, forgive me!" he cried. "When they flogged me with the knot it was not so hard to bear as it is to see you now ... yet you had pity on me, and did not tell. For Christ's sake forgive me, wretch, that I am!" And he began to sob.

When Aksionov heard him sobbing he, too, began to weep. "God will forgive you!" said he. "Maybe I am a hundred times worse than you." And at these words, his heart grew light, and the longing for home left him. He no longer had any desire to leave the prison, but only hoped for his last hour to come.

In spite of what Aksionov had said, Makar Semyonich confessed, his guilt. But when the order for his release came, Aksionov was already dead.

3. Most Beautiful - *Ruskin Bond*

I don't quite know why I found that particular town so heartless, perhaps because of its crowded, claustrophobic atmosphere, its congested and insanitary lanes, its weary people . . . One day I found the children of the bazaar tormenting a deformed retarded boy.

About a dozen boys, between the ages of eight and fourteen, were jeering at the retard, who was making things worse for himself by confronting the gang and shouting abuses at them. The boy was twelve or thirteen, judging by his face; but had the height of an eight or nine-year old. His legs were thick, short and bowed. He had a small chest but his arms were long, making him rather ape-like in his attitude. His forehead and cheeks were pitted with the scars of small-pox. He was ugly by normal standards, and the gibberish he spoke did nothing to discourage his tormentors. They threw mud and stones at him, while keeping well out of his reach. Few· can be more cruel than a gang of schoolboys in high spirits.

I was an uneasy observer of the scene. I felt that I ought to do something to put a stop to it, but lacked the courage to interfere. It was only when a stone struck the boy on the face, cutting open his cheek, that I lost my normal discretion and ran in amongst the boys, shouting at them and clouting those I could reach. They scattered like defeated soldiery.

I was surprised at my own daring, and rather relieved when the boys did not return. I took the frightened, angry boy by the hand, and asked him where he lived. He drew away from me, but I held on to his fat little fingers and told him I would take him home. He mumbled something incoherent and pointed down a narrow line. I led him away from the bazaar.

I said very little to the boy because it was obvious that he

had some defect of speech. When he stopped outside a door set in a high wall, I presumed that we had come to his house.

The door was opened by a young woman. The boy immediately threw his arms around her and burst into tears. I had not been prepared for the boy's mother. Not only did she look perfectly normal physically, but she was also strikingly handsome. She must have been about thirty-five.

She thanked me for bringing her son home, and asked me into the house. The boy withdrew into a comer of the sitting-room, and sat on his haunches in gloomy silence, his bow legs looking even more grotesque in this posture. His mother offered me tea but I asked for a glass of water. She asked the boy to fetch it, and he did so, thrusting the glass into my hands without looking me in the face.

"Suresh is my only son", she said; "My husband is disappointed in him, but I love my son. Do you think he is very ugly?"

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"Ugly is just a word", I said. "Like beauty. They mean different things to different people. What did the poet say? "Beauty is truth, truth is beauty." But if beauty and truth are same thing why have different words? There are no absolutes except birth and death."

The boy squatted down at her feet, cradling his head in her lap. With the end of her sari, she began wiping his face. "Have you tried teaching him to talk properly?" I asked.

"He has been like this since childhood. The doctors can do nothing."

While we were talking the father came in, and the boy slunk away to the kitchen. The man thanked me curtly for bringing the boy home, and seemed at once to dismiss the whole matter from his mind. He seemed preoccupied with business matters. I got the impression that he had long since resigned himself to having a deformed son, and his early disappointment had changed to indifference. When I got up to leave, his wife a accompanied me to the front door.

"Please do not mind if my husband is a little rude," she said. "His business is not going too well. If you would like to come again please do. Suresh does not meet many people who treat him like a normal person."

I knew that I wanted to visit them again-more out of sympathy for the mother than out of pity for the boy. But I realised that she was not interested in me personally, except as a possible mentor for her son.

After about a week I went to the house again.

Suresh' s father was away on a business trip, and I stayed for lunch. The boy's mother made some delicious parathas stuffed with ground radish, and served it with pickle and curds. If Suresh ate like an animal, gobbling his food, I was not far behind him. His mother encouraged him to overeat. He was morose and uncommunicative when he ate, but when I suggested that he come with me for a walk, he looked up eagerly. At the same time a look of fear passed across his mother's face.

"Will it be all right?" she asked, "You have seen how other children treat him. That day he slipped out of the house without telling anyone."

"We won't go towards the bazaar", I said. "[was thinking of a walk in the fields."

Suresh made encouraging noises and thumped the table with his fists to show that he wanted to go. Finally his mother consented, and the boy and I set off down the road.

He could not walk very fast because of his awkward legs, but this gave me a chance to point out to him anything that I thought might arouse his interest-parrots squabbling in a banyan tree, buffaloes wallowing in a muddy pond, a group of hermaphrodite musicians strolling down the road. Suresh took a keen interest in the hermaphrodites, perhaps because they were grotesque in their own way: tall, masculine-looking people dressed in women's

garments, ankle-bells jingling on their heavy feet, and their long, gaunt faces made up with rouge and mascara. For the first time, I heard Suresh laugh. Apparently, he had discovered that there were human beings even odder than he. And like any human being, he lost no time in deriding them.

"Don't laugh", I said. "They were born that way, just as you were born the way you are."

But he did not take me seriously and grinned, his wide mouth revealing surprisingly strong teeth.

We reached the dry river-bed on the outskirts of the town, and crossing it entered a field of yellow mustard flowers. The mustard stretched away towards the edge of a sub-tropical forest. Seeing trees in the distance, Suresh began to run towards them, shouting and clapping his hands. He had never been out of town before. The courtyard of his house and, occasionally, the road to the bazaar, were all that he had seen of the world. Now the trees beckoned him.

We found a small stream running through the forest and I took off my clothes and leapt into the cool water, inviting Suresh to join me. He hesitated about taking off his clothes; but after watching me for a while, his eagerness to join me overcame his self-consciousness, and he exposed his misshapen little body to the soft spring sunshine.

He waded clumsily towards me. The water which came only to my knees reached up to his chest.

"Come, I'll teach you, to swim", I said And lifting him up from the waist, I held him afloat. He spluttered and thrashed around, but stopped struggling when he found that he could stay afloat. He spluttered and thrashed around, but stopped struggling when he found that he could stay afloat.

Later, sitting on the banks of the stream, he discovered a small turtle sitting over a hole in the ground in which it had laid the eggs. He had never watched a turtle before, and watched it in fascination, while it drew its head into its shell and then thrust it out again with extreme circumspection. He must have felt that the turtle resembled him in some respects, with its squat legs, rounded back, and tendency to hide its head from the world.

After that, I went to the boy's house about twice a week, and we nearly always visited the stream. Before long Suresh was able to swim a short distance. Knowing how to swimthis was something the bazaar boys never learnt-gave him a certain confidence, made his life something more than a one-dimensional existence.

The more I saw Suresh, the less conscious was I of his deformities. For me, he was fast becoming the norm; while the children of the bazaar seemed abnormal in their very similarity to each other. That he was still conscious of his ugliness-and how could he ever cease to be-was made clear to me about two months after our first meeting.

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We were coming home through the mustard fields, which had turned from yellow to green, when I noticed that we were being followed by a small goat. It appeared to have been separated from its mother, and now attached itself to us. Though I tried driving the kid away, it continued tripping along at our heels, and when Suresh found that it persisted in accompanying us, he picked it up and took it home.

The kid became his main obsession during the next few days. He fed it with his own hands and allowed it to sleep at the foot of his bed. It was a pretty little kid, with fairy horns and an engaging habit of doing a hop, skip and jump when moving about the house. Everyone admired the pet, and the boy's mother and I both remarked on how pretty it was.

His resentment against the animal began to show when others started admiring it. He suspected that they found it better looking than its owner. I remember finding him squatting in front of a low mirror, holding the kid in his arms, and studying their reflections in the glass. After a few minutes of this, Suresh thrust the goat away. When he noticed that I was watching him, he got up and left the room without looking at me.

Two days later, when I called at the house, I found his mother looking very upset. I could see that she had been crying. But she seemed relieved to see me, and took me into the sitting room. When Suresh saw me, he got up from the floor and ran to the verandah.

"What's wrong?" I asked.

"It was the little goat", she said. "Suresh killed it."

She told me how Suresh, in a sudden and uncontrollable rage, had thrown a brick at the kid, breaking its skull. What had upset her more than the animal's death was the fact that Suresh had shown no regret for what he had done.

"I'll talk to him", I said, and went out on the verandah; but the boy had disappeared.

"He must have gone to the bazaar", said his mother anxiously. "He does that when he's upset. Sometimes I think he likes to be teased and beaten."

He was not in the bazaar. I found him near the stream, lying flat on his belly in the soft mud, chasing tadpoles with a stick.

"Why did you kill the goat?" I asked. He shrugged his shoulders.

"Did you enjoy killing it?"

He looked at me and smiled and nodded his head vigorously.

"How very cruel;" I said. But I did not mean it. I knew that his cruelty was no different from mine or anyone else's; only his was an untrammeled cruelty, primitive, as yet undisguised by civilizing restraints."

Reprint 2024

He took a pen-knife from his shirt pocket opened it, and held it out to me by the blade. He pointed to his bare stomach and motioned me to thrust the blade into his belly. He had such a mournful look on his face (the result of having offended me and not in remorse for the goat-sacrifice) that I had to burst out laughing.

"You are a funny fellow", I said, taking the knife from him and throwing it into the stream. "Come, let's have a swim"

We swam all afternoon, and Suresh went home smiling. His mother and I conspired to keep the whole affair a secret from his father - who had not in any case, been aware of the goat's presence.

Suresh seemed quite contented during the following weeks. And then I received a letter offering me a job in Delhi and I knew that I would have to take it, as I was earning very little by my writing at the time.

The boy's mother was disappointed, even depressed when I told her I would be going away. I think she had grown quite fond of me. But the boy, always unpredictable, displayed no feeling at all. I felt a little hurt by his apparent indifference. Did our weeks of companionship mean nothing to him? I told myself that he probably did not realize that he might never see me again.

On the evening my train was to leave, I went to the house to say goodbye. The boy's mother made me promise to write to them, but Suresh seemed cold and distant, and refused to sit near me or take my hand. He made me feel that I was an outsider again one of the mob throwing stones at odd and frightening people.

At eight o'clock that evening I entered a third-class compartment and, after a brief scuffle with several other travellers, succeeded in securing a seat near a window. It enabled me to look down the length of the platform.

The guard had blown his whistle and the train was about to leave, when I saw Suresh standing near the station turnstile, looking up and down the platform.

"Suresh!" I shouted and he heard me and came hobbling along the platform. He had run the gauntlet of bazaar during the busiest hour of the evening.

"I'll be back next year." I called.

The train had begun moving out of the station, and as I waved to Suresh, he broke into a stumbling run, waving his arms in frantic, restraining gestures.

I saw him stumble against someone's bedding.

Reprint 2024

POETRY

Reprint 2024

1. A Red Palm - *Garay Soto*

You're in this dream of cotton plants.
You raise a hoe, swing, and the first weeds
Fall with a sigh. You take another step,
Chop, and the sigh comes again,
Until you yourself are breathing that way
With each step, a sigh that will follow you into town.

That's hours later. The sun is a red blister
Coming up in your palm. Your back is strong,
Young, not yet the broken chair
In an abandoned school of dry spiders.
Dust settles on your forehead, dirt
Smiles under each fingernail.
You chop, step, and by the end of the first row,
You can buy one splendid fish for wife
And three sons. Another row, another fish,
Until you have enough and move on to milk,
Bread, meat. Ten hours and the cupboards creak.
You can rest in the back yard under a tree.
Your hands twitch on your lap,
Not unlike the fish on a pier or the bottom
Of a boat. You drink iced tea. The minutes jerk
Like flies.

It's dusk, now night,
And the lights in your home are on.
That costs money, yellow light
In the kitchen. That's thirty steps,
You say to your hands,
Now shaped into binoculars.
You could raise them to your eyes:
You were a fool in school, now look at you.
You're a giant among cotton plants.
Now you see your oldest boy, also running.
Papa, he says, it's time to come in.

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You pull him into your lap
And ask, What's forty times nine?
He knows as well as you, and you smile.
The wind makes peace with the trees,
The stars strike themselves in the dark.

You get up and walk with the sigh of cotton plants.
You go to sleep with a red sun on your palm,
The sore light you see when you first stir in bed.

About the Author

Gary Soto, born and raised in Fresno California, is the author of ten poetry collections for adults, most notably NEW AND SELECTED POEMS, a 1995 finalist for both the *Los Angeles Time Book Award* and the *National Book Award*. His recollection *LIVING UP THE STREET* received a *Before Columbus Foundation 1985 AMERICAN BOOK AWARD.* His poems have appeared in many literary magazines, including *The Nation, Ploughshares, The Iowa Review, Ontario Review* and most frequently Poetry, which honored him with the Bess Hokin Prize and *The Levinson Award* and by featuring him in *Poets in Person*.

He serves as the Young People's Ambassador for the California Rural Legal Assistance (CRLA) and the United Farm Workers Of America (UFW). He lives in Berkley, CA.

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2. “Hope” is the thing with feathers - *Emily Dickinson*

“Hope” is the thing with feathers___
That perches in the soul___
And sings the tune without the words___
And never stops-at all___
And sweetest-in the Gale-is heard___
And sore must be the storm___
That could abash the little Bird
That kept so many warm___
I’ve heard it in the chillest land___
And on the strangest Sea___
Yet, never, in Extremity,
It asked a crumb-of Me.

About the Author

Dickinson was born in Amherst, Massachusetts, to a family well known for educational and political activity. She was educated at the Amherst Academy (1834-1837) and Mount Holyoke Female Seminary (1847-48). Around 1850 Dickinson started to write poems, first in fairly conventional style, but after ten years of practice she began to give room for experiments. From 1858 she started assembling her poems in the packets of ‘fascicles’, which she bound herself with needle and thread.

After the civil war Dickinson restricted her contacts outside Amherst to exchange of letters, dressed only in white and saw few of the visitors who came to visit her. In fact, she spent most of her time in her room. Dickinson’s emotional life remains mysterious, despite much speculation about a possible disappointed love affair.

After Dickinson’s death, her sister Lavinia brought out her poems. She co-edited three volumes from 1891-1896. Dickinson’s poem came to public in 1945 in the form of Bolts Of Melody, transcribed and published by Dickinson Bianchi, the poet’s niece.

Reprint 2024

3. The Solitary Reaper – *William Wordsworth*

Rationale

Wordsworth's "The Solitary Reaper" is one of his most well-known post-Lyrical Ballads lyrics. It was inspired by his sister Dorothy and his stay in the Scottish village of Strathyre in the parish of Balquhidder in September 1803. The poem serves to "praise the beauty of music and its fluid expressive beauty," the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings; it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity," identified by Wordsworth as the heart of poetry. On the most obvious level, the poem represents the ability of art to transport and inspire the audience, emphasising the value of such forms of expression. The song, on the other hand, is an unusually dynamic symbol that blends in with the poem's other symbolic elements.

This is a good poem to read aloud to students, besides, there are rhythmic, visual and auditory imageries for students to explore.

Behold her, single in the field,
Yon solitary Highland Lass!
Reaping and singing by herself;
Stop here, or gently pass!
Alone she cuts and binds the grain,
And sings a melancholy strain;
O listen! for the Vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound.

No Nightingale did ever chaunt
More welcome notes to weary bands
Of travellers in some shady haunt,
Among Arabian sands:
A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings? —
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago:
Or is it some more humble lay,

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Familiar matter of today
Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
That has been, and maybe again?

Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang
As if her song could have no ending;
I saw her singing at her work,
And o'er the sickle bending; —
I listened, motionless and still;
And, as I mounted up the hill,
The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more.

About the Poet

William Wordsworth (1770–1783) is a major English poet and the founder of the Romantic Movement in English literature, a style of writing that emphasises emotion and imagination. Wordsworth became known as a "Lakeland poet" because of the area where he lived, which is known for its beautiful, wild landscapes, charming pastures, and countless lakes. Because of his emphasis on the relationship between humans and the natural world, he was often referred to as a "nature poet." He rose to prominence and was named Poet Laureate of England in 1843.

Make connections

1. To what is the song of the reaper compared?
2. How is the loneliness of the reaper highlighted?
3. Discuss the significance of the title of the poem, "The Solitary Reaper." Explain your response.
4. Why does the poet believe the girl's song will never end?
5. Think of a time when you listened to a song and wondered about the singer and what the song was about. Share with friends.
6. Talk about your favourite song(s) with friends explaining why it/they are your favourite.

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4. To My Mother *George Barker*

Most near, most dear, most loved and most far,
Under the window where I often found her
Sitting as huge as Asia, seismic with laughter,
Gin and chicken helpless in her Irish hand,
Irresistible as Rabelais, but most tender for
The lame dogs and hurt birds that surround her,
She is a procession no one can follow after
But be like a little dog following a brass band.

She will not glance up at the bomber, or condescend
To drop her gin and scuttle to a cellar,
But lean on the mahogany table like a mountain
Whom only faith can move, and so I send
O all my faith, and all my love to tell her
That she will move from mourning into morning.

5. Dover Beach - *Mathew Arnold*

The sea is calm to-night.
The tide is full, the moon lies fair
Upon the straits;—on the French coast the light
Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England stand,
Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay.
Come to the window, sweet is the night-air!
Only, from the long line of spray
Where the sea meets the moon-blanch'd land,
Listen! you hear the grating roar
Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling,
At their return, up the high strand,
Begin, and cease, and then again begin,
With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
The eternal note of sadness in.

Reprint 2024

Sophocles long ago
Heard it on the Aegaean, and it brought
Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
Of human misery; we
Find also in the sound a thought,
Hearing it by this distant northern sea.

The Sea of Faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furl'd.
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
Retreating, to the breath
Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world.

Ah, love, let us be true
To one another! for the world, which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

About the Author

Although remembered now for his elegantly argued critical essays, Matthew Arnold (1822 1888) began his career as a poet, winning early recognition as a student at the Rugby School. He also studied at Balliol College, Oxford University. He was the Professor of Poetry at Oxford from 1857 to 1867. During this time, Arnold wrote the bulk of his most famous critical works, Essays in Criticism and Culture and Anarchy. His poems like Dover Beach link the problem of isolation with what Arnold saw as the dispair in the light of human affairs.

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SUPPLEMENTARY

Reprint 2024

1. Dreams within a Dream - *Edgar Allan Poe*

Take this kiss upon the brow!
And, in parting from you now,
Thus much let me avow —
You are not wrong, who deem
That my days have been a dream;
Yet if hope has flown away
In a night, or in a day,
In a vision, or in none,
Is it therefore the less gone?
All that we see or seem
Is but a dream within a dream.

I stand amid the roar
Of a surf-tormented shore,
And I hold within my hand
Grains of the golden sand —
How few! yet how they creep
Through my fingers to the deep,
While I weep — while I weep!
O God! Can I not grasp
Them with a tighter clasp?
O God! can I not save
One from the pitiless wave?
Is ***all*** that we see or seem
But a dream within a dream?

Reprint 2024

2. Hard Luck - *Edgar Albert Guest*

Ain't no use as I can see
In sittin' underneath a tree
An' growlin' that your luck is bad,
An' that your life is extry sad;
Your life ain't sadder than your neighbor's
Nor any harder are your labors;
It rains on him the same as you,
An' he has work he hates to do;
An' he gits tired an' he gits cross,
An' he has trouble with the boss;
You take his whole life, through an' through,
Why, he's no better off than you.

If whinin' brushed the clouds away
I wouldn't have a word to say;
If it made good friends out o' foes
I'd whine a bit, too, I suppose;
But when I look around an' see
A lot o' men resemblin' me,
An' see 'em sad, an' see 'em gay
With work t' do most every day,
Some full o' fun, some bent with care,
Some havin' troubles hard to bear,
I reckon, as I count my woes,
They're 'bout what everybody knows.

The day I find a man who'll say
He's never known a rainy day,
Who'll raise his right hand up an' swear
In forty years he's had no care,
Has never had a single blow,
An' never known one touch o' woe,
Has never seen a loved one die,
Has never wept or heaved a sigh,
Has never had a plan go wrong,
But allas laughed his way along;
Then I'll sit down an' start to whine
That all the hard luck here is mine.

3. O Captain! My Captain! -Walt Whitman

O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,
The ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we sought is won,
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;
But O heart! heart! heart!
O the bleeding drops of red,
Where on the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;
Rise up—for you the flag is flung—for you the bugle trills,
For you bouquets and ribbon'd wreaths—for you the shores a-crowding,
For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;
Here Captain! dear father!
This arm beneath your head!
It is some dream that on the deck,
You've fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still,
My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will,
The ship is anchor'd safe and sound, its voyage closed and done,
From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won;
Exult O shores, and ring O bells!
But I with mournful tread,
Walk the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

Reprint 2024

ESSAY

Reprint 2024

1. What's in This Toothpaste? - David Bodanis

Rational:

The products that we consume with luring names do not provide us with the benefit it subscribes. While products have become an indispensable part of our lives, knowing what is in them may help us in mindful use of the products. This essay 'What's in a toothpaste' presents what makes toothpaste using figurative expressions like hypophora and anaphora.

Into the bathroom goes our male resident, and after the most pressing need is satisfied it's time to brush the teeth. The tube of toothpaste is squeezed, its pinched metal seams are splayed, pressure waves are generated inside, and the paste begins to flow. But what's in this toothpaste, so carefully being extruded?

Water mostly, 30 to 45 per cent in most brands: ordinary, everyday, simple tap water. It's there because people like to have a big gob of toothpaste to spreads on the brush, and water is the cheapest stuff there is when it comes to making big gobs. Dripping a bit from the tap onto your brush would cost virtually nothing; whipped in with the rest of the toothpaste the manufacturers can sell it at a neat and accountant–pleasing price. Toothpaste manufacturing is a very lucrative occupation.

Second to water in quantity is chalk: the same material that schoolteachers use to write on blackboards. It is collected from the crushed remains of long-dead ocean creatures. In the Cretaceous seas (from the age of dinosaurs), chalk particles served as part of the wickedly sharp outer skeleton that these creatures had to wrap around themselves to keep from getting chomped by all the slightly larger other ocean creatures they met. Their massed graves are our present chalk deposits.

The individual chalk particles-the size of the smallest mud particles in your garden have kept their toughness over the aeons, and now on the toothbrush, they will need it. The enamel outer coating of the tooth they'll have to face is the hardest substance in the body tougher than the skull, bone, or nail. Only the chalk particles in toothpaste can successfully grind, into the teeth during brushing, ripping off the surface layers like an abrading wheel grinding down a boulder in a quarry.

The craters, slashes, and channels that the chalk tears into the teeth will also remove a certain amount of built-up yellow in the carnage, and it is for that polishing function that it's there. A certain amount of unduly enlarged extra-abrasive chalk fragments tear such cavernous pits into the teeth that future decay bacteria will be able to bunker down there and thrive; the quality control people find it almost impossible to screen out these errant super-chalk pieces, and government regulations allow them to stay in.

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In case even the gouging doesn't get all the yellow off, another substance is worked into the toothpaste cream. This is titanium dioxide. It comes in tiny spheres, and it's the stuff bobbing around in white wall paint to make it come out white. Splashed around onto your teeth during the brushing, it coats much of the yellow that remains. Being water soluble it leaks off in the next few hours and is swallowed, but at least for the glance up in the mirror after finishing it will make the user think his or her teeth are truly white. Some manufacturers add optical whitening dyes- the stuff more commonly found in washing machine bleach-to make extra sure that glance in the mirror shows reassuring white.

These ingredients alone would not make a very attractive concoction. They would stick in the tube like a sloppy white plastic lump, hard to squeeze out as well as revolting to the touch. Few consumers would savour rubbing in a mixture of water, ground-up blackboard chalk and the whitener from latex paint first thing in the morning. To get around that finicky distaste the manufacturers have mixed in a host of other goodies.

To keep the glop from drying out, a mixture including glycerine glycol-related to the most common car antifreeze ingredient- is whipped in with the chalk and water, and to give that concoction a bit of substance (all we have so far is wet-coloured chalk) a large helping is added of gummy molecules from the seaweed Chondrus Crispus. This seaweed ooze spreads in among the chalk, paint and antifreeze, then stretches itself in all directions to hold the whole mass together. A bit of paraffin oil (the fuel that flickers in camping lamps) is pumped in with it to help the moss ooze keep the whole substance smooth.

With the glycol, ooze and paraffin we're almost there. Only two major chemicals are left to make the refreshing, cleansing substance we know as toothpaste. The ingredients so far are fine for cleaning, but they wouldn't make much of the satisfying foam we have come to expect in the morning brushing.

To remedy that, every toothpaste on the market has a big dollop of detergent added too. You've seen the suds detergent will make in a washing machine. The same substance added here will duplicate that inside the mouth. It's not particularly necessary, but it sells.

The only problem is that by itself this ingredient tastes, will, too like detergent. It's bitter and harsh. The chalk put in toothpaste is pretty foul-tasting too for that matter. It's to get around that gustatory discomfort that the manufacturers put in the ingredient they tout perhaps most of all. This is the flavouring, and it has to be strong. Double-rectified peppermint oil is used as a flavourer so powerful that chemists know better than to sniff it in the raw state in the laboratory. Menthol crystals and saccharin or other sugar simulators are added to complete the camouflage operation.

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Is that it? Chalk, water, paint, seaweed, antifreeze, paraffin oil detergent and peppermint? Not quite. A mix like that would be irresistible to the hundreds of thousands of individual bacteria lying on the surface of even an immaculately cleaned bathroom sink. They would get in, float in the water bubbles, and ingest the ooze and paraffin, maybe even spray out enzymes to break down the chalk. The result would be an inviting mess. The way manufacturers avoid that final obstacle is by putting something in to kill the bacteria. Something good and strong is needed, something that will zap any accidentally intruding bacteria into oblivion. And that something is a formaldehyde-the disinfectant used in anatomy labs.

So, its chalk, water, paint, seaweed, antifreeze, paraffin oil, detergent, peppermint, formaldehyde and fluoride (which can go some way towards preserving children's teeth)-that's the usual mixture raised to the moth on the toothbrush for a fresh morning's clean. If it sounds too unfortunate, take heart. Studies show that brushing with just plain water will often do as good a job.

About the Author

Born in Chicago, Illinois, David Bodanis has been a lecturer in intellectual history at Oxford University in England, where he currently lives. Bodanis's books include Web of Words: The Ideas Behind Politics (1989), The Secret House (1986), from which 'What's in This Toothpaste?' is taken, and E=mc2: A Biography of the World's Most Famous Equation (2000). Along with studying such banal subject matter as toothpaste, Bodanis is said to be concerned 'about the bugs that live inside our pillows and among our eyelashes, and…the disgusting truth about what's really in orange juice and baby food.' His book, The Secret Family, was adapted into an award–winning documentary.

Making Connections

1. Why do you think the author chose to write about toothpaste of all the products in the market?
2. Do you think every non-food product should have the ingredients of their products labelled on it? Use the essay and your experiences to present your arguments.
3. What type of essay is **What's in This Toothpaste?** Why?

Reprint 2024

2. Progress - *Alan Lightman*

Over the past several years, friends and colleagues have become increasingly irritated with me for not being on the electronic network. Scientists want to send me their data on E-mail. Secretaries for distant committees, forced to resort to the telephone, hound me for my E-mail address and lapse into stunned silence when I allow that I don't have one. University administrators, who organize meetings and send messages across campus at the push of a button, grumble about hand-carrying information to me or, even worse, putting paper in an envelope and sending it through the interdepartmental-mail system. I admit I'm a nuisance. But I resist getting on the Internet as a matter of principle, as a last holdout against the onslaught of unbridled technology galloping almost blindly into the twenty-first century.

For at least the past two hundred years, human society has operated under the assumption that all developments in science and technology constitute progress. According to that view, if a new metalalloy can increase the transmission of data from 10 million bits per second to 20 million, we should create it. If a new plastic has twice the strength-to-weight ratio as the older variety, we should produce it. If a new automobile can accelerate at twice the rate of the current model, we should build it. Whatever is technologically possible will find an application and improve us….

Today, at the end of the twentieth century, a crucial question before us is whether developments in technology inevitably improve the quality of life. And if not, we must ask how our society can employ some selectivity and restraint, given the enormous capitalistic forces at work. That is a terribly difficult problem for several reasons, not the least of which is the subjective nature of progress and quality of life. Is progress greater human happiness? Greater comfort? Greater speed in personal transportation and communication. The education of human suffering? Longer life span? Even with a definition of progress, its measurements and technological requirements are not straightforward. If progress is human happiness, has anyone shown that twentieth-century people are happier than nineteenth-century people? If progress is comfort, how do we weigh the short-term comfort of air-conditioning against the long-term comfort of a pollution-free environment? If progress is longer life span, can we ever discontinue life support for a dying patient in pain?

Only a fool would claim that new technology rarely improves the quality of life. The electric light has expanded innumerable human activities, from reading to night time athletic events. Advances in medicine___ particularly the germ theory of disease, public-health programs, and the development of good antiseptics___have obviously reduced physical suffering and substantially extended the healthy human life span.

But one can also argue that advances in technology do not always improve life. I will skip over such obvious environmental problems as global warming, ozone depletion, and nuclear-waste disposal, and consider something more subtle: high-speed communications. We are already seeing people at restaurants talking into cellular phones as they dine. Others take modems on vacations, so they can stay in touch with their offices at all times. Or consider E-mail, the example I began with. E-mail has undeniable benefits. It is faster than regular mail and cheaper and less obtrusive than the telephone. It can promote conversations among far-flung communities of people, and it can encourage otherwise reticent talkers to speak up, via computer terminals. But E-mail, in my view, also contributes to the haste, the thoughtlessness, and the artificial urgency that increasingly characterize our world. The daily volume of E-mail communications is inflating without limit. A lawyer friend says he spends 50 percent of his time at work sifting through unimportant E-mail messages to arrive at the few that count. Some communications are invariably of the form "Please ignore my last message." Evidently, it has become so easy and fast to communicate that we often do so without reflection. When messages come in so quickly and effortlessly, we irresistibly and immediately respond in kind. Although I cannot document it, I suspect that bad decisions are being made because of the haste of transmitting and responding to E-mail messages.

But more to the point is the overall fast-food mentality at work in the rapid conveyance of our thoughts and responses. We are suffocating ourselves. We are undercutting our contemplative powers. We could even be, ironically, impeding progress.

E-mail, of course, is only one example. Its use or abuse is up to the individual. But E-mail is representative of other technological developments, such as genetic engineering, throw-away plastics, advanced life-support systems, and computer networks. Certainly, many of those developments will have good consequences. But that is not the point. Modern technology is racing forward with little examination or control. To be sure, a number of thinkers and writers have for some time expressed alarm over where unchecked science and technology might be taking us. Mary Shelley, in *Frankenstein* (1818), was certainly concerned about the ethical dilemmas of artificial life. So was H. G. Wells in *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (1896), wherein the evil surgeon, Dr. Moreau, synthesizes creatures that are half man and half beast. In *Walden* (1854), Thoreau wrote, "We do non ride on the railroad; it rides upon us." A more recent example is Don DeLillo's *White Noise* (1985), in which the hero is exposed to a cloud of poisonous industrial chemicals, and then suffers a far worse, mental ailment because of a computerized medical system that constantly announces his fate. But those countervailing voices have, for the most part, been ignored. That is not just because of the considerable economic forces that are propelling today's ravenous technological engine. Rather, we seem to belief___perhaps at some subconscious level___that technology is our sacred future.

I am not in favor of squashing new developments in pure science, in any form. The act of understanding the workings of nature___and our place in it___expresses for me what is most noble and good in us. As for the applications of science, I am certainly not opposed to technology as a whole; I benefit greatly from it. But we cannot have advances in technology without an accompanying consideration of human values and quality of life.

How should this examination and questioning proceed? I don't know. It is not likely that government regulations would be effective. Our government, as well as other large institutions, understandably has an investment in allowing technology to develop unabated. The problem cannot be solved from the top down. It is a cultural problem. Perhaps we must regulate ourselves. Perhaps we each must think about what is truly important in our lives and decide which technologies to accept and which to resist. That is a personal responsibility. In the long run, we need to change our thinking, to realize that we are not only a society of production and technology but also a society of human beings.

About the Author

Alan Lightman was born in Memphis, Tennessee, in 1948. He has worked in astrophysics at Cornell, as assistant professor of astronomy at Harvard, and as a research scientist at the Harvard-Smithsonain Center for Astrophysics. Lightman has published poems, essays, reviews, and short fiction, and his books have been translated into 30 languages.

Reprint 2024

3. Multitasking – *Unknown*

Rationale

Multitasking is the practice of performing multiple tasks at the same time. The reason for multitasking is that people have multiple tasks to complete, each of which may be of high priority. As a result, an individual chooses to handle all of the tasks at once to complete them all at once. It is important to note that some tasks can be completed with the assistance of others, while others require complete attention. Individuals approach multitasking in different ways. One person can multitask effectively, while another finds it difficult to work on multiple tasks.

This essay, with a clear thesis statement, topic sentences and subsequent elaborations and explanations can be taken as a sample to teach students how to write an expository essay.

Nowadays, if you want to get employed in a prospective company, you need to be outstanding to withstand competition. Employers often promote inflated standards to their would-be workers, even if their duties include only xerox copying or sharpening pencils. One of the qualities crucial for any employee is multitasking; throughout the recent decade, it has become almost a cult. However, although it is believed that a multitasking person can complete more work within the same amount of time compared to a "regular" worker multitasking is not only ineffective but also harmful for those who try to spread their energy into working on several projects at once.

Multitasking is not what everyone thinks it is—simultaneous work in several different directions. Multitasking should be called "task switching." According to Guy Winch, PhD and the author of the book "Emotional First Aid: Practical Strategies for Treating Failure, Rejection, Guilt and Other Everyday Psychological Injuries," our brains are not capable of maintaining constant attention towards several objects at once. "It's like a pie chart, and whatever we're working on is going to take up the majority of that pie. There's not a lot left over for other things, except automatic behaviours like walking or chewing gum," Guy Winch says (Health.com). So, a person has to constantly switch from one activity to another, without getting themselves fully engaged in at least one of them.

If you think this is productive, you are wrong. The negative effect of multitasking on productivity has been proven by numerous researchers; one of the most recent experiments proving this statement has been conducted by the researcher Zhen Wang. The participants of her experiment who were told to do several things simultaneously displayed an increased feeling of being pleased with themselves, and in these terms, multitasking might be beneficial; however, when it came to evaluating the results of the tasks these people were to accomplish, it turned out they are much worse compared to people who were free to prioritize their activities and do things one at a time (Lifehack.org).

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Multitasking being bad for work is just half of the problem; the second half of it lies in the fact that spreading your energy on several tasks at once is detrimental not just to your productivity, but to yourself as well. Over-stimulation caused by your brain being constantly bombarded by incoming external stimulation (such as phone calls, requests, new tasks, and so on) puts you at risk of becoming unable to distinguish what is important and what is not. In 2009, a group of researchers from Stanford University led by Clifford Nass, PhD, figured out that multitasking participants were distracted the most by unimportant information stored in their short-term memory; multitasking people also tend to forget their tasks' details, thus becoming less able to perform them well. Besides, multitasking leads to an increase in stress levels, burnout, employee absences, disability, and so on (Chron). Therefore, sometimes it can be useful for office workers to turn off notifications on their smartphones, and pay all their attention to one task at a time.

Efficient multitasking is a myth brought to life by employers' desire to have fewer workers who would do more work in the same amount of time. Multitasking is nothing else but switching between tasks, as the human brain is not capable of maintaining attention on different tasks for a long time. Research shows that multitasking does not lead to an increase in productivity; on the contrary, multitasking workers show worse results compared to their non-multitasking colleagues; they also tend to have problems with memory and display increased stress levels, which inhibits workers' morale and leads to their absences and other negative effects. Therefore, employers and employees should stop deceiving themselves, and return to the good old way of working: one task at a time.

Make connection

1. What are some of the benefits of multitasking?
2. Can you explain a time when you had to multitask? What made multitasking a requirement in that situation?
3. How do you determine your priorities?
4. Do you agree with the information shared in the essay? Why or why not?
5. Reread the thesis statement of the essay and try rewriting or restructuring it to make it more emphatic.
6. Reread the topic sentences of each paragraph and think if you can provide additional information or elaboration to support it (the topic sentence)

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SUPPLEMENTARY

Reprint 2024

1. Preventing Conflict in the New Century - *Kofi Annan*

IN THE PAST 20 YEARS we have understood the need for military intervention where governments grossly violate human rights and the international order. In the next 20 years we must learn how to prevent conflicts as well as how to intervene in them. Even the costliest policy of prevention is far cheaper, in lives and in resources, than the least expensive intervention.

This is why we have been pressing the international community to take prevention more seriously. In cost-benefit terms the case for doing this is compelling. A recent study by the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict estimated that the cost to the international community of the seven major wars in the 1990s, not including Kosovo and East Timor, was US$199 billion. Add in these two conflicts and US$230 billion seems a likely figure.

Effective prevention could have saved most of this huge sum. More important, it could have saved hundreds of thousands of lives.

Time and again, differences are allowed to develop into disputes and disputes allowed to develop into deadly conflicts. Time and again, warning signs are ignored and pleas for help overlooked. Only after the deaths and the destruction do we intervene at a far higher human and material cost, by which time there are fewer lives left to save. Only when it is too late, it seems, do we value prevention.

There are, in my view, three main reasons for the failure of prevention, when prevention is so clearly possible. First, the reluctance of one or more of the parties to a conflict to accept external intervention of any kind. Second, the lack of political will at the highest levels of the international community.

Third, a lack of integrated conflict-prevention strategies within the UN system and the international community. Of all these, the will to act is the most important. Without the political will to act when action is needed, no amount of improved co-ordination or early warning will translate awareness into action.

The founders of the UN drew up its charter with a sober view of human nature. They had witnessed the ability of humanity to wage a war of unparalleled brutality and unprecedented cruelty. They had witnessed, above all, the failure of prevention, when prevention was, throughout the 1930s, still possible and every signal pointed to war.

Of course, as realists we must also recognize that in some cases the sheer intractability of conflicts and the obduracy of the warring parties will make intervention unlikely to succeed. But even wars that cannot be stopped once started might well have been avoided with effective prevention policies.

We are under no illusion that preventive strategies will be easy to implement. For a start, the costs of prevention have to be paid in the present, while its benefits lie in the distant future. And the benefits are not tangible___when prevention succeeds, nothing happens. Taking such a political risk when there are few obvious rewards requires conviction and considerable vision.

Second, there are real institutional barriers to the institutional co-operation that prevention requires. In national governments and international agencies, departments responsible for security tend to know little about development or governance; those responsible for the latter rarely think of them in security terms. Identifying such constraints is not a counsel of despair. It is a necessary, if not sufficient, condition for progress.

The UN has long argued that good governance, democratization, respect for human rights, and policies for equitable and sustainable development are the best form of long-term conflict prevention. The changing patterns of global conflict and governance in recent years, particularly with respect to democratization, provide ample evidence to support our conviction.

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More Votes, Less War

During the 1990s there was a remarkable and little-noticed reduction in global warfare. More od wars ended than new ones began.

Between 1989 and 1992 on average eight new ethnic wars began each year; by the late 1990s the average had fallen to two a year. Between 1992 and 1998 the scope and intensity of armed conflict around the world declined by about a third. The number of democratically elected governments increased by about the same proportion.

We cannot leap to the conclusion that the increase in the number of democracies has caused the decrease in warfare. Other factors, such as the end of the Cold War, surely also played a role (although the two are obviously related). But the evidence is in line with the well-established, if little publicized, finding that democracies have far lower levels of internal violence than non-democracies. This is not really surprising. The non-violent management of conflict is the very essence of democracy. In an era when more than 90% of wars take place within, not between, states, the import of this finding for conflict prevention should be obvious.

Prevention is no panacea. It requires that governments act in good faith and place the welfare of citizens above narrow sectional interests. But we know that some conflict-prone governments see prevention policies, particularly those which stress democratization and good governance, as a threat to their own power and privilege. For that reason, they are likely to reject them.

The fact that prevention will not work everywhere is an argument against naive optimism, but not against actively supporting democratization, good governance, and other preventive

policies. These are not only important goods in their own right. They are also among the most potent and cost-effective antidotes to the scourge of war.

About the Author

Kofi Annan (Born 1938, Kumasi, Ghana) is the seventh Secretary-General of the United Nations. Annan joined the UN in 1962 as an officer with the World Health Organization in Geneva. His work with the UN has included negotiating the release of Western hostages during the Persian Gulf crisis of 1990-91, and helping implement a peace agreement in the former Yugoslavia in 1995-96. He was elected Secretary-General in 1997.

2. People as Products - *Jean Kilbourne*

MAKE NO MISTAKE: The primary purpose of the mass media is to sell audiences to advertisers. We are the product. Although people are much more sophisticated about advertising now than even a few years ago, most are still shocked to learn this.

Magazines, newspapers, and radio and television programs round us up, rather like cattle, and producers and publishers then sell us to advertisers, usually through ads placed in advertising and industry publications. "The people you want, we've got all wrapped up for you," declares the *Chicago Tribune* in an ad placed in *Advertising Age,* which pictures several people, all neatly boxed according to income level.

Although we like to think of advertising as unimportant, it is in fact the most important aspect of the mass media. It *is* the point. Advertising supports more than 60 percent of magazine and news - paper production and almost 100 percent of the electronic media. Over $40 billion a year in ad revenue is generated for television and radio, and over $30 billion for magazines and newspapers. As one *ABC* executive said, "The network is paying affiliates to carry network commercials, not programs. What we are is a distribution system for Procter & Gamble." And the CEO of *CBS* said, "We're here to serve advertisers. That's our *raison d'etre".*

The media know that television and radio programs are simply fillers for the space between commercials. They know that the programs that succeed are the ones that deliver the highest number of people to the advertisers. But not just any people. Advertisers are interested in white people aged 18 to 49 who live in or near a city. *Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman,* a program that was No.1 in its time slot and immensely popular with older, more rural viewers, was cancelled in 1998 because it couldn't command the higher advertising rates paid for younger, richer audiences.

This is not new: *The Daily Herald,* a British newspaper with 47 million readers, double the combined readership of the *Times, Financial Times, Guardian* and *Telegraph,* folded in the 1960s because its readers were mostly elderly and working class and had little appeal to advertisers.

The target audience that appeals to advertisers is becoming more narrow all the time. According to Dean Valentine, the head of Viacom's *UPN,* most networks have abandoned the middle class and want "very chic shows that talk to affluent, urban, unmarried, huge-disposable-income 18-to-34-year-olds because the theory is, from advertisers, that the earlier you get them, the sooner you imprint the brand name."

"Tripod Delivers Gen-X," proclaims a website/magazine's sinister ad, featuring a delivery man carrying a corpselike consumer wrapped from neck to toe in brown paper. Several other such "deliveries" are propped up in the truck. An ad for the newspaper *USA Today* offers 18 consumer's eye between a knife and a fork and says, "12 Million Served Daily." The ad

explains, "Nearly six million influential readers with both eyes ingesting your message every day." There is no humanity, no individuality in this ad or others like it___people are simply products sold to advertisers, of value only as potential consumers.

Newspapers are more in the business of selling audiences than in the business of giving people news, especially as more and more newspapers are owned by fewer and fewer chains. They exist primarily to support local advertisers, such as car dealers, realtors and department store owners.

Once we begin to count, we see that magazines are essentially catalogs of goods, with less than half of their pages devoted to editorial content (and much of that in the service of the advertisers). An ad for a custom publishing company in *Advertising Age* promises, "The next hot magazine could be the one we create exclusively for your product"

And in fact, there are magazines for everyone from dirt-bike riders to knitters to mercenary soldiers, from *Beer Connoisseur* to *Cigar Aficionado.* There are plenty of magazines for the wealthy, such as *Coastal Living,* "for people who live or vacation on the coast". *Barron's* advertises itself as a way to "reach faster cars, bigger houses and longer prenuptial agreements" and promises a readership with an average household net worth of over a million.

The Internet advertisers target the wealthy too, of course. Not surprisingly, there are no magazines or Internet sites or television programs for the poor. They might not be able to afford the magazines or computers, but, more importantly, they are of little use to advertisers.

About the Author

Jean Kilbourne is a media critic, writer, lecturer, and expert on addictions, gender issues, and the media. She is internationally recognized for her pioneering work on the effects of alcohol and tobacco advertising, and for raising public awareness of how advertising encourages addictive behaviour. Kilbourne has made several documentaries based on her lectures, including Killing Us Softly: Advertising's Image of Women, and its sequel, Still Killing Us Softly. This selection is taken from her book Deadly Persuasion: Why Women and Girls Must Fight the Addictive Power of Advertising.

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3. Hard Edges Soft Skills - *Ann Coombs*

Technological advances have indeed been a fantastic boon to business in terms of speed and scope. Time has been compressed into femtoseconds. Geography is irrelevant. But what corporations___and the people who work in them___sometimes forget is that what makes a message important is the content, not the means of sending it.

As Mark Starowicz, project director and executive director of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's "The Canadian History Project," said, "What we are seeing may be occasioned by one piece of technology___the microchip___but it is not one revolution; it is a cluster of revolutions. Sometimes___I find this interesting___we are actually seeing the return of old media that we thought were dead or static. The digital age has, for example, resurrected telegraphy in the form of e-mail, restoring an almost Victorian level of letter-writing. It is a revolution in telephony, a century-old medium where we weren't expecting much excitement."

When workers send e-mails, they are sending letters, reports, proposals or responses. When they leave voice-mail messages, they are exchanging notes of information. Yet the prevailing view is to downgrade the need to learn how to develop and present thoughtful, well-crafted, clear content. The definition of technological literacy rarely, if ever, appears to include writing and speaking skills.

When workers use real-time video, video conferencing and other highly sophisticated technological tools they are still sitting in isolation in front of a monitor. Even if they can see the person with whom they are linked, they will be blocked by a barrier that does not let them see or hear, for example, a foot tapping impatiently. Nor will they have the opportunity to build a friendship bit by bit by sharing moments of understanding over an informal lunch.

The day will come when 21st-century workers finally begin to understand that they need and want something more. The tools, however sophisticated, will lose their luster, as workers realize they are not truly connecting to their workplaces or to each other. That is when the demand for a new language characterized by honesty, energy and clarity will become a clamor___ the day workers become aware of their hunger for true, full circle, say___listen___hear communication. They will be as hungry for it as they are for respect, regard and a spiritually supportive workplace.

This realization will also dawn on employers as they wage the war for talent. The first effects in the marketplace of knowledge workers being fought over are already being felt. But the shortcomings of these workers are also becoming apparent. As reported in *Stepping Up*: *Skills and Opportunities in the Knowledge Economy,* a study done in 2000 by the Conference Board of Canada, these workers are technically skilled but they generally do not have the "soft" skills, such as teamwork and oral and written communications. They are valuable for their technical

talents and skill for moving messages across time and space. But they have not developed the discerning and intuitive skills of human discourse. They are not equipped to say, listen and hear beyond tightly defined boundaries. They are clumsy in social environments. These workers will become liabilities that corporations cannot tolerate if they are to compete successfully in the global marketplace.

Joseph F. Coates, president of Coates & Jarratt Inc., a Washington, D.C. company engaged in futures research, lays some of the responsibility at the door of the educational system. "The most important skills for the worker…are skills in communication___not just reading and writing, but in computation, and perhaps most importantly of all, in listening. Other skill needs will emphasize human interaction, sensitivity to people, ability to work in teams ___the sorts of things that are reflected in a number of interesting books and reports on 'emotional intelligence.'"

NOVEL

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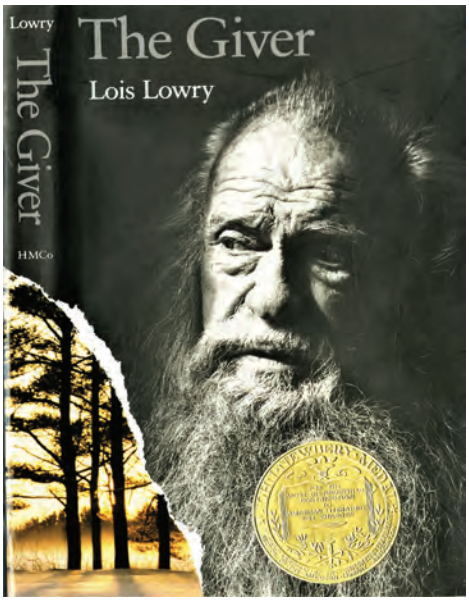
1. The Giver (in its entirety) - *Lois Lowry*

The Giver is her most ambitious work to date and her acceptance speech for the Newbery Award it received tells of the many rivers of experience and inspiration that led her to write it. One of those rivers of inspiration came from her father who was, at that time, in a nursing home having lost most of his long-term memory. She realized one day while visiting her father that, without memory, there is no pain and began to imagine a society in which the past was deliberately forgotten. The flaws in that supposedly ideal society show the need for personal and societal memory and for making connections with the past and with each other. The ending of **The Giver**, which is deliberately ambiguous, has been the subject of much discussion by readers. All that Lois will say about it is that there will never be a sequel and that she is hopeful about its ending. With its varied interpretations, the book is a wonderful one for discussion groups for middle school students.



Lois has said that each reader reads his or her own book and that is certainly shown in the varied reactions to **The Giver**.

Recurrent themes for Lois Lowry seem to be saying goodbye, the importance of making connections with others and finding a place where we belong. ***The Giver*** deals with all of these and more. Lois Lowry's work is wide-ranging, richly varied and right on target for her intended audiences.

Rationale

The Giver is a novel that students of class X will enjoy immensely because the plot is original and fresh. The plot follows a logical series of events and is cleverly crafted. There is an identifiable climax, plenty of conflict and tension. On the whole it is a fascinating story with great examples of foreshadowing and flashbacks. Foreshadowing is a technique the writer uses to arouse the reader's curiosity, build suspense and help prepare the reader to accept events that occur later in the novel. Flashback is a device that shifts the narrative from the present to the past, usually to reveal a change in character or illustrate an important point.

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There is a lot of intrigue. The protagonist is a young boy of twelve. He is himself unaware of what is in store for him in his assigned job as a receiver of memory. What are the memories? Why must the community be shielded from these memories? Why is it necessary to keep these memories alive? The reader is kept busy throughout the novel trying to unravel these questions.

The protagonist is Jonas, a regular 12-year-old boy, and the story begins shortly before the ceremony in which he and all the other twelve year olds receive their life work assignments. Jonas receives the most responsible job in the community: that of Receiver of Memory. The character is strong. Jonas the protagonist is an evolving character. He takes his own decisions; he matures with the different experiences he undergoes. He tries to bring changes to his own life and the lives of the people in his community. Moreover, his experience as a teenager is identifiable and relevant to the experiences of Bhutanese teenagers. Therefore his character is convincing and credible.

The fantasy novel takes place in an isolated but modern village that tries to maintain utopia for its residents. The advantage with this setting is that it can be anywhere in Bhutan, Canada, India. The setting is designed appropriately and integrates well with the characters and the conflict created by the writer.

The themes are worth imparting to students. They are not obviously stated rather the students are allowed the freedom to discuss and let the themes emerge naturally. The novel has themes that are universally true: the ideas of wanting to be loved, the need for nuclear families, the ideas of personal happiness versus one's responsibility to society, the power that elders have over their children, the concept of punishment, the regard for rules, controlling one's biological urges and many others can be discussed. Besides these, controversial themes related to euthanasia for both old and young, treatment of people with different job assignments, the ideas of a utopian (ideal) society versus the real world and the use of euphemisms will allow students to have healthy discussions and understand their concepts more clearly.

The style is challenging. The writer is able to create images in the mind of the reader that suggests a bland organised utopian society balanced against a society that is painful and yet beautiful with the use of her diction. There is a good balance between narration and dialogue. The story can be set both in the future or the present and this brings a fresh use of terminology for example: nurturer instead of nurse, birthmother instead of biological mothers, sanitation labourer instead of wet sweeper, instructor of threes instead of teacher of foundation level, landscape workers instead of gardeners and so on. The language is appropriate to age and the writer makes the reader aware that precision in the use of language is important in order to express oneself well.

The writer uses words, phrases and sentences that suggest the protagonist is happy in the utopian society but also questions the utopian society. Towards the later half of the novel the tone created by the writer is one of rebellion: he rebels against many utopian ideas.

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About the Author

Lois Lowry is a witty, clever, interesting woman with lots of facets to her life. She's a great conversationalist, an avid and eclectic reader and moviegoer; she likes to play bridge and garden. She's an excellent cook and her cookbook collection is enormous and varied. Her home is full of bookshelves which, of course, are full of books and, since she has a great need for order, her books are carefully arranged with her own rather eccentric system with no apologies to Dewey.

Lois is an accomplished photographer (the cover of **The Giver** is her own work) and she has an artist's eye for composition. She sometimes compares the role of writer to that of photographer saying that the writer carefully chooses the best lens and settings for her work, deciding which things to focus on and which to blur.

She writes novels, short stories and essays, mostly for young people, but she also writes because it's so much a part of her that she turns to it constantly, both personally and professionally.

Recently, her son, an air force pilot, was killed when his plane crashed on take-off in Germany. Soon after that tragedy, she wrote a sort of newsletter to those of us who knew Lois but not Grey because she needed us to know what a treasure the world had lost. She also put together a book about him with photographs and a brief text for his two-year-old daughter so that she would remember what her father was like.

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Time Allocation for X

The maximum number of instructional days available for curriculum delivery excluding examination is 150 days in a year. The school year divided into two terms of fifteen weeks each, and that each week will have 5 periods of 40 minutes for teaching English. The total time allocated for English in a week is 200 minutes. Therefore, class X will have 100 hours in a year which is 150 periods.

The following is the suggestive period and time allocation per week for all strands.

	Period	**Time** *(minutes)*
Reading & Literature	2	80
Writing	1	40
Listening & Speaking	1	40
Language and Grammar	1	40
Total	**5**	**200**

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Modes of Assessment

Continuous (CA) and Examinations Weighting for Class X

English Paper I (Writing and Grammar) – CA and Written Examination Weighting

Term One				Term Two				Grand Total (Total A + Total B)
CA		Examination	Total A	CA		Examination	Total B	
Listening and Speaking	15%	35%	50%	Listening and Speaking	15%	35%	50%	100%

Note:

1. In English Paper I, Writing and Language & Grammar strands form the written examination part, and the Listening and Speaking strand forms the CA part.

2. The Term One examination should be conducted out of 100 marks and converted to 35%. The 15% CA marks from the Listening and Speaking should be added to the examination marks to make it 50%.

3. Similarly, the Term Two examination should be also conducted out of 100 marks and converted to 35%. The 15% CA marks from the Listening and Speaking should be added to the examination marks to make it 50%.

4. Finally, the total marks of term one and term two should be added to make it 100%.

5. Listening and Speaking, activities such as debates, extempore speeches, presentations, book talks, reports, and discussions should be conducted regularly throughout the year, ideally by integrating in other strands so that the students get maximum time to practice the skills. Teachers need to develop their own additional listening and speaking exercises wherever necessary. Use Continuous Formative (CFA) to help students achieve the desired goals.

6. At the end of each Term, a formal test should be conducted to assess each learners' competencies in listening and speaking through oral test items and other listening and speaking exercises and the marks converted to 15%.

7. Correspondingly, for class X, teachers should assess the listening and speaking skills consistently throughout the year. Also, a formal test to asses listening and speaking skills should be conducted for each learner. The cumulative marks (30%) should be sent to BCSEA at the end of the academic year.

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English Paper I (Writing and Grammar) - Written Examination Marks Break-up

Sl No	Genre	Weighting	Remarks
1	Essay writing	25 marks	Descriptive essay for class IX and Expository essay for class X.
2	Personal letter/leave application/invitation	15 marks	Any ONE can be asked
3	Report writing	10 marks	Reporting event/incident/occasion etc.
4	Information transfer	10 marks	Non-continuous to continuous or vice versa.
5	Grammar	40 marks	Items to be derived from the competencies and objectives. Questions can be asked from the lower classes as well.
Total		100	

Note: The questions types and patterns for written examinations shall remain dynamic.

English Paper I - Listening and Speaking CA (30%)

Sl No	Listening and Speaking activities	Remarks
1	Listening and Speaking skills	• Teachers can design additional activities as per the lesson plans. • Conduct oral test and other listening and speaking activities regularly. • A formal test to be conducted at the end of each term. • For class X the cumulative marks (30%) to be sent to BCSEA.
2	Oral report	
3	Debates	
4	Extempore speeches	
5	Presentations	
6	Book talk	

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English Paper II (Reading & Literature) - CA and Written Examination Weighting

Term One				Term Two				Grand Total (Total A + Total B)
CA		Examination	Total A	CA		Examination	Total B	
Reading Portfolio	7.5%	35%	50%	Reading Portfolio	7.5%	35%	50%	100%
Writing Portfolio	7.5%			Writing Portfolio	7.5%			

Note:

1. In the English Paper II, the Reading and Literature strand forms the written examination part, and the Reading Portfolio and the Writing Portfolio form the CA part.

2. Term One examination should be conducted out of 100 marks and converted to 35%. The CA marks from the Reading Portfolio and the Writing Portfolio (7.5 each) should be added to the examination marks to make it 50%.

3. Similarly, the Term Two examination should be conducted out of 100 marks and converted to 35%. The CA marks from the Reading Portfolio and Writing Portfolio (7.5) should be added to the examination marks to make it 50%.

4. Finally, the total marks of Term One and Term Two should be added up to make it 100%.

5. The Reading Portfolio should consist of record of reading, book reviews, and critical response to books read. The Writing Portfolio should consist of learner's best pieces of writing (essays, articles, short stories, poems etc.), journal writing for books read, process of work, variety in number and genre.

6. Teacher should ensure that all the learners maintain their portfolios for academic purposes only.

7. The Reading and the Writing Portfolios of all the learners should be monitored consistently to check their progress. Teachers should provide timely feedback, support and take necessary remedial measures so that the learners meet the expected objectives and competencies. At the end of each term, both the portfolios should be assessed and award marks accordingly.

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8. The portfolios should be assessed consistently throughout the year. For class X, the cumulative marks (30%) should be sent to BCSEA at the end of the academic year.

English Paper II (Reading and Literature) - Written Examination Marks Break-up

Sl No	Genre	Weighting	Remarks
1	Short Story	25 marks	From the prescribed short stories, questions on more than ONE story can be asked
2	Essay	25 marks	From outside the prescribed textbook
3	Poetry	25 marks	From prescribed textbook or outside
4	Novel	25 marks	The prescribed novel – The Giver (till chapter 11 for class IX and the entire novel for class X)
Total		100	

Note: The questions types and patterns for written examinations shall remain dynamic.

English Paper II CA (30%)

Reading Portfolio (15%)	Writing Portfolio (15%)	Remarks
• Record of reading • Book reviews • Critical response to books read	• Best pieces of writing selected by students • Best pieces selected by teacher • Journal writing for book review • Minutes of meetings. • memoirs • Personal, transactional and poetic writing • Short stories	• Use notebooks for maintaining portfolios. • Consider process while assessing the quality of work. • The writing portfolio should show the records of the Writing Process • Plagiarism to be prohibited. • Assess the portfolios consistently throughout the year. For class X, send the cumulative marks (30%) to BCSEA at the end of the academic year.

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Reading Strategies

Secondary Reading Strategies

Reading is the process of constructing meaning through the dynamic interaction among:

- the reader's existing knowledge,
- the information suggested by the written language, and
- the context of the reading situation.

Four general purposes of reading are:

- to gain information
- to perform a task
- to experience and enjoy literature
- to form opinions

Critical Reading

Critical reading means **learning to look through texts rather than at them**; it means **reading beyond and beneath** surface meanings to the assumptions, arguments, and strategies behind them. Critical reading means learning about **how texts work**: how they make their meaning, how they appeal to your emotions and intellect, how they present arguments that are explicit and implicit; how they reason with readers and manipulate them.

To be a critical reader, you need to learn how to "slow down" your reading. Slowing down your reading doesn't mean you ought to read more slowly; it means that you need to **read in such a way that you learn to be aware of a text's various parts and processes**. Running your eye over the words on the page it is easy to think of any piece of writing as a smooth and solid object. But all writing — whether a short story by a famous writer or a paper by one of your classmates — is the result of a process and the product of a context. Both the process and context that produce a piece of writing are reflected in various ways in a text's parts and layers. When you learn to slow down your reading you will be able to see that all writing is made up of parts and layers that come together in the writing process to make something that seems whole.

Critical Reading Classroom Environment

For active, critical reading to occur, teachers must create an atmosphere which fosters inquiry. Students must be encouraged to question, to make predictions, and to organize ideas which support value judgments. Two techniques for developing these kinds of critical reading skills include **problem solving** and **learning to reason through reading**. Flynn (1989) describes an instructional model for problem solving which promotes analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of ideas. She states that, "When we ask students to analyze we expect them to clarify

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information by examining the component parts. Synthesis involves combining relevant parts into a coherent whole, and evaluation includes setting up standards and then judging against them to verify the reasonableness of ideas."

Beck (1989) adopts a similar perspective, using the term "reasoning" to imply higher order thinking skills. Comprehension requires inferencing, which plays a central role in reasoning and problem solving. For Beck, children's literature has the potential to engage students in reasoning activities.

When literature is approached from a problem solving perspective, students are asked to evaluate evidence, draw conclusions, make inferences, and develop a line of thinking (Riecken and Miller, 1990). According to Flynn (1989), children are capable of solving problems at all ages and need to be encouraged to do so at every grade level. (See, for example, "Using Fairy Tales" 1991 for young children; Anton 1990 for elementary children; Johannessen 1989 for middle school children.) Teachers may want to experiment with a particular children's book and plan a lesson which places reasoning at the center of instruction.

Wilson (1988) suggests that teachers re-think the way they teach reading and look critically at their own teaching/thinking processes. She cautions against skills lessons that are repackaged in the name of critical thinking but which are only renamed worksheets. She points out that teaching students to read, write, and think critically is a dramatic shift from what has generally taken place in most classrooms.

According to Wilson, critical literacy advocates the use of strategies and techniques like formulating questions prior to, during, and after reading; responding to the text in terms of the student's own values; anticipating texts, and acknowledging when and how reader expectations are aroused and fulfilled; and responding to texts through a variety of writing activities which ask readers to go beyond what they have read to experience the text in personal ways.

Critical Reading Strategies

Mastering these strategies will not make the critical reading process an easy one, it can make reading much more satisfying and productive and thus help students handle difficult material well and with confidence.

Fundamental to each of these strategies is annotating directly on the page: underlining key words, phrases, or sentences; writing comments or questions in the margins; bracketing important sections of the text; constructing ideas with lines or arrows; numbering related points in sequence; and making note of anything that strikes you as interesting, important, or questionable.

Previewing: Learning about a text before really reading it. Previewing enables readers to get a sense of what the text is about and how it is organized before reading it closely. This

simple strategy includes seeing what you can learn from the headnotes or other introductory material, skimming to get an overview of the content and organization, and identifying the rhetorical situation.

Contextualizing: Placing a text in its historical, biographical, and cultural contexts. When you read a text, you read it through the lens of your own experience. Your understanding of the words on the page and their significance is informed by what you have come to know and value from living in a particular time and place. But the texts you read were all written in the past, sometimes in a radically different time and place. To read critically, you need to contextualize, to recognize the differences between your contemporary values and attitudes and those represented in the text.

Questioning to understand and remember: Asking questions about the content. As students, you are accustomed to teachers asking you questions about your reading. These questions are designed to help you understand a reading and respond to it more fully, and often this technique works. When you need to understand and use new information it is most beneficial if you write the questions, as you read the text for the first time. With this strategy, you can write questions any time, but in difficult academic readings, you will understand the material better and remember it longer if you write a question for every paragraph or brief section. Each question should focus on a main idea, not on illustrations or details, and each should be expressed in your own words, not just copied from parts of the paragraph.

Reflecting on challenges to your beliefs and values: Examining your personal responses. The reading that you do for this class might challenge your attitudes, your unconsciously held beliefs, or your positions on current issues. As you read a text for the first time, mark an X in the margin at each point where you fell a personal challenge to your attitudes, beliefs, or status. Make a brief note in the margin about what you feel or about what in the text created the challenge. Now look again at the places you marked in the text where you felt personally challenged. What patterns do you see?

Outlining and summarizing: Identifying the main ideas and restating them in your own words. Outlining and summarizing are especially helpful strategies for understanding the content and structure of a reading selection. Whereas outlining revels the basic structure of the text, summarizing synopsizes a selection's main argument in brief. Outlining may be part of the annotating process, or it may be done separately (as it is in this class). The key to both outlining and summarizing is being able to distinguish between the main ideas and the supporting ideas and examples. The main ideas form the backbone, the strand that holds the various parts and pieces of the text together. Outlining the main ideas helps you to discover this structure. When you make an outline, don't use the text's exact words.

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Summarizing begins with outlining, but instead of merely listing the main ideas, a summary recomposes them to form a new text. Whereas outlining depends on a close analysis of each paragraph, summarizing also requires creative synthesis. Putting ideas together again — in your own words and in a condensed form — shows how reading critically can lead to deeper understanding of any text.

Evaluating an argument: Testing the logic of a text as well as its credibility and emotional impact. All writers make assertions that want you to accept as true. As a critical reader, you should not accept anything on face value but to recognize every assertion as an argument that must be carefully evaluated. An argument has two essential parts: a claim and support. The claim asserts a conclusion — an idea, an opinion, a judgment, or a point of view — that the writer wants you to accept. The support includes reasons (shared beliefs, assumptions, and values) and evidence (facts, examples, statistics, and authorities) that give readers the basis for accepting the conclusion. When you assess an argument, you are concerned with the process of reasoning as well as its truthfulness (these are not the same thing). At the most basic level, in order for an argument to be acceptable, the support must be appropriate to the claim and the statements must be consistent with one another.

Comparing and contrasting related readings Exploring likenesses and differences between texts to understand them better. Many of the authors we read are concerned with the same issues or questions, but approach how to discuss them in different ways. Fitting a text into an ongoing dialectic helps increase understanding of why an author approached a particular issue or question in the way he or she did.

THE STUDENT'S ROLE

Critical thinking implies that a reader is actively and constructively engaged in the process of reading. The reader is continually negotiating what s/he knows with what s/he is trying to make sense of. The role of background knowledge and the student's ability to draw upon it are essential to critical thinking/learning.

It is not an easy task to incorporate higher level thinking skills into the classroom, but it is a necessary one. For students to participate in the society in which they live, they must have experiences which prepare them for life. In order to become critical thinkers, it is essential that students learn to value their own thinking, to compare their thinking and their interpretations with others, and to revise or reject parts of that process when it is appropriate.

A classroom environment which is student-centered fosters student participation in the learning process. Learning that is both personal and collaborative encourages critical thinking. Students who are reading, writing, discussing, and interacting with a variety of learning materials in a variety of ways are more likely to become critical thinkers.

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THE TEACHER'S ROLE

Teachers who encourage **pre-reading discussions** to help readers activate prior knowledge or fill in gaps in background knowledge set the stage for critical reading. They help students identify purposes for reading, formulate hypotheses, and test the accuracy of their hypotheses throughout the reading process. In addition, asking students to examine their own reading and learning processes creates the awareness necessary for critical reading.

Post-reading activities that extend texts provide an opportunity for teachers to check for learning. Transforming ideas from reading into artwork, poetry, etc. is an evaluative, interpretive act that reveals the student's level of understanding. Critical readers are active readers. They **question, confirm, and judge** what they read throughout the reading process. Students engaged in such activities are likely to become critical thinkers and learners.

How Do I Sharpen My Critical Reading Strategies?

Reading critically does not mean that you are criticizing the writer's message but rather that you are **assessing the validity and reliability of the writer's material**. Critical readers are also aware that they bring their beliefs, values, experiences, and prior knowledge to the reading process. Critical readers ask questions about themselves, the writer, and the writing. Below is a set of questions to sharpen your critical reading strategies.

Menu of Critical Reading Questions

1. Reader's Background and Value Assumptions

i. What do I know about the topic?
ii. What are my beliefs and values regarding the topic?
iii. What is my purpose for reading this material?

2. Writer's Background and Value Assumptions

i. What is the writer's background?
ii. How might it affect the writer's approach to the topic and the selection and interpretation of the evidence presented?
iii. What are the writer's value assumptions regarding this topic?

3. Writer's Argument, Conclusion, and Evidence

i. What is the topic of the writer's argument?
ii. What is the writer's conclusion?
iii. How has the writer limited the scope of the argument through definitions of key terms and the use of qualifying words and phrases?

4. Writer's Use of Evidence to Support the Conclusion

i. Are there any logical fallacies?
ii. What sort of evidence does the writer use to support the conclusion(s)?

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iii. Does the evidence offer adequate support for the writer's conclusion?
iv. Are the sources creditable?
v. If the writer uses research studies as evidence, does the research satisfy these conditions:
    - Is it timely?
    - Who conducted the research? What was the purpose of the research?
    - Has the research been replicated?
    - Are the statistical findings and writer's conclusion focused on the same topic?
    - Do the graphic illustrations represent the data in a truthful manner?
    - Do the various physical dimensions of the graphic accurately portray the numerical relationships?
    - What is the source of the data in the illustration?
    - Are the statistical findings and the writer's conclusion focused on the same topic?

5. Reader's Reaction to the Reading

i. Do I accept the writer's evidence as reliable and valid support of the conclusion?
ii. To what degree do I accept the conclusion?
iii. How does the conclusion relate to what I already know and believe about the topic?
iv. How has the writer's argument changed my views on this topic?

Here are some strategies that may be used:

1. Take inventory of what you will be reading

Think about what you already know about the subject. Write down some notes on these thoughts. Look over the material you are reading - look for key words and phrases that may be in italics or boldface. Look for any graphs, captions, pictures or other graphics. See if there is a summary at the end or a set of comprehension questions. Most textbooks have summaries and questions. These can be very helpful to guide your reading. You should always read the summary and the questions before you read the text. These will give you a good idea of what to look for when you read. Remember: not everything in the text is equally important: read for the main ideas.

2. See the forest, not the trees!

There is an English idiom that says, "You can't see the forest for the trees." This means that a person cannot see the overall picture or idea because she/he is concentrating on the details too much. When you are reading, don't try to understand every word - get the overall idea.

3. Don't just read —WRITE!

Take notes while you are reading. Sometimes notes can be words and phrases that help you

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remember main ideas. However, you can also draw pictures or diagrams of key ideas. It's like drawing a map with roads connecting different cities or locations. If each location is an idea, connect them together in your notes.

4. If at first you don't succeed, try again.
If possible, read the text more than once.

5. Don't be afraid to make guesses.
Try to guess at meaning by looking at the context. The sentences and words immediately before and after the point you are reading can give you good ideas.

6. Try to analyze the text.
Look for the introduction and conclusion. Look for the topic sentences in each paragraph.

7. Make connections.
Try to make connections between main ideas and supporting details. Well-written texts will attempt to make connections of their ideas in a logical way.

8. Summarize & Paraphrase.
When you have finished reading a paragraph or a portion of the text, stop and try to summarize in your own words what you have read. You can do this in your notes or you can explain it orally to someone else.

9. Talk with your friends.
Discuss what you have read with others who have also read the same text.

SQ3R....for students & teachers

When you read, it is important to have a strategy or a plan for reading effectively. If you do not have a plan, you may be easily distracted or may not focus on the right things in the text. As a result, when you are finished reading, you may not understand very much of what you have read. Also, you may not have developed your English very much, either.

When you read, you must be actively involved in the reading process in order to understand most effectively. The SQ3R method is one way to help you do this.

How does the SQ3R method work?

Survey
Survey means to scan the main parts of the text you are going to read. This includes looking at the title, headings of paragraphs, introduction and conclusion, first lines of each paragraph,

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and any extra information that may be presented in boxes on the page. Doing this gives you some basic understanding of what the text is about and helps you know what to expect when you read in more detail.

Question

Questions are very helpful when you read a text. Most of the time, people read first, and then look at questions at the end of the text. However, this is not the best way to read. If possible, read the questions provided for you FIRST. This will help you know what specific information to look for. Questions (those that are provided with text and those provided by your teacher) are designed to focus on the main points. Therefore, if you read to answer these questions, you will be focusing on the main points in the text. This helps you read with a goal in mind - answering specific questions.

3 R's

Read

Once you have some idea of what the text is about and what the main points might be, start reading. Do not be afraid if the text has many words you cannot understand. Just read!

Follow these suggestions:

- Do not use your dictionary the first time through the text.
- Try to understand as much as you can from the context.
- Take notes as you go.
- Make a note of places that you do not understand, or words that are unclear.
- Go through the text a second time.
- Try to answer the questions.

Recite

Studies have suggested that students remember 80% of what they learn, if they repeat the information verbally. If they do not repeat verbally, they often forget 80%. Writing down the answers to questions from the text and saying these answers will help you remember the information. One good way to do this is to discuss the information with a friend or classmate, or with the teacher. Try to summarize the main points you have learned from the reading and add to your knowledge from the comments and responses of the person you are talking with.

Review

Review means to go over something again. In order to remember information, you cannot simply memorize it one day and then put it aside. After you have read and discussed and studied your information, it is important to review your notes again a few days or weeks later. This will help you keep the information fresh in your mind.

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MODES OF READING

Different modes of reading offer varying levels of support for students, from having the teacher read the entire text aloud to having students read the text independently. It is frequently appropriate to combine several modes of reading at once. The combination provides a scaffold for learning that gradually releases responsibility to the students and helps them to become more proficient readers. Different combinations are used to meet the differing needs of students in relation to the materials they are reading.

Reading Aloud

The teacher reads aloud from a text that is too challenging for the students to read and comprehend alone. Usually the students do not have a copy of the text. The teacher may complete the text in one reading or may continue reading a longer text over a period of time. Reading aloud is used to develop background information, to make connections across texts, or for enjoyment.

Teacher-Directed Interactive Reading

Using grade level materials which may include magazine or newspaper articles, poems, charts, or other forms of print, the teacher provides direct, supported reading of text to the whole class. The text is read in a variety of ways.

- The teacher introduces the text and sets a purpose for independent, silent reading of a part or all of the text.
- The teacher reads the text or part of the text aloud while students follow the reading in their own texts. The teacher pauses for predictions, clarifications, and questions. A summary of what was read is developed orally or in writing with the class.
- Students are paired for buddy reading of the text.
- Small groups of students read the text together using reciprocal teaching strategies.
- The teacher reads the text aloud to a small group of students while the rest of the class reads the selection independently, with a buddy, or in a small group.
- Groups of students or the whole class may read the text together as a choral reading activity.

Guided Reading

The teacher provides small group instruction using materials at the instructional level of the group. The teacher supports the development of effective reading strategies for processing new texts at increasingly challenging levels of difficulty. This progression of difficulty must be in increment's small enough to allow the reader to bridge the gap without being frustrated. Therefore, the best materials for guided reading are sets of books that have the progression built in. For elementary school students whose instructional reading level is close to grade level, the grade level basal may be used to provide guided reading instruction.

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During Guided Reading, the teacher works with a small group of students who use similar reading processes and are able to read similar levels of text with support. The teacher introduces a text to this small group and works briefly with individuals in the group as each student reads to him/herself. The teacher may select one or two reading strategies to present to the group following the reading and may have students participate in extension activities. Basic to Guided Reading is that the text is one that offers the reader a minimum of new concepts to learn so that students can read the text with the strategies they currently have, but it provides an opportunity for new learning.

Structured Independent Reading

Students build reading fluency, practice strategic reading skills, and increase their vocabularies by spending sustained periods of in-class time engaged in independent reading. Books may be self-selected or teacher assigned, but are at the students' independent reading levels. Time for this fluency practice must be built into the school day and must include a daily homework assignment.

Students in Kindergarten should spend a minimum of 15 minutes each day in developmentally appropriate independent reading behavior. **Students in grades 1-12 must spend 30 minutes each day on in-class independent reading**. **All students, PP-12, must read 30 minutes each night as daily reading homework.** Activities which support and strengthen independent reading include:

- drawing a picture of a favorite part of the book;
- discussing the book/chapter read with a partner or a small group;
- keeping a record or log of each book completed;
- writing a brief summary of the content;
- making a personal response to the reading in a log or journal;
- writing dialogue journals to the teacher about the independent reading material; and/or
- taking the Accelerated Reader test.

Working With Words

Students receive daily explicit, systematic instruction in one or more of the following as appropriate:

- phonemic awareness, students are taught the sounds of the language;
- phonics instruction, students receive instruction in letter/sound matching;
- blending and segmenting sounds, and decoding;
- graphophonic instruction, students learn to use letter/sound correspondence to write;
- syntactic, students learn word patterns and spelling, prefixes, suffixes, root words, etymologies; and
- vocabulary, students learn word meanings, analogies, usage, and cognates.

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Reciprocal Teaching

Students are taught to become **strategic readers through an active dialogue** with a teacher/leader and other students. Working in small groups, students practice the following critical reading strategies:

- making predictions based on titles, captions, pictures, prior knowledge, etc.;
- formulating good questions based on the text (e.g., writing test questions);
- seeking clarification of words, phrases, or concepts not understood;
- summarizing, getting the main idea; and
- forming visual images while reading.

Questions and Discussion

Critical to reading comprehension is the ability to ask and answer higher order thinking questions about text and to defend or challenge answers using information and details from the text to support positions. Students at all levels and in all subject areas **must have daily opportunities** to raise questions to be used in group discussions about texts. Student-generated questions should be used to formulate teacher-made tests.

Read and Retell

Retellings are powerful tools because they serve authentic instructional and assessment purposes. Students retell, orally or in writing, narrative or expository text. In the retelling, they use the same form, style, and language of the original text. This strategy aids comprehension of text, expands vocabulary, and provides good models for students to transfer to their personal writing. Retellings provide insights into the thinking, organization, and comprehension levels of the readers. In primary grades students may use drawings in combination with oral retelling.

Learning to Write, Writing to Learn

Writing and reading are reciprocal skills which strongly support one another. It is important that students receive daily instruction in effective writing and that they use writing to demonstrate what they have learned. Writing is thinking made visible. It supports students in learning to construct meaning and become proficient readers. It involves many activities including:

- exploring different modes of writing;
- mini-lessons that include modeling; and
- engaging students in meaningful interactions with text.

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Acknowledgments

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