

Contemplations

(B.A. IInd Year)

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Preface

Language learning and study of literature are two facets of learning which should be embedded in the system of education. Without a study of literature, language learning is incomplete. Hence, a study of some of the representative pieces of poetry, prose, short stories, critical appreciations and others needs to be undertaken. Karnataka Samskrit University imparts specialized Samskrit education. However, this does not happen in isolation. Study of Kannada and English literature is also prescribed in undergraduate courses. Hence, there was an urgent need of a textbook, which takes into account various dimensions of English literature. It is a matter of pride and pleasure that Karnataka Samskrit University is bringing out this text-book of English with this view.

The present text-book comprises of many good literary works, which when studied and mastered, make a student appreciate English literature and language. Book One comprises of short prose and poetry, both by Indian and Western authors. Older forms of poetry like sonnets are also introduced to the student in this book. Book Two comprises of about ten chapters. 'Shooting an Elephant' and etc. are essays which develop critical and logical thinking. The student is exposed to different styles of English prose. Satirical and comedy pieces followed by critical essays, poetry etc. are introduced in a novel way. There are special exercises on Functional Grammar and grammatical elements.

I congratulate the Editorial board for bringing out these two volumes which are most needed to students. I thank noted critic Dr. N. Manu Chakravarthy who has edited these volumes. I offer

my thanks to Dr. Vinay P. for assistance in editing. Dr. Veeranarayana N.K. Pandurangi, Director of Adhyayananga took pains in arranging the compilation and printing of these volumes. I thank all the persons who worked for this book.

The choice of literary material is also most praise-worthy. I wish that these books help instil an appreciation for English literature and also produce interest for further study.

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Shooting an Elephant

Summary

“Shooting an Elephant” is an essay by George Orwell, first published in the literary magazine *New Writing* in late 1936 and broadcast by the BBC Home Service on 12 October 1948.

The essay describes the experience of the English narrator, possibly Orwell himself, called upon to shoot an aggressive elephant while working as a police officer in Burma. Because the locals expect him to do the job, he does so against his better judgment, his anguish increased by the elephant’s slow and painful death. The story is regarded as a metaphor for British imperialism, and for Orwell’s view that “when the white man turns tyrant it is his own freedom that he destroys.”

Orwell spent some of his life in Burma in a position akin to that of the narrator, but the degree to which his account is autobiographical is disputed, with no conclusive evidence to prove it to be fact or fiction. After Orwell’s death in 1950, the essay was republished several times, including in *Shooting an Elephant and Other Essays* (1950), *Inside the Whale and Other Essays* (1957), and *Selected Writings* (1958).

Courtesy: Wikipedia

About the Author

Eric Arthur Blair (25 June 1903 – 21 January 1950), better known by his pen name George Orwell, was an English novelist, essayist, journalist, and critic. His work is marked by lucid prose, awareness of social injustice, opposition to totalitarianism, and outspoken support of democratic socialism.

Orwell wrote literary criticism, poetry, fiction, and polemical journalism. He is best known for the allegorical novella *Animal Farm* (1945) and the dystopian novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949). His non-fiction works, including *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937), documenting his experience of working class life in the north of England, and *Homage to Catalonia* (1938), an account of his experiences in the Spanish Civil War, are widely acclaimed, as are his essays on politics, literature, language, and culture. In 2008, *The Times* ranked him second on a list of “The 50 greatest British writers since 1945”.

Orwell’s work continues to influence popular and political culture, and the term Orwellian – descriptive of totalitarian or authoritarian social practices – has entered the language together with many of his neologisms, including Big Brother, Thought Police, Room 101, memory hole, newspeak, doublethink, proles, unperson, and thoughtcrime.

Shooting an Elephant

George Orwell

In Moulmein, in Lower Burma, I was hated by large numbers of people — the only time in my life that I have been important enough for this to happen to me. I was sub-divisional police officer of the town, and in an aimless, petty kind of way anti-European

feeling was very bitter. No one had the guts to raise a riot, but if a European woman went through the bazaars alone somebody would probably spit betel juice over her dress. As a police officer I was an obvious target and was baited whenever it seemed safe to do so. When a nimble Burman tripped me up on the football field and the referee (another Burman) looked the other way, the crowd yelled with hideous laughter. This happened more than once. In the end the sneering yellow faces of young men that met me everywhere, the insults hooted after me when I was at a safe distance, got badly on my nerves. The young Buddhist priests were the worst of all. There were several thousands of them in the town and none of them seemed to have anything to do except stand on street corners and jeer at Europeans.

All this was perplexing and upsetting. For at that time I had already made up my mind that imperialism was an evil thing and the sooner I chucked up my job and got out of it the better. Theoretically — and secretly, of course — I was all for the Burmese and all against their oppressors, the British. As for the job I was doing, I hated it more bitterly than I can perhaps make clear. In a job like that you see the dirty work of Empire at close quarters. The wretched prisoners huddling in the stinking cages of the lock-ups, the grey, cowed faces of the long-term convicts, the scarred buttocks of the men who had been flogged with bamboos — all these oppressed me with an intolerable sense of guilt. But I could get nothing into perspective. I was young and ill-educated and I had had to think out my problems in the utter silence that is imposed on every Englishman in the East. I did not even know that the British Empire is dying, still less did I know that it is a great deal better than the younger empires that are going to supplant it. All I knew was that I was stuck between my hatred of the empire I served and my rage against the evil-spirited little beasts who tried to make my job impossible. With one part of my mind I thought

of the British Raj as an unbreakable tyranny, as something clamped down, in *saecula saeculorum*, upon the will of prostrate peoples; with another part I thought that the greatest joy in the world would be to drive a bayonet into a Buddhist priest's guts. Feelings like these are the normal by-products of imperialism; ask any Anglo-Indian official, if you can catch him off duty.

One day something happened which in a roundabout way was enlightening. It was a tiny incident in itself, but it gave me a better glimpse than I had had before of the real nature of imperialism — the real motives for which despotic governments act. Early one morning the sub-inspector at a police station the other end of the town rang me up on the phone and said that an elephant was ravaging the bazaar. Would I please come and do something about it? I did not know what I could do, but I wanted to see what was happening and I got on to a pony and started out. I took my rifle, an old .44 Winchester and much too small to kill an elephant, but I thought the noise might be useful in *terrorem*. Various Burmans stopped me on the way and told me about the elephant's doings. It was not, of course, a wild elephant, but a tame one which had gone 'must'. It had been chained up, as tame elephants always are when their attack of 'must' is due, but on the previous night it had broken its chain and escaped. Its mahout, the only person who could manage it when it was in that state, had set out in pursuit, but had taken the wrong direction and was now twelve hours' journey away, and in the morning the elephant had suddenly reappeared in the town. The Burmese population had no weapons and were quite helpless against it. It had already destroyed somebody's bamboo hut, killed a cow and raided some fruit-stalls and devoured the stock; also it had met the municipal rubbish van and, when the driver jumped out and took to his heels, had turned the van over and inflicted violences upon it.

The Burmese sub-inspector and some Indian constables were waiting for me in the quarter where the elephant had been seen. It was a very poor quarter, a labyrinth of squalid bamboo huts, thatched with palmleaf, winding all over a steep hillside. I remember that it was a cloudy, stuffy morning at the beginning of the rains. We began questioning the people as to where the elephant had gone and, as usual, failed to get any definite information. That is invariably the case in the East; a story always sounds clear enough at a distance, but the nearer you get to the scene of events the vaguer it becomes. Some of the people said that the elephant had gone in one direction, some said that he had gone in another, some professed not even to have heard of any elephant. I had almost made up my mind that the whole story was a pack of lies, when we heard yells a little distance away. There was a loud, scandalized cry of 'Go away, child! Go away this instant!' and an old woman with a switch in her hand came round the corner of a hut, violently shooing away a crowd of naked children. Some more women followed, clicking their tongues and exclaiming; evidently there was something that the children ought not to have seen. I rounded the hut and saw a man's dead body sprawling in the mud. He was an Indian, a black Dravidian coolie, almost naked, and he could not have been dead many minutes. The people said that the elephant had come suddenly upon him round the corner of the hut, caught him with its trunk, put its foot on his back and ground him into the earth. This was the rainy season and the ground was soft, and his face had scored a trench a foot deep and a couple of yards long. He was lying on his belly with arms crucified and head sharply twisted to one side. His face was coated with mud, the eyes wide open, the teeth bared and grinning with an expression of unendurable agony. (Never tell me, by the way, that the dead look peaceful. Most of the corpses I have seen looked devilish.) The friction of the great beast's foot had stripped the skin from his back as neatly as one skins a rabbit. As

soon as I saw the dead man I sent an orderly to a friend's house nearby to borrow an elephant rifle. I had already sent back the pony, not wanting it to go mad with fright and throw me if it smelt the elephant.

The orderly came back in a few minutes with a rifle and five cartridges, and meanwhile some Burmans had arrived and told us that the elephant was in the paddy fields below, only a few hundred yards away. As I started forward practically the whole population of the quarter flocked out of the houses and followed me. They had seen the rifle and were all shouting excitedly that I was going to shoot the elephant. They had not shown much interest in the elephant when he was merely ravaging their homes, but it was different now that he was going to be shot. It was a bit of fun to them, as it would be to an English crowd; besides they wanted the meat. It made me vaguely uneasy. I had no intention of shooting the elephant — I had merely sent for the rifle to defend myself if necessary — and it is always unnerving to have a crowd following you. I marched down the hill, looking and feeling a fool, with the rifle over my shoulder and an ever-growing army of people jostling at my heels. At the bottom, when you got away from the huts, there was a metalled road and beyond that a miry waste of paddy fields a thousand yards across, not yet ploughed but soggy from the first rains and dotted with coarse grass. The elephant was standing eight yards from the road, his left side towards us. He took not the slightest notice of the crowd's approach. He was tearing up bunches of grass, beating them against his knees to clean them and stuffing them into his mouth.

I had halted on the road. As soon as I saw the elephant I knew with perfect certainty that I ought not to shoot him. It is a serious matter to shoot a working elephant — it is comparable to destroying a huge and costly piece of machinery — and obviously one ought

not to do it if it can possibly be avoided. And at that distance, peacefully eating, the elephant looked no more dangerous than a cow. I thought then and I think now that his attack of 'must' was already passing off; in which case he would merely wander harmlessly about until the mahout came back and caught him. Moreover, I did not in the least want to shoot him. I decided that I would watch him for a little while to make sure that he did not turn savage again, and then go home.

But at that moment I glanced round at the crowd that had followed me. It was an immense crowd, two thousand at the least and growing every minute. It blocked the road for a long distance on either side. I looked at the sea of yellow faces above the garish clothes-faces all happy and excited over this bit of fun, all certain that the elephant was going to be shot. They were watching me as they would watch a conjurer about to perform a trick. They did not like me, but with the magical rifle in my hands I was momentarily worth watching. And suddenly I realized that I should have to shoot the elephant after all. The people expected it of me and I had got to do it; I could feel their two thousand wills pressing me forward, irresistibly. And it was at this moment, as I stood there with the rifle in my hands, that I first grasped the hollowness, the futility of the white man's dominion in the East. Here was I, the white man with his gun, standing in front of the unarmed native crowd — seemingly the leading actor of the piece; but in reality I was only an absurd puppet pushed to and fro by the will of those yellow faces behind. I perceived in this moment that when the white man turns tyrant it is his own freedom that he destroys. He becomes a sort of hollow, posing dummy, the conventionalized figure of a sahib. For it is the condition of his rule that he shall spend his life in trying to impress the 'natives', and so in every crisis he has got to do what the 'natives' expect of him. He wears a mask, and his face grows to fit it. I had got to shoot the elephant. I had

committed myself to doing it when I sent for the rifle. A sahib has got to act like a sahib; he has got to appear resolute, to know his own mind and do definite things. To come all that way, rifle in hand, with two thousand people marching at my heels, and then to trail feebly away, having done nothing — no, that was impossible. The crowd would laugh at me. And my whole life, every white man's life in the East, was one long struggle not to be laughed at.

But I did not want to shoot the elephant. I watched him beating his bunch of grass against his knees, with that preoccupied grandmotherly air that elephants have. It seemed to me that it would be murder to shoot him. At that age I was not squeamish about killing animals, but I had never shot an elephant and never wanted to. (Somehow it always seems worse to kill a large animal.) Besides, there was the beast's owner to be considered. Alive, the elephant was worth at least a hundred pounds; dead, he would only be worth the value of his tusks, five pounds, possibly. But I had got to act quickly. I turned to some experienced-looking Burmans who had been there when we arrived, and asked them how the elephant had been behaving. They all said the same thing: he took no notice of you if you left him alone, but he might charge if you went too close to him.

It was perfectly clear to me what I ought to do. I ought to walk up to within, say, twenty-five yards of the elephant and test his behavior. If he charged, I could shoot; if he took no notice of me, it would be safe to leave him until the mahout came back. But also I knew that I was going to do no such thing. I was a poor shot with a rifle and the ground was soft mud into which one would sink at every step. If the elephant charged and I missed him, I should have about as much chance as a toad under a steam-roller. But even then I was not thinking particularly of my own skin, only of the watchful yellow faces behind. For at that moment, with the crowd

watching me, I was not afraid in the ordinary sense, as I would have been if I had been alone. A white man mustn't be frightened in front of 'natives'; and so, in general, he isn't frightened. The sole thought in my mind was that if anything went wrong those two thousand Burmans would see me pursued, caught, trampled on and reduced to a grinning corpse like that Indian up the hill. And if that happened it was quite probable that some of them would laugh. That would never do.

There was only one alternative. I shoved the cartridges into the magazine and lay down on the road to get a better aim. The crowd grew very still, and a deep, low, happy sigh, as of people who see the theatre curtain go up at last, breathed from innumerable throats. They were going to have their bit of fun after all. The rifle was a beautiful German thing with cross-hair sights. I did not then know that in shooting an elephant one would shoot to cut an imaginary bar running from ear-hole to ear-hole. I ought, therefore, as the elephant was sideways on, to have aimed straight at his ear-hole, actually I aimed several inches in front of this, thinking the brain would be further forward.

When I pulled the trigger I did not hear the bang or feel the kick — one never does when a shot goes home — but I heard the devilish roar of glee that went up from the crowd. In that instant, in too short a time, one would have thought, even for the bullet to get there, a mysterious, terrible change had come over the elephant. He neither stirred nor fell, but every line of his body had altered. He looked suddenly stricken, shrunken, immensely old, as though the frightful impact of the bullet had paralysed him without knocking him down. At last, after what seemed a long time — it might have been five seconds, I dare say — he sagged flabbily to his knees. His mouth slobbered. An enormous senility seemed to have settled upon him. One could have imagined him thousands of

years old. I fired again into the same spot. At the second shot he did not collapse but climbed with desperate slowness to his feet and stood weakly upright, with legs sagging and head drooping. I fired a third time. That was the shot that did for him. You could see the agony of it jolt his whole body and knock the last remnant of strength from his legs. But in falling he seemed for a moment to rise, for as his hind legs collapsed beneath him he seemed to tower upward like a huge rock toppling, his trunk reaching skyward like a tree. He trumpeted, for the first and only time. And then down he came, his belly towards me, with a crash that seemed to shake the ground even where I lay.

I got up. The Burmans were already racing past me across the mud. It was obvious that the elephant would never rise again, but he was not dead. He was breathing very rhythmically with long rattling gasps, his great mound of a side painfully rising and falling. His mouth was wide open — I could see far down into caverns of pale pink throat. I waited a long time for him to die, but his breathing did not weaken. Finally I fired my two remaining shots into the spot where I thought his heart must be. The thick blood welled out of him like red velvet, but still he did not die. His body did not even jerk when the shots hit him, the tortured breathing continued without a pause. He was dying, very slowly and in great agony, but in some world remote from me where not even a bullet could damage him further. I felt that I had got to put an end to that dreadful noise. It seemed dreadful to see the great beast lying there, powerless to move and yet powerless to die, and not even to be able to finish him. I sent back for my small rifle and poured shot after shot into his heart and down his throat. They seemed to make no impression. The tortured gasps continued as steadily as the ticking of a clock.

In the end I could not stand it any longer and went away. I

heard later that it took him half an hour to die. Burmans were bringing dash and baskets even before I left, and I was told they had stripped his body almost to the bones by the afternoon.

Afterwards, of course, there were endless discussions about the shooting of the elephant. The owner was furious, but he was only an Indian and could do nothing. Besides, legally I had done the right thing, for a mad elephant has to be killed, like a mad dog, if its owner fails to control it. Among the Europeans opinion was divided. The older men said I was right, the younger men said it was a damn shame to shoot an elephant for killing a coolie, because an elephant was worth more than any damn Coringhee coolie. And afterwards I was very glad that the coolie had been killed; it put me legally in the right and it gave me a sufficient pretext for shooting the elephant. I often wondered whether any of the others grasped that I had done it solely to avoid looking a fool.

1936

Is love an art?

– Erich Fromm

Summary:

The Art of Loving is a 1956 book^{[1][2]} by psychoanalyst and social philosopher Erich Fromm, which was published as part of the *World Perspectives Series*^[3] edited by Ruth Nanda Anshen. In this work, Fromm develops his perspective on human nature, from his earlier work, *Escape from Freedom* and *Man for Himself* – principles which he revisits in many of his other major works.

Fromm presents love as a skill that can be taught and developed, rejecting the idea of loving as something magical and mysterious that cannot be analyzed and explained. He is therefore sceptical about popular ideas such as “falling in love” or being helpless in the face of love.^[4]

Modern humans are alienated from each other and from nature; we seek refuge from our lonesomeness in romantic love and marriage. However, Fromm observes that real love “is not a sentiment which can be easily indulged in by anyone.” It is only through developing one’s total personality to the capacity of loving one’s neighbour with “true humility, courage, faith and discipline” that one attains the capacity to experience real love. This should be considered a rare achievement. Fromm defended these opinions also in interview with Mike Wallace when he states: “love today is

a relatively rare phenomenon, that we have a great deal of sentimentality; we have a great deal of illusion about love, namely as a...as something one falls in. But the question is that one cannot fall in love, really; one has to be in love. And that means that loving becomes, and the ability to love, becomes one of the most important things in life.”

About the author:

Erich Seligmann Fromm (German March 23, 1900 – March 18, 1980) was a German-born American socialpsychologist, psychoanalyst, sociologist, humanistic philosopher, and democratic socialist. He was one of Founders of The William Alanson White Institute of Psychiatry, Psychoanalysis and Psychology in New York City and was associated with the Frankfurt School of critical theory.

the only child of Orthodox Jewish parents. He started his academic studies in 1918 at the University of Frankfurt am Main with two semesters of jurisprudence

Fromm received his PhD in sociology from Heidelberg in 1922. During the mid-1920s, he trained to become a psychoanalyst through Frieda Reichmann’s psychoanalytic sanatorium in Heidelberg. They married in 1926, but separated shortly after and divorced in 1942. He began his own clinical practice in 1927. In 1930 he joined the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research and completed his psychoanalytical training.

After the Nazi takeover of power in Germany, Fromm moved first to Geneva and then, in 1934, to Columbia University in New York. Together with Karen Horney and Harry Stack Sullivan, Fromm belongs to a Neo-Freudian school of psychoanalytical thought. Horney and Fromm each had a marked influence on the other’s thought, with Horney illuminating some aspects of

psychoanalysis for Fromm and the latter elucidating sociology for Horney.

Beginning with his first seminal work of 1941, *Escape from Freedom* (known in Britain as *Fear of Freedom*), Fromm's writings were notable as much for their social and political commentary as for their philosophical and psychological underpinnings. Indeed, *Escape from Freedom* is viewed as one of the founding works of political psychology. His second important work, *Man for Himself: An Inquiry into the Psychology of Ethics*, first published in 1947, continued and enriched the ideas of *Escape from Freedom*. Taken together, these books outlined Fromm's theory of human character, which was a natural outgrowth of Fromm's theory of human nature. Fromm's most popular book was *The Art of Loving*, an international bestseller first published in 1956, which recapitulated and complemented the theoretical principles of human nature found in *Escape from Freedom* and *Man for Himself*—principles which were revisited in many of Fromm's other major works.

Is love an art?

– Erich Fromm

Is love an art? Then it requires knowledge and effort. Or is love a pleasant sensation, which to experience is a matter of chance, something one 'falls into' if one is lucky? This little book is based on the former premise while undoubtedly the majority of people today believe in the latter.

Not that people think that love is not important. They are starved for it; they watch endless numbers of films about happy and unhappy love stories, they listen to hundreds of trashy songs about love -yet hardly anyone thinks that there is anything that needs to be learned about love.

This peculiar attitude is based on several premises which either singly or combined tend to uphold it. Most people see the problem of love primarily as that of being loved, rather than that of loving, of one's capacity to love. Hence the problem to them is how to be loved, how to be lovable. In pursuit of this aim they follow several paths. One, which is especially used by men, is to be successful, to be as powerful and rich as the social margin of one's position permits. Another, used especially by women, is to make oneself attractive, by cultivating one's body, dress, etc. Other ways of making oneself attractive, used both by men and women, are to develop pleasant manners, interesting conversation, to be helpful, modest, inoffensive. Many of the ways to make oneself lovable are the same as those used to make oneself successful, 'to win friends and influence people'. As a matter of fact, what most people in our culture mean by being lovable is essentially a mixture between being popular and having sex appeal.

A second premise behind the attitude that there is nothing to be learned about love is the assumption that the problem of love is the problem of an object, not the problem of a faculty. People think that to love is simple, but that to find the right object to love- or to be loved by - is difficult. This attitude has several reasons rooted in the development of modern society. One reason is the great change which occurred in the twentieth century with respect to the choice of a 'love object'. In the Victorian Age, as in many traditional cultures, love was mostly not a spontaneous personal experience which then might lead to marriage. On the contrary, marriage was contracted by convention - either by the respective families, or by a marriage broker, or without the help of such intermediaries; it was concluded on the basis of social considerations, and love was supposed to develop once the marriage had been concluded. In the last few generations the concept of romantic love has become almost universal in the Western world. In the United

States, while considerations of a conventional nature are not entirely absent, to a vast extent people are in search of 'romantic love', of the personal experience of love which then should lead to marriage. This new concept of freedom in love must have greatly enhanced the importance of the object as against the importance of the function.

Closely related to this factor is another feature characteristic of contemporary culture. Our whole culture is based on the appetite for buying, on the idea of a mutually favourable exchange. Modern man's happiness consists in the thrill of looking at the shop windows, and in buying all that he can afford to buy either for cash or installments. He (or she) looks at people in a similar way. For the man an attractive girl - and for the woman an attractive man - are the prices they are after. Attractive usually means a nice package of qualities which are popular and sought after on the personality market. What specifically makes a person attractive depends on the fashion of the time, physically as well as mentally. During the twenties, a drinking and smoking girl, tough and sexy, was attractive; today the fashion demands more domesticity and coyness. At the end of nineteenth and the beginning of this century, a man had to be aggressive and ambitious - today he has to be social and tolerant - in order to be an attractive 'package'. At any rate, the sense of falling in love develops usually only with regard to such human commodities as are within reach of one's own possibilities for exchange. I am out for a bargain; the object should be desirable from the stand-point of its social value, and at the same time should want me, considering my overt and hidden assets and potentialities. Two persons thus fall in love when they feel they have found the best object available on the market, considering the limitations of their own exchange values. Often, as in buying real estate, the hidden potentialities which can be developed play a considerable role in this bargain. In a culture in which the marketing orientation prevails,

and in which material success is the outstanding value, there is little reason to be surprised that human love relations follow the same pattern of exchange which governs the commodity and the labour market.

The third error leading to the assumption that there is nothing to be learned about love lies in the confusion between the initial experience of 'falling' in love, and the permanent state of being in love, or as we might better say, of 'standing' in love. If two people who have been strangers, as all of us are, suddenly let the wall between them break down, and feel close, feel one, this moment of oneness is one of the most exhilarating, most exciting experiences in life. It is all the more wonderful and miraculous for persons who have been shut off, isolated, without love. This miracle of sudden intimacy is often facilitated if it is combined with, or initiated by, sexual attraction and consummation. However, this type of love is by its very nature not lasting. The two persons become well acquainted, their intimacy loses more and more its miraculous character, until their antagonism, their disappointments, their mutual boredom kill whatever is left of the initial excitement. Yet, in the beginning they do not know all this: in fact, they take the intensity of the infatuation, this being 'crazy' about each other, for proof of the intensity of their love, while it may only prove the degree of their preceding loneliness.

This attitude - that nothing is easier than to love - had continued to be the prevalent idea about love in spite of the overwhelming evidence to the contrary. There is hardly any activity, any enterprise, which is started with such tremendous hopes and expectations, and yet, which fails so regularly, as love. If this were the case with any other activity, people would be eager to know the reasons for the failure, and to learn how one could do better - or they would give up the activity. Since the latter is impossible in the case of love, there seems to be only one adequate way to overcome the failure of

love -to examine the reasons for this failure, and to proceed to study the meaning of love.

The first step to take is to become aware that love is an art, just as living is an art; if we want to learn how to love we must proceed in the same way we have to proceed if we want to learn any other art, say music, painting, carpentry, or the art of medicine or engineering.

What are the necessary steps in learning any art?

The process of learning an art can be divided conveniently into two parts: one, the mastery of the theory; the other, the mastery of the practice. If I want to learn the art of medicine, I must first know the facts about the human body, and about various diseases. When I have all this theoretical knowledge, I am by no means competent in the art of medicine. I shall become a master in this art only after a great deal of practice, until eventually the results of my theoretical knowledge and the results of my practice are blended into one - my intuition, the essence of the mastery of any art. But, aside from learning the theory and practice, there is a third factor necessary to becoming a master in any art -the mastery of the art must be a matter of ultimate concern; there must be nothing else in the world more important than art. This holds true for music, for medicine, for carpentry -and for love. And, maybe, here lies the answer to the question of why people in our culture try so rarely to learn this art, in spite of their obvious failures: in spite of the deep-seated craving for love; almost everything else is considered to be more important than love: success, prestige, money, power - almost all our energy is used for the learning of how to achieve these aims, and almost none to learn the art of loving.

Dinner for the Boss

Summary

The Boss came to dinner is a story full of fun and tragic notes. Mr. Shamnath has invited his office boss to his house for dinner. He along with his wife cleaned and neatly arranged the household things. But the old ignorant mother was a problem. He wanted his mother to stay in a chair in the verandah and not to sleep or snore. When the guest would come to the verandah she would step into her room. The dinner went on smoothly and the guests were happy and gay. At about ten-thirty the guests came to the verandah and saw the old woman sleeping on the chair, swaying her body this side and that and snoring. The female guests giggled at the sight but the sahib felt sorry for the old lady. The mother woke up ashamed and confused. The sahib greeted her with "Namaste". He wanted to shake hands with her but she gave him her left hand as her right hand tightly held the beads. Shamnath was angry, the woman giggled but the sahib softly stroked her left hand and asked her how she was. When Shamnath introduced her as a villagewoman, the sahib wanted to hear some folk songs of Punjab. Mother could not sing of her age but at the angry instance of her son she sung two lines of a wedding song in her cracked voice. All the guests burst out with applause. The sahib wanted to see village handcrafts. Again at the insistence of her son, she produced a tattered phulkari. Shamnath assured sahib that he would give him a new one. He

asked his mother to make one for sahib. Mother pleaded her inability on account of her weak eyesight. But Shamnath gave sahib his word that she would make one for him. At this the sahib was pleased. The guest went out to dinner and mother slipped into her room and burst into tears. She prayed for her son. At midnight the guests left and the house became quite. Shamnath entered his mother's room and praised her for her good performance in front of the sahib. Mother wanted to go to Haridwar and spend the rest of her life in meditation. At first Shamnath said that people could blame him that he does not provide shelter for his old mother. Then he reminded his mother about the Phulkari for the Sahib. If she could not do it, his promotion could be spoiled. His promotion depended on the sahib being pleased with him. Mother was happy at the thought of her son's promotion and agreed to make a phulkari for the Sahib. Shamnath was reassured and happy and went to sleep.

Courtesy: <https://www.scribd.com/document/228277524/The-Boss-Came-to-Dinner>

About the Author

Bhisham Sahni was born on 8 August 1915 in Rawalpindi. He earned a master's degree in English Literature from Government College in Lahore, and a Ph.D from Punjab University, Chandigarh in 1958.

He joined the struggle for Indian independence. At the time of Partition he was an active member of the Indian National Congress, and organized relief work for the refugees when riots broke out in Rawalpindi in March 1947. In 1948 Bhisham Sahni started working with the Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA), an organization with which his brother was already closely associated. He worked both as an actor and a director. As a result of

his association with IPTA, he left the Congress and joined the Communist Party. Thereafter, he left Bombay for Punjab where he worked briefly as a lecturer, first in a college at Ambala and then at Khalsa College, Amritsar. At this time he was involved in organizing the Punjab College Teachers' Union and also continued with IPTA work. In 1952 he moved to Delhi and was appointed Lecturer in English at Delhi College (now Zakir Husain College), University of Delhi.

From 1956 to 1963 he worked as a translator at the Foreign Languages Publishing House in Moscow, and translated some important works into Hindi, including Lev Tolstoy's short stories and his novel Resurrection. On his return to India Bhisham Sahni resumed teaching at Delhi College, and also edited the reputed literary magazine *Nai Kahaniyan* from 1965 to 1967. He retired from service in 1980. Sahni was fluent in Punjabi, English, Urdu, Sanskrit and Hindi.

Bhisham Sahni was associated with several literary and cultural organizations. He was General Secretary of the All India Progressive Writers Association (1975–85) and Acting General Secretary of the Afro-Asian Writer' Association and was also associated with the editing of their journal *Lotus*. He was the founder and chairman of 'SAHMAT', an organisation promoting cross-cultural understanding, founded in memory of the murdered theatre artist and activist Safdar Hashmi.

Courtesy: Wikipedia

Dinner for the Boss

-Bhisham Sahni

The boss was invited for dinner this evening at the home of Mr Shyamnath.

Shyamnath and his wife hadn't time even to wipe away their sweat. She, in a dressing gown, her uncombed hair knotted in a bun, oblivious to the rouge and powder smudged on her face, and he, puffing cigarette after cigarette, a list in his hand, were rushing from room to room.

Finally, as the clock struck five, the preparations approached completion. Chairs, a table, stools, napkins and flowers had all arrived on the veranda. The drinks had been arranged in the sitting room. Now all unnecessary domestic articles were being hidden behind cupboards and under beds. Suddenly an obstacle appeared before Shyamnath: 'What to do with Mother?'

Neither he nor his capable wife had directed their attention to this matter. Mr Shyamnath turned to Mrs Shyamnath and said in English, "What can we do with Mother?"

Mrs Shyamnath paused in her work and, after considering for a while, said, "Send her to her friend's house at the back. She'll be sure to stay there all night and come back tomorrow."

Shyamnath, a cigarette hanging from his mouth, regarded his wife through narrowed eyes; thought for a moment, shook his head and said, "No, I don't want that old woman to start coming here again. It took enormous trouble to get rid of her before. We should tell Mother to eat early and go to her room. The guests will come about eight o'clock. Before that, she can do all she has to."

It was a good suggestion. They both approved of it. But then Suddenly Mrs Shyamnath spoke. "If she goes to sleep and starts

snoring, then what? People will be eating on the veranda just next to her room."

"So we'll tell her to shut her door from inside, I'll lock it from outside. Or I'll tell her to go inside but not to sleep, to keep awake. What else?"

"And if she nods off? Goodness knows how long dinner will go on. You drink until eleven o'clock."

Shyamnath became a little irritated. He flung up his hands and said, "She was all ready to go off to my brother, and you went and interfered just to show how good you were!"

"Vah! And should I show myself in a bad light by interfering between a mother and her son? You know what went on, and so does she."

Mr Shyamnath kept quiet. This was no time to argue; they had to find a solution to the problem. He turned towards his mother's room, which opened on to the veranda.

Glancing along the veranda, he said, "I have an idea," and he walked over to the door of his mother's room. She was sitting inside on a wooden takht pushed against the wall, a dupatta wrapped around her head telling her prayer beads. Having watched all the preparations since the morning, her heart was thumping. The burra sahib from her son's office was coming. May everything go off satisfactorily!

"Mother, today you eat early. The guests will come at half past seven".

She slowly unwrapped the dupatta from her face and said, looking at her son, "I won't eat today, beta, you know that I don't eat anything when meat and fish are cooked in the house."

"Whatever -just get all you have to do over with early."

"Very well, beta."

“And Mother, first we’ll be in the sitting room. For that time you sit on the veranda. Then when we come out here, you go through the bathroom to the sitting room.”

His mother looked at him speechless. Then she said softly, “very well, beta.”

“And Mother, don’t go to sleep early today. The sound of your snoring carries a long way.”

His mother said rather ashamedly, “What can I do, beta? It’s not in my control. Ever since I rose from my sickness, I can’t breathe through my nose.”

Mr Shyamnath had fixed matters, but he was still not at ease. If the boss suddenly came this way, then what? There would be eight to ten guests, Indian officials plus their wives - anyone could go to the bathroom. He again began fretting in agitation and irritation.

Picking up a chair and putting it on the veranda outside his mother’s door, he said, “Come here, Mother. Just sit on this.”

His mother took up her prayer beads, adjusted the end of her dupatta and slowly came and sat on the chair.

“Not like that, Mother. You don’t sit with your legs up. This isn’t a charpoy.”

His mother put her legs down.

“And for God’s sake don’t wander around barefoot. And don’t come in front of anyone wearing those wooden sandals. One of these days I’m going to take them and throw them out.”

His mother said nothing.

“What clothes are you going to wear, Mother?”

“Whatever I have, beta! Whatever you tell me.”

His cigarette in his mouth, Mr Shyamnath watched her

through half-closed eyes and began to consider her apparel. Shyamnath desired order in everything. The running of the entire household was in his hands: where hooks should be put, where the beds should be, which colour the curtains should be, which sari his wife should wear, what size the table should be... Shyamnath was afraid that if the boss should come across his mother, he might face embarrassment. Regarding her from head to toe, he told her, “Wear a white shalwar and a white kameez, Mother, Go and put them on, so I can see.”

She slowly stood up and went into her room to change.

“She’s going to be problem,” he said again in English to his wife. “People should speak only if they have something sensible to say. If she says something foolish and the boss takes offence, then the whole evening will be spoilt.”

His mother came out wearing a white shalwar and a white kameez. Rather short, swaddled in white, a small shrivelled body with cloudy eyes and only half her thinning hair hidden by her dupatta, she appeared somewhat less ugly than before.

“There, that’s all right. If you have any bangles or bracelets, then wear them too. There’s no harm.”

“Where will I find bangles, beta? You know that I sold all my ornaments to pay for your education.”

This sentence pierced Shyamnath like an arrow. He said hotly, “Why touch on that? Simply say that you don’t have any ornament, that’s all. What does it have to do with my education? Whatever jewellery was sold, I have made something of myself, haven’t I? I didn’t come back a failure. Whatever you gave, take twice as much back.”

“May my tongue burn, beta. Can I take ornaments from you? It just slipped out. If I had any, I’d wear them a hundred thousand times for you.”

It was already half past five. Mr Shyamnath still had to bathe and get himself ready. Mrs Shyamnath had disappeared to her room long before. As Shyamnath left he gave one more piece of advice to his mother. "Mother, don't sit dumbly like you do every day. If the sahib comes this way and asks you anything, then answer him properly."

"I've never been to school or learnt to write, beta. What can I say to him? You tell him that I'm illiterate, I don't know anything. Then he won't ask me."

By the time it was seven o' clock his mother's heart was pounding. If the boss came and asked her a question, what could she reply? She was terrified even by the distant sight of an Englishman, and this was an American. Goodness knows what he would say, what she should reply. She wanted to go quietly to the house of her widowed friend who lived behind them. But how could she disobey her son? She remained sitting on the chair with her legs hanging down.

A successful party is a party in which the drinks are successfully served. Shyamnath's party had begun to touch the summit of success. The conversation was flowing as swiftly as the glasses were being filled. There was no hindrance. The sahib had liked the whisky. His memsahib had liked the curtains, the design of the sofa covers, the decoration of the sitting room. What more could they want?

From only the second round of drinks, sahib had begun to make jokes and tell stories. He was being as friendly here as he was awe inspiring in the office, and his wife, in a black gown with a string of white pearls at her throat and saturated in scent and powder was the centre of adoration for all the Indian women. At everything she laughed and nodded, and she was chatting with Shyamnath's wife as if she were an old friend.

And in this flow of drinking and offering drinks, the clock

struck half past ten. They had no idea where the time had gone.

Finally everyone drained the last drops from their glasses, rose for dinner and left the sitting room. Shyamnath was in front, showing the way, behind him the boss and the other guests.

Stepping onto the veranda, Shyamnath suddenly stopped dead. What he saw made him stumble, and in a moment his intoxication took flight. On the veranda, right in front of her room, his mother was sitting on her chair just as she had been. But both her feet were on the seat of the chair, and her head was lolling from side to side, and from her mouth issued loud snores. When her head fell to one side and stayed in the same position for some time, her snores became even deeper. And after she woke with a jolt, her head began to loll from side to side once again. Her dupatta had slipped from her head, and her thinning hair was dishevelled on her half-bald head.

The moment he saw her, Shyamnath was enraged. He felt like dragging her to her feet and shoving her into her room, but this was not possible; the boss and the other guests were standing nearby.

When they saw his mother, some of the wives of the Indian officials began to giggle, but then the boss said quietly, 'Poor dear!'

At once Mother hastily sat up straight. Seeing so many people in front of her she was so alarmed she could say nothing. She immediately pulled her dupatta over her head, stood up, and began to stare at the ground. Her legs began to feel unsteady and her fingers to tremble.

"Mother, go and sleep. Why are you up so late?" asked Shyamnath and looked abashedly at his boss.

There was a smile on the boss's face. From where he was standing he said, "Namaste!"

Hesitatingly, shrinking inwardly, Mother joined her hands together, but in one hand, inside the dupatta, she held her prayer beads, and her other hand was outside the dupatta, and she couldn't complete her Namaste properly. Shyamnath was annoyed by this too. Meanwhile, the boss stretched out his right hand for Mother to shake. Mother was even more alarmed.

“Mother, shake hands.”

But how could she? She had the prayer beads in her right hand. In her confusion she put her left hand in the sahib's. Shyamnath began to burn inside. The wives of the Indian officers tittered.

“Not like that, Mother. You know you shake hands with your right hand. Give him your right hand.”

But by then the boss had shaken her left hand several times and was saying in English, “How do you do?”

“Tell him, Mother, ‘I am fine. I am well.’”

His mother muttered something.

“Mother is saying that she's fine. Go on, Mother, say, ‘How do you do?’”

She said slowly and hesitatingly, “How do do..”

There was a peal of laughter.

The atmosphere became less tense. The sahib had taken control of the situation. People began to laugh and joke with one another. Shyamnath began to feel slightly less agitated.

The sahib was still holding on to Mother's hand and Mother was shivering with embarrassment. There was the smell of alcohol coming from the sahib's mouth.

Shyamnath said in English, “My mother comes from a village. She's lived there her whole life. That's why she's shy of you.”

At this the boss looked happy. He said, “Really? I like village

folk a lot. Then your mother must know village songs and dances?” He started to gaze happily at her, nodding his head.

“Mother, the sahib is asking you to sing a song, some old song. You must know lots of them.”

His mother replied softly, “How can I sing, beta? When have I ever sung?”

“Vah, Mother! Can anyone refuse a guest? The sahib is so delighted. If you do nothing he'll take it badly.” .

“What can I sing, beta? What do I know?”

“Vah! Some really good folk song, ‘do pattar anaran de..’”

At this suggestion the Indian officers and their wives began to clap. Mother looked humbly sometimes at her son and sometimes at her daughter-in-law standing near him.

Meanwhile her son ordered her gravely, “Mother!”

After that there was no question of arguing. She sat down and in a thin, weak and trembling voice, began to sing an old wedding song.

“Hariya ni maye., hariya ni bhaine, hariya te bhagi bhariya hai!” (*Listen dear mother, listen dear sister, my son Hariya is truly blessed.*)

The Indian wives broke into laughter. After three phrases Mother fell silent, and the veranda resounded with applause. The sahib just wouldn't stop clapping. Shyamnath's annoyance turned into joy and pride. His mother had brought new colour to the party.

When the applause subsided, the boss asked. “What handicrafts do you have in Punjabi villages?” Shyamnath was swaying with joy, “Oh, a lot, sahib! I will gift you a whole set of them. You'll be thrilled to see them.”

But the sahib shook his head and said. “No, I don't want

anything from a shop. What is made in Punjabi homes? What do women make themselves?"

Thinking a little, Shyamnath replied, "Girls make dolls, and women make phulkaris."

"What's phulkari?"

After an unsuccessful attempt to explain what a phulkari was, Shyamnath said to his mother, "Do we have any old phulkari in the house?"

She quietly went inside and brought out an old phulkari of her own.

The sahib examined the colourfully embroidered cloth with great interest. It was old; in places the threads were breaking, and the cloth was splitting. Seeing this, Shyamnath suggested, "This one is torn, sahib, I'll get a new one made for you. Mother will make it. Mother, the sahib likes your phulkari very much. You'll make one just like this for him, won't you?"

His mother was silent. Then she said softly and with trepidation, "How much can I see now, beta? How can old eyes see?"

But interrupting his mother Shyamnath told the sahib, "She will definitely make it for you. You will be thrilled with it." The sahib nodded, thanked him and, swaying slightly, made his way towards the dining table. The other guests followed him.

When they had sat down and everyone's eyes had turned from her, the old lady slowly stood up and, avoiding notice, went into her room.

The moment she sat down there, her eyes flooded with tears. She wiped them again and again with her dupatta, but again and again they filled, as if a dam had burst after many years. She tried to control herself. She joined her hands, took the name of God,

prayed for long life for her son, shut her eyes, but her tears were like monsoon rain that would not cease.

It must have been the middle of the night. The guests had eaten and had left one by one. She was sitting leaning against the wall staring at it. The tension in the house had relaxed. The stillness of the surrounding locality had descended on Shyamnath's home too. Only the clinking of crockery was coming from the kitchen. Then suddenly someone knocked loudly on her door.

"Mother, open the door!"

Her heart sank. She hurriedly got up. Had she made another mistake? She had been cursing herself continually. Why had she fallen asleep? Why had she dozed off?

Had her son still not forgiven her? With trembling hands she opened the door.

The moment she opened it, Shyamnath stepped forward and took her into his embrace.

"Oh, Mummy! You really did wonders tonight! The sahib was so delighted, I can't tell you. Oh Ammi! Ammi!"

His mother's slight body crumpled and was hidden in his embrace. Tears again welled in her eyes. Wiping them, she said, "Beta, send me to Haridwar. I've been telling you for so long."

Shyamnath suddenly stopped swaying, and a line of worry began to form again on his brow. He released her from his arms.

"What did you say, Mother? What tune have you started on now?"

Shyamnath's anger began to build up, and he went on, "You want to disgrace me so that the world will say that I couldn't keep my mother with me."

"No, beta, now you live with your wife just as you like. I have done with fine food and clothes. Now what will I do here? The

few days of life I have left I will remember God's name. You send me to Haridwar!"

"If you go, then who will embroider the phulkari? I agreed to give him a phulkari right in front of you." "I don't have the eyes, beta, to be able to sew a phulkari. You have it made somewhere else. Get one ready-made."

"Mother, are you going to let me down and leave? Are you going to ruin my future success? Don't you know that if the sahib is happy I'll get promotion?"

His mother was silent. Then, looking at her son, she asked, "Will you be promoted? Will the sahib promote you? Has he said anything?"

"He hasn't said anything, but don't you see how delighted he was? He was saying that when you begin embroidering the phulkari, he'll come to see how you do it. If we make the sahib happy, I can get a better job than this. I can be a senior executive."

His mother's complexion began to change, gradually her lined face began to reveal a radiance, a slight gleam came to her eyes.

"So will you be promoted, beta?"

"Can it happen just like that? If I keep the sahib happy, then he'll do something; otherwise there's no dearth of people wanting to please him."

"Then I'll do it, beta. However it'll have to be done, I will do it."

And in her heart she again longed for a bright future for her son, while Mr Shyamnath, stumbling a little and with the words "Now go to sleep," turned towards his own room.

The Bench

Summary

Richard Rive was born in District Six in Cape Town. "The Bench" is taken from his short story collection, "Advance, Retreat" influenced by events during the Defiance of Unjust Laws Campaign from 1952 to 1953. The story starts with an excerpt from a speech that is held in Cape Town, South Africa. It is clearly part of a demonstration against the apartheid system. A large black man with a rolling voice says, "It is up to everyone of us to challenge the right of any law which wilfully condemns any person to an inferior position." The lecture is held outdoors, most of the crowd being coloured. The main character in the story, Karlie, a black man, follows every word the speaker says. He doesn't quite understand the full meaning of them, but realises that they are true words. The speaker tells Karlie that he has certain rights. The picture of himself living like a white man frightens him, but at the same time fascinates him. All he has ever been taught is that God made the white man white, the coloured man brown and the black man black and that they must know their place. The people on the platform behave as if there were no difference in colour. It makes sense, but still only in a vague way. All the time Karlie is comparing what is happening on the platform to his own situation back home. There, people of different colour could never offer each other a cigarette as a white woman does to a black man, up on the stage. The idea makes him

laugh, getting him noticed by a couple of people. This shows that Karlie is not completely comfortable or at ease with all this new information. His upbringing is strongly embedded in him. Playing with the thought of being as good as any other man he remembers black opposers of apartheid going to prison, smiling. It confuses him. As a white woman speaker says, “ One must challenge all discriminatory laws,” Karlie grows more confident, fear and passivity are replaced with determination to act for equality. A white woman jeopardising all her advantages to say what she believes in. Never had he seen anything like this in his home town. A determination starts creeping over his vagueness. Now he wants to challenge, whatever the consequences. He wants to be in the newspaper smiling. This is a turning point in his life. After the meeting, on the way to the station, Karlie is on the receiving end of a nasty, racist comment from an approaching car. “ Karlie stared dazed, momentarily too stunned to speak.” By reacting at all, it shows that he now questions this kind of treatment. To “ challenge” like the white woman speaker said, he sits on a “whites only” bench at the railway station. Although this story spans over a limited time, Karlie has gone through an extreme change in his life. He is now determined to fight for his own freedom as a human being. He rebels against his former upbringing imprinted in him and wants to find a new place in society for himself. This short story was written during the apartheid system. The bench at the railway station symbolises South African society at that time. Karlie refuses to move from the “ whites only” bench and is therefore pulled away by the police. Under apartheid even mixed marriages were not allowed. Schools, restaurants and hotels were segregated. “ Bantu education” was enforced for black people in South Africa in 1953. The blacks were taught that they were less intelligent than other races. Karlie’s initial confusion while listening to the speech, can be linked to this form of brain washing. Many were opposed to this oppressive system. Karlie is of course

alone in disobeying the police, but he represents all the black opponents of apartheid and racial discrimination. “ Karlie turned to resist, to cling to the bench, to his bench.” Karlie is not only holding on to a bench, but also to his own existence as an equal citizen of South Africa. “ It was senseless fighting any longer. Now it was his turn to smile.” Although Karlie loses his grip, he is not defeated. He smiles as he’s taken away. Karlie wins the battle with himself and is proud of showing his victory.

Courtesy: <https://www.enotes.com/topics/bench>

About the Author

Rive was born on 1 March 1931 in Caledon Street in the working-class Coloured residential area District Six of Cape Town.

His father was African, and his mother was Coloured. Rive was given the latter classification under apartheid. Rive went to St Mark’s Primary School and Trafalgar High School, both in District Six. In 1951 he went to Hewat College of Education in Athlone, where he qualified as a teacher. He was a prominent sportsman (a South African hurdles champion while a student) and a school sports administrator.

He acquired a BA degree from the University of Cape Town in 1962. In 1963 he was given a scholarship organised by Es’kia Mphahlele, the editor of Drum magazine, in which Rive published some of his early writing. His first novel, *Emergency* was published in 1964. In 1965 Rive was awarded a Fulbright scholarship. He earned an MA degree (1966) from Columbia University in the United States, and a Ph.D. from Oxford University (1974). His doctoral thesis on Olive Schreiner would be published posthumously, in 1996.

Rive was for many years Head of the English Department at

Hewat College. He was a visiting professor at several overseas universities, including Harvard University in 1987. He also delivered guest lectures at more than 50 universities on four continents.

A firm believer in anti-racism, Rive decided to stay in his country with the hope of influencing its development there.

He was stabbed to death at his home in Cape Town in 1989, when he was aged 58

Courtesy: Wikipedia

The Bench

-Richard Moore Rive

“We form an integral part of a complex society, a society in which a vast proportion of the population is denied the very basic right of existence, a society that condemns a man to an inferior position because he has the misfortune to be born black, a society that can only retain its precarious social and economic position at the expense of an enormous oppressed mass!”

The speaker paused for a moment and sipped some water from a glass. Karlie’s eyes shone as he listened. Those were great words, he thought, great words and true. Karlie sweated. The hot November sun beat down on the gathering. The trees on the Grand Parade in Johannesburg afforded very little shelter and his handkerchief was already soaked where he had placed it between his neck and his shirt collar. Karlie stared around him at the sea of faces. Every shade of color was represented, from shiny ebony to the one or two whites in the crowd. Karlie stared at the two detectives who were busily making shorthand notes of the speeches, then turned to stare back at the speaker.

“It is up to us to challenge the right of any group who willfully and deliberately condemn a fellow group to a servile position. We must challenge the right of any people who see fit to segregate human beings solely on grounds of pigmentation. Your children are denied the rights which are theirs by birth. They are segregated educationally, socially, economically. . . .”

Ah, thought Karlie, that man knows what he is speaking about. He says I am as good as any other man, even a white man. That needs much thing. I wonder if he means I have the right to go to any bioscope, or eat in any restaurant, or that my children can go to a white school. These are dangerous ideas and need much thinking. I wonder what Ou Klass would say to this. Ou Klaas said that God made the white man and the black man separately, and the one must always be “baas” and the other “jong.” But this man says different things and somehow they ring true.

Karlie’s brow was knitted as he thought. On the platform were many speakers, both white and black, and they were behaving as if there were no differences of color among them. There was a white woman in a blue dress offering Nxeli a cigarette. That never could have happened at Bietjiesvlei. Old Lategan at the store there would have fainted if his Annatjie had offered Witbooi a cigarette. And Annatjie wore no such pretty dress.

These were new things and he, Karlie, had to be careful before he accepted them. But why shouldn’t he accept them? He was not a colored man anymore, he was a human being. The last speaker had said so. He remembered seeing pictures in the newspapers of people who defied laws which relegated them to a particular class, and those people were smiling as they went to prison. This was a queer world.

The speaker continued and Karlie listened intently.

He spoke slowly, and his speech was obviously carefully prepared. This is a great man, thought Karlie.

The last speaker was the white lady in the blue dress, who asked them to challenge any discriminatory laws or measures in their own way. Why should she speak like that? She could go to the best bioscopes and swim at the best beaches. Why she was even more beautiful than Annatjie Lategan. They had warned him in Bietjiesvlei about coming to the city. He had seen the skollies in District Six and he knew what to expect there. Hanover Street held no terrors for him. But no one had told him about this. This was new, this set one's mind thinking, yet he felt it was true. She had said one should challenge. He, Karlie, would astound old Lategan and Van Wyk at the Dairy Farm. They could do what they liked to him after that. He would smile like those people in the newspapers.

The meeting was almost over when Karlie threaded his way through the crowd. The words of the speaker were still milling through his head. It could never happen in Bietjiesvlei or could it? The sudden screech of a car pulling to a stop whirled him back to his senses. A white head was thrust angrily through the window.

"Look where you're going, you black bastard!"

Karlie stared dazedly at him. Surely this white man never heard, what the speakers had said. He could never have seen the white woman offering Nxeli a cigarette. He could never imagine the white lady shouting those words at him. It would be best to catch a train and think these things over.

He saw the station in a new light. Here was a mass of human beings, black, white and some brown like himself. Here they mixed

with one another, yet each mistrusted the other with an unnatural fear, each treated the other with suspicion, moved in a narrow, haunted pattern of its own. One must change these things the speaker had said... in one's own way. Yet how in one's own way? How was one to challenge? Suddenly it dawned upon him. Here was his challenge! The bench. The railway bench with "Europeans Only" neatly painted on it in white. For one moment it symbolized all the misery of the plural South African society.

Here was his challenge to the rights of a man. Here it stood. A perfectly ordinary wooden railway bench, like thousands of others in South Africa. His challenge. That bench now had concentrated in it all the evils of a system he could not understand and he felt a victim of. It was the obstacle between himself and humanity. If he sat on it, he was a man. If he was afraid he denied himself membership as a human being in a human society. He almost had visions of righting this pernicious system, if he only sat down on that bench. Here was his chance. He, Karlie, would challenge.

He seemed perfectly calm when he sat down on the bench, but inside his heart was thumping wildly. Two conflicting ideas now throbbed through him. The one said, "I have no right to sit on this bench." The other was the voice of a new religion and said, "Why have I no right to sit on this bench?" The one voice spoke of the past, of the servile position he had occupied on the farm, of his father, and his father's father who were born black, lived like blacks, and died like mules. The other voice spoke of new horizons and said, "Karlie, you are a man... You have dared what your father and your father's father would not have dared. You will die like a man."

Karlie took out a cigarette and smoked. Nobody seemed to notice his sitting there. This was an anticlimax. The world still

pursued its monotonous way. No voice had shouted. "Karlie has conquered!" He was a normal human being sitting on a bench in a busy station, smoking a cigarette. Or was this his victory: the fact that he was a normal human being? A well-dressed white woman walked down the platform. Would she sit on the bench? Karlie wondered. And then that gnawing voice, "You should stand and let the white woman sit!" Karlie narrowed his eyes and gripped tighter at his cigarette. She swept past him without the slightest twitch of an eyelid and continued walking down the platform. Was she afraid to challenge-to challenge his rights to be a human being? Karlie now felt tired. A third conflicting idea was now creeping in, a compensatory idea which said, "You sit on this bench because you are tired; you are tired therefore you sit." He would not move because he was tired, or was it because he wanted to sit where he liked?

People were now pouring out of a train that had pulled into the station. There were so many people pushing and jostling one another that nobody noticed him. This was his train. It would be easy to step into the train and ride off home, but that would be giving in, suffering defeat, refusing the challenge, in fact admitting that he was not a human being. He sat on. Lazily he blew the cigarette smoke into the air, thinking His mind was away from the meeting and the bench: He was thinking of Bietjievlei and Ou Klaas, how he had insisted that Karlie should come to Cape Town. Ou Klaas would suck on his pipe and look so quizzically at one. He was wise and knew much. He had said one must go to Cape Town and learn the ways of the world. He would spit and wink slyly when he spoke of District Six and the women he knew in Hanover Street. Ou Klass knew everything. He said God made us white or black and we must therefore keep our places.

"Get off this seat!"

Karlie did not hear the gruff voice. Ou Klaas would be on the land now waiting for his tot of cheap wine.

"I said get off the bench, you swine!!" Karlie suddenly whipped back to reality. For a moment he was going to jump up. then he remembered who he was and why he was sitting there; He suddenly felt very tired. He looked up slowly into a very red face that stare down at him.

"Get up!" it said. "There are benches down there for you."

Karlie looked up and said nothing. He stared into a pair of sharp, gray, cold eyes.

"Can't you hear me speaking to you? You black swine!"

Slowly and deliberately Karlie puffed at the cigarette. This was his test. They both stared at each other, challenged with the eyes, like two boxers, each knowing that they must eventually trade blows yet each afraid to strike first.

"Must I dirty my hands on scum like you?"

Karlie said nothing. To speak would be to break the spell, the supremacy he felt slowly gaining.

An uneasy silence, then: "I will call a policeman rather than soil my hands on a Hotnot like you. You can't even open up your black jaw when a white man speaks to you."

Karlie saw the weakness. The white man was afraid to take the action himself. He, Karlie, had won the first round of the bench dispute.

A crowd had now collected.

"Afrika!" shouted a joker.

Karlie ignored the remark. People were now milling around

him, staring at the unusual sight of a black man sitting on a white man's bench. Karlie merely puffed on.

"Look at the black ape. That's the worst of giving these Kaffirs enough rope."

"I can't understand it. They have their own benches!"

"Don't get up! You have every right to sit there!"

"He'll get up when a policeman comes!"

"After all why shouldn't they sit there?"

"I've said before, I've had a native servant once and a more impertinent ..."

Karlie sat and heard noting. Irresolution had now turned to determination. Under no condition was he going to get up. They could do what they liked.

"So, this is the fellow, eh! Get up there! Can't you read?"

The policeman was towering over him. Karlie could see the crest on his buttons and the wrinkles in his neck.

"What is your name and address! .Come on !"

Karlie still maintained his obstinate silence. It took the policeman rather unawares. The crowd was growing every minute.

"You have no right to speak to this man in such a manner!" It was the white lady in the blue dress.

"Mind your own business! I'll ask your help when I need it. It's people like you who make these Kaffirs think they're as good as white men. Get up, you!" The latter remark was addressed to Karlie.

"I insist that you treat him with proper respect." The policeman turned red.

"This . . . this . . ." He was lost for words.

"Kick up the Hotnot if he won't get up!" shouted a spectator.

Rudely a white man laid hands on Karlie.

"Get up, you bloody bastard!" Karlie turned to resist, to cling to the bench, his bench. There was more than one man pulling at him. He hit out wildly and then felt a dull pain as somebody rammed a fist into his face. He was bleeding now and wild-eyed. He would fight for it. The constable clapped a pair of handcuffs on him and tried to clear a way through the crowd. Karlie still struggled. A blow or two landed on him. Suddenly he relaxed and slowly struggled to his feet. It was useless to fight any longer. Now it was his turn to smile. He had challenged and won. Who cared the rest? "Come on, you swine!" said the policeman forcing Karlie through the crowd.

"Certainly!" said Karlie for the first time. And he stared at the policeman with all the arrogance of one who dared sit on a "European bench."

Fire Stones

Summary

Fire Stones, is a short story written by Eoin Colfer. The story is set in the Nicobar islands, and the date is 26th Dec 2004, the day the killer tsunami waves struck. **Fire Stones** is one of the 16 short stories in a collection titled, **Higher Ground**.

Fire Stone is the story of a 13 year old Nicobarese boy. He survived the killer waves, he was taken away from danger and rescued by a Shompenese boy. Shompens are the tribes who inhabit the dense Nicobar forests.

The Nicobari boy, was on the beach on the fateful day. He experienced the earthquake, and also saw the sea retreat – which is another feature before a tsunami; the sea retreats initially and then comes back with giant waves – he also saw the giant waves, crashing towards the shores.

The waves would have been 30 feet high, but instead of getting scared, the boy was amazed at its gigantic size, and wanted to stay on the beach, and see the huge wave crash on the shore.

That's when the Shompen boy appears on the scene. He warns the Nicobari boy to run for his safety. The Nicobari boy does not heed to the advice of the young Shompen, and continues to watch the wave closing in. He had been advised by his elders to keep his distance from the Shompen tribesmen.

The rest of the story tells us how the young Shompen saves the life of the Nicobari boy. The story is titled **Fire Stones**, after the stones which the Shompen uses to light a fire to feed the Nicobari boy after saving him. The Shompen later gifts those stones to the Nicobari boy as token of his friendship.

The simple storyline, narration and the emotions of the characters are good.

About the Author

Eoin Colfer (born 14 May 1965) is an Irish author of children's books. He worked as a primary school teacher before he became a full-time writer. He is best known for being the author of the Artemis Fowl series. In September 2008, Colfer was commissioned to write the sixth installment of the Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy series, entitled *And Another Thing ...*, which was published in October 2009.

Courtesy: Wikipedia

Fire Stones

Eoin Colfer

“First the earth shakes, then the mountain wave comes. We must go.”

I REMEMBER thinking what a beautiful sight. It was just as Papa had always said, *God is in the water*.

First came the earthquake, then the sea retreated, almost to the horizon it seemed. But now it was coming back.

The wave was high and square with a snowdrift of white foam at its head. It was the biggest wave that I had ever seen, but not so big that I would run away. I had turned thirteen and was not easily

scared. The wave would break on the shore, may be even strand a few Blue fin in the sharp grass. I could return home with dinner. Mama would wrap the fish in palm leaves, bake it and serve it with rice cooked in coconut oil . I rubbed my stomach and smiled.

But then I remembered. Mama would not cook. She had returned to the village with a headache. The earthquake had given her a migraine. Tonight Papa would cook. He would wear the apron and dance around, singing in a high voice, his impersonation of Mama. Actually, he sounded just like her, and we would have to blow our laughter into our hands, so as not to wake my resting mother. The wave rumbled closer. It made a noise like all the creatures of the world rolled up in a ball. The lion's roar, the bull's bellow, even the snakes hiss. How fabulous. I wished my cousins were here to see it. I considered running to the village to fetch them, but I didn't want to miss the wave breaking. Also, I did not wish to share the fish.

There were more people on the beach. Further down. A group of teenagers were dancing around a radio, slugging coconut toddy from a Pepsi bottle. One had food cooked over the side of his canoe, but it was unlikely that he would actually venture into the sea. The Nicobari people respect the ocean and its power.

Something thumped on the sand behind me. Too loud to be a coconut, too soft for a wild pig, I turned reluctantly, not wishing to miss one second in the life of the fabulous wave. There was a boy on the beach. A Shompen boy, one of the ancient tribe that lived in the darkest forest. Papa said that as Christians we should respect every living thing, but even Papa could never summon much respect for the Shompen. They were barely more than cave-people. They were ignorant in the ways of the modern life. The Shompen still sacrificed animals, they stole from rubbish tips and they shot arrows at helicopters.

The boy had a swipe of ebony hair hanging over one eye. The other was brown, wide and staring over my shoulder.

'Mountain wave,' he said in a gruff voice. I imagined a talking dog would have a voice like that.

'Are you speaking to me?' I asked.

Shompens were not known for their social skills. Generally they stayed as far away from civilization as the island of Great Nicobar will allow, although in recent years ancient barriers were being worn down and there was even some trading between the Shompens and Nicobari. But this was the first time in my life that a Shompen had addressed me.

I tapped my chest. 'Me? Are you talking to me?'

The boy pointed out to sea, 'First the earth shakes, then the mountain wave comes. We must go.'

The boy spoke Car with a heavy accent. The Shompen have their own ancient language, but no one outside their tribe can speak it. No one can be bothered to try.

'Go', he repeated, gesturing towards the forest. 'Now'.

My mother had always told me never to follow a Shompen anywhere, especially into the forest. And I did not intend to disobey her. Anyway, I wanted to watch the wave. It was really something when a big wave broke on the shore, cutting long furrows into the sand.

I turned my back on the boy. Our conversation was over. The giant wave made me catch my breath. Suddenly it was close and huge. I hadn't realised how big it must be. Higher than the trees surely. And fast too. It seemed as though the entire ocean was coming this way, not just the surface.

'What?' I said, in surprise, but my own words were smothered by the gigantic rumbling. I felt dwarfed. An ant faced with a

descending human foot. But I was being silly. The wave would break on the shore. Waves always did.

I glanced down along the shoreline. The teenagers were not retreating. In fact, they were hooting and hollering, enjoying this fantastic sight.

I felt a hand in my pocket, and it was not my own hand. A brown arm had snaked in around my waist. The Shompen boy was picking my pocket.

'Hey!' I objected, grabbing at the stick-thin arm. But it was gone, and so was my money pouch, packed with my birthday rupees. The small Shompen boy darted between the palms on the edge of the beach. He would disappear now, I knew it, and I would never catch him. The Shompen were like ghosts in the jungle. They were harder to spot than a crocodile in a drift of logs.

But for some reason, the boy stopped. He turned and waved my pouch at me. A taunt that no thirteen-year-old boy could resist. That little thief may have been Shompen, but my legs were fast and I had the strength of the wronged behind me. I forgot the wave and ran.

It was quite a chase. I could run but the Shompen boy could read the jungle like an open book. Every dip in the sandy clay and every root that snaked from the earth to trip us, seemed to be a part of his plan. A quiver of arrows clattered on his belt as he ran and I noticed a shirt bow across his belt. He wouldn't shoot me. Surely not. I almost called off the chase, but the boy seemed to sense my reluctance and waved my pouch over his head like a trophy. My brow burned, and I sucked a deep breath, sending the oxygen to my muscles.

Faster, I told myself. You are the taller boy. You will snap his arrows across his own legs.

So, for five seconds I ran faster, then the world changed forever.

My ears were filled with sound of my blood boiling, or so I thought. But the sound grew louder, filling the air, drowning out the insects. It was the wave, howling towards the shore.

I ran on, because I was already running. And may be because something deep inside me knew already that this wave was just not slightly out of the ordinary. I looked to my right, through a picket fence of palms, to where the other boys stood, dancing like monkeys. Jeering the water.

I think that was the moment I knew for sure. I saw this wave, not like a swimmer's arm, curling up and over, but like a fighter's arm with a fist at its head.

The fist slammed into the boys, burying them instantly. There was no struggle or cry. Just alive, and then dead. I cried out, still running. Tears flooded my eyes, but I kept running. The Shompen boy sprinted ahead, bear foot, reading the ground. I followed. Mother had always said, *never follow a Shompen*, but I was thirteen now, able to make up my own mind.

Spray from the wave splattered my neck. Stones too. It was sending out messages. *I am coming for you, little boy. Your legs are not strong enough to outrun me.* There was a hill ahead. Small and rough dotted with neem trees like arrows in the pig's back. The money thief ran towards the summit. So did I.

There was foam at my ankles. Noise buffeting me like a giant wind. Sticks flashed past spearing the earth. Fish flapped on the ground. Wide-eyed and amazed.

Water now. Up to my knees. Fresh and salty. Not clear though. Thick with mud. The Shompen scaled a giant tree, right at the summit. He went up like an animal, fast and sure-footed. I tried to follow, tried to copy, but I am no Shompen. Our tribe have forgotten how to live in the trees. My feet slipped on the rough bark, my fingernails tore and bled. Crying, I turned to face the

water and was amazed at the ruin behind me. The wave had all but eaten the coastline and was flowing on towards the village. It was trying to scale the hill too, rolling its way towards me....

The wave would make it, I thought. It would flick up a finger and dislodge me from my perch. Then on to my village. Maybe the entire island. What was happening to the Earth? Was this the Judgement day the Bible spoke of?

Then, to my relief I saw that the wave dipping. My feet were clear of the water. For several seconds, I sobbed in selfish relief, before I realised that my family were probably not so lucky.

This brought on a second round of sobs. I ran to the water's edge and peered towards our village. But there was nothing but water, its surface almost solid with smashed dwellings. For several minutes I hopped on the hill with frustration. I must have looked like a monkey.

I calmed down momentarily, but then my panic returned. Oh my God. There was a second wave behind the first. Crouched on its back. Six feet higher, high enough to snatch me off my little hill. I scabbled at the tree trunk again, but it was slick and gave me no purchase. Corkscrew thorns wormed into my forearms.

I turned to face my doom. I saw people in the water. And houses. And a shark. I swear I saw a shark snapping at the sea, its new enemy. An enemy that had always been its friend. The shark, mouth open wide, saw me, its last meal.

Then I was snatched, from above. The Shompen boy had me by the shoulders, hauling me into the neem tree. My sandals were ripped away by the wave. One found its way into the shark's mouth. I don't know how I saw that. It should have been impossible. But somehow, for a fraction of a second, the water was like glass and I saw the shark slide below me. A torpedo of steel-blue muscle.

Then I was in the branches. Covering behind a sheet of leaves,

as if they could shield me from anything. What did it matter? The wave would surely uproot the tree. We would both be dead in a few seconds.

The Shompen boy squatted beside me, apparently calm. His eyes were wide, but his body was relaxed and casual. He knew that there was nothing more to do. Whatever happened was beyond our control.

What happened was that we survived. The wave flowed inland for what seemed like an eternity, but it never managed to uproot our ancient tree. The hill became a little island on the back of our sunken island, and the Shompen boy and I were the only two inhabitants.

Things flowed beneath us that nobody should ever see. The sea had claimed its bounty, and now it was revealing it to me. Shacks, bicycles livestock and of course people. My heart was torn from my chest as I saw a girl I knew float past, her beautiful dark hair trailing behind her. I think she was a distant cousin. She was encased in driftwood and rubbish, like something lost and worthless. I will never forget that image. I have thought about her so much since that day that I feel she is known to me now. Much more than in life.

A sharp pain in my arm cut through the dull pain of despair. I looked down. The Shompen boy was twisting a corkscrew thorn from my forearm. I jerked away, then pulled at the thorn myself, but the boy gripped my hand firmly.

'Not pull,' he said, in his thick accent. 'Turn. Pull makes a big hole.'

He gripped the thorn again, twisting it gently so that it followed its own path out. The tip was covered with half an inch of my blood. I almost felt sorry for myself, but then I remembered that I was alive to feel pain. My distant cousin was not. And what

of my family? Mama and Papa. My God, what of them?

I wanted to jump down from our tree and run to the village. but all I could see were treetops and water. The wave still covered the ground and it was moving in fast muscular currents. If my parents were alive, they would not want me to kill myself. So I was stuck there for the time being, at the mercy of a pickpocket Shompen savage.

A savage who had saved my life, and fixed my arm.

I looked closely at the boy. He seemed friendly enough, but he was a thief. I couldn't trust him. Maybe he had saved me so that he could ransom me off later. If there was anyone to ransom me to.

'Why are you here?' I asked him.

The boy shrugged. 'I was leaving with the others, for the high ground. Then I saw you walking towards the water.' He slapped the side of his own head incredulously. 'Towards the water. Everyone knows that after the earthquake comes the mountain wave.'

I nodded, as if I too had known. As if any of the Nicobarian had known. Maybe the Shompen were not as stupid as we thought.

'So, your family are safe?'

'Yes. High ground. Father will be angry with me. Stuck in a tree with a Nicobarese.'

'That's what you get for trying to rob an easy target. I suppose you thought the wave would drown me, and there would be no witnesses to your theft.'

The Shompen boy frowned 'Target?'

'Yes, target. Someone to steal from.'

'Steal?' spat the boy, as though that had not been his purpose. 'You are stupid, Nicobarese. Stupid, like my father says. I should have saved a pig instead of you.'

And with that, he crawled to the end of a long branch, hiding in the foliage leaving me to twist out the other thorns in my flesh.

Hours passed and still the water stayed, rolling about the trunk like a nest of giant snakes, waiting to snatch anyone foolish enough to venture down. I stayed where I was.

Miserable. I was cold, wet and hungry, but more than that I was feeling a terrible anguish. People were dead, that much was certain. But how many, I could not know.

I did know that my life had changed forever. This was a new world, a terrifying one. One that could end at any moment.

I could see nothing beyond the water. But sometimes I heard voices. In the distance, women were crying. That could be my own mother, crying for me. She must believe that I was dead, just as I thought she was.

Sometimes, people floated past our perch, clinging to anything that would float. In every pair of eyes was a blank look of shock. How could the earth turn on us so quickly, and with such venom. As if we were responsible for the crimes of humankind. Our helpless little island.

I heard a rustle in the branches and looked up to see the Shompen boy approaching. His face was serious and he had an arrow notched in his bow. The arrow was aimed at me. 'Quiet, Nicobarese,' he whispered. 'No moving.'

I did not move, though I was tempted to throw myself into the water. So the thief had graduated to murder. Papa had told me that the Shompen have no regard for human life outside their own tribe, so I suppose that I shouldn't have been surprised.

The Shompen boy drew the arrow close to his cheek, then fired. The arrow sped over my shoulder and into the leaves behind me. There was a long string tied to the arrow and the Shompen

pulled at the other end. A half-dead chicken squawked feebly as it was yanked from its perch. It was wounded only through its wing, but the Shompenboy quickly finished it off with an efficient twist of its neck.

‘Food,’ he said, smiling. I felt bad. I had suspected this boy of murderous intent, but now I saw that he had simply been trying to feed us. Hopefully *us*, not just him.

The Shompen removed his arrow and tossed the limp fowl to me.

‘Feathers,’ he said, making plucking motions.

I was glad to pluck the chicken. This was something I knew how to do and it would take my mind off my surroundings. I almost felt sorry for the chicken. Imagine somehow flapping your way out of that wave, then landing on the only tree on the island with an armed boy in it. Bad luck indeed. I gripped a handful of breast feathers and pulled.

As I plucked, the Shompen boy took up his knife and carved a hole in one of the branches. He filled the hole with the driest kindling he could find, then took two black stones from his belt and began cracking them together. Each crack produced a spark, and eventually, amazingly, one of these sparks actually caught. He set the flame, blowing gently into the carved bowl. In minutes, a small but bright fire sent a thick stream of black smoke skywards. I felt its glorious heat on my face and the silent mosquitoes backed away from the smell.

‘Amazing,’ I said. And I meant it. I had never seen stones like that. To start a fire in the middle of a humid jungle was a great skill indeed. But to start a fire while stranded up a tree and surrounded by churning flood waters was amazing.

The boy smiled again, our earlier disagreement forgotten. He

frowned then trying to think of the Car words for his precious stones.

‘Fire stones,’ he settled on eventually, sparking the stones together. ‘Very valuable.’

I nodded and even smiled, trying to send the message that I respected and was grateful for what the Shompen boy was doing. He may be a thief, but he had saved me and was now feeding me. I was prepared to forget about the money-snatching.

We cooked the chicken on a spit, picking off bits as soon as they were done. This was a real treat. Generally we saved chicken for special feasts. This fowl probably came from somebody’s coop, but in the circumstances, this thought did not cause me any guilt.

The Shompen boy tossed the carcass into the water.

‘For the shark that missed you,’ he said.

‘Thank you,’ I said, it was all I could think of to say. There was no point in us communicating really. If it hadn’t been for the wave, then we would never have shared anything except distrust, and when we got down from this tree, we would never speak again. This was the way things were. I was starting to think that this was a great shame, no matter what papa said. ‘Hey, you two!’ said a voice below us. I looked down, there were two men in a canoe, paddling against the current. I recognized one, a Nicobarese from a nearby village.

‘We saw the smoke. How did you manage to build a fire in that tree? It’s wetter than my paddle.’

Then he saw the Shompen boy.

‘Ah, I see. A little jungle magic. Anyway, climb down. This tree is not going to last long’.

The Shompen boy considered the offer, then leaped from the tree, landing neatly in the canoe. It took me a while longer, feeling

my way down the trunk, wary of corkscrew thorns. The man's hands grabbed me under the armpits when I came within arm's reach.

'Are you hurt?' He asked, plonking me on the upturned crate that acted as a seat.

'No. Just a few thorns.'

'You are blessed. To have survived this near to the coast. We haven't found anyone else. Alive, that is.'

'My village beyond the ridge. Was it destroyed?'

The man frowned. 'All the villages were hit. Most were destroyed completely. But many people made it to higher ground. There is hope'.

A strange numbness settled over me. I did not want to face the horror to come. I shut my mind to the terrible sights all around me. If I was to preserve hope then I could not afford to see all this despair.

The canoe came within then meters of the shore and suddenly the Shompen boy was on his feet.

'Hey,' said the second man 'Sit down, Shompen idiot.'

'Don't call him that,' I blurted, surprised to find myself defending a Shompen. 'He saved me.'

The Shompen boy jumped onto the rim of the canoe, then stepped off, into the water. Or so I thought. I saw then that he had landed on a floating tree trunk. He ran along it to the shore. Then he turned to look back at me. It was the last time I would see him. His last act before disappearing into the jungle was to pat his thigh right where a pocket would be.

I automatically patted my own thigh. It was heavy with my money pouch. The Shompen boy had somehow put it back, without my feeling a thing. I pulled it out and of course all the money was

there. And there was something else in it. Two black stones. The Shompen boy had made me a gift of his precious fire stones.

I almost cried at my own stupidity. The thief had been a ruse to make me follow the Shompen boy into the jungle. I had refused to come when he had simply asked, so desperate measures had been required. He had risked his own life, saved mine and fed me. And all I had done in return was call him a thief.

I felt more ashamed at that moment than any time before or since. I knew then that the Shompen boy was a better person than I. All this, and we didn't even know each other's names.

He would have his fire stones back, I decided, pocketing the pouch. When this was all over, I would find him and thank him properly, even if I had to scour the jungle on my own. Papa wouldn't like that.

And then I began to cry in earnest, the sobs shaking my shoulders. Maybe papa wouldn't be around to disapprove. The man behind me misinterpreted my tears.

'Don't worry, son,' he said, patting my shoulder. 'You're safe from that Shompen savage now.'

I didn't correct him. I didn't have the right. Only this morning, I had thought the same thing myself.

An Education in Language

About the Author

Richard Rodriguez (born July 31, 1944) is an American writer who became famous as the author of *Hunger for Memory: The Education of Richard Rodriguez* (1982), a narrative about his intellectual development.

Early life

He was born on July 31, 1944, into a Mexican immigrant family in San Francisco, California. Rodriguez spoke Spanish until he went to a Catholic school at 6. As a youth in Sacramento, California, he delivered newspapers and worked as a gardener. He graduated from Sacramento's Christian Brothers High School.

Career

Rodriguez received a B.A. from Stanford University, an M.A. from Columbia University, was a Ph.D. candidate in English Renaissance literature at the University of California, Berkeley, and attended the Warburg Institute in London on a Fulbright fellowship. A noted prose stylist, Rodriguez has worked as a teacher, international journalist, and educational consultant, and he has appeared regularly on the Public Broadcasting Service show, *News Hour*. Rodriguez's visual essays, "Richard Rodriguez Essays, on "The News Hour with Jim Lehrer" earned Rodriguez a Peabody Award

in 1997. Rodriguez's books include *Hunger for Memory: The Education of Richard Rodriguez* (1982), a collection of autobiographical essays; *Mexico's Children* (1990); *Days of Obligation: An Argument With My Mexican Father* (1992), which was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize; *Brown: The Last Discovery of America* (2002); and *Darling: A Spiritual Autobiography* (2013). Rodriguez's works have also been published in *Harper's Magazine*, *Mother Jones*, and *Time*.

Courtesy: Wikipedia

An Education in Language

Richard Rodriguez

Some educationists have recently told me that I received a very bad education. They are proponents of bilingual schooling, that remarkable innovation - the latest scheme - to improve education. They think it is a shame, a disgrace, that my earliest teachers never encouraged me to speak Spanish, "my family language," when I entered the classroom.

Those educators who tell me such things, however, do not understand very much about the nature of classroom language. Nor do they understand the kind of dilemma I faced when I started my schooling. A socially disadvantaged child, I desperately needed to be taught that I had the obligation — the right — to speak public language. (Until I was nearly seven years old, I had been almost always surrounded by the sounds of my family's Spanish, which kept me safely at home and made me a stranger in public.) In school, I was initially terrified by the language of gringos. Silent, waiting for the bell to go home, dazed, diffident, I could not believe that English concerned me. The teacher in the (Catholic) school I

attended kept calling out my name, anglicising it as Rich-heard Road-ree-guess, telling me with her sounds that I had a public identity.

But I couldn't believe her. I would not respond.

Classroom words were used in ways very different from family words; they were directed to a general audience. (The nun remarked in a friendly, but oddly theatrical voice, "Speak up, Richard. And tell it to the entire class, not just to me".) Classroom words, moreover, meant just what they said. (Grammar school.) The teacher quizzed: Why do we use that word in this sentence? Could I think of a better word to use there?

Would the sentence change its meaning if the words were differently arranged? And wasn't there a much better way of saying the same thing? I could not say.

Eventually my teachers connected my silence with the difficult progress my older brother and sister were making. All three of us were directed to daily tutoring sessions. I was the "slow learner" who needed a year and a half of special attention. I also needed my teachers to keep my attention from straying in class by calling out, "Richard!" And most of all I needed to hear my parents speak English at home - as my teachers had urged them to do.

The scene was inevitable: one Saturday morning, when I entered a room where my mother and father were talking, I did not realise that they were speaking in Spanish until the moment they saw me they abruptly started speaking English. The gringo sounds they uttered (had previously spoken only to strangers) startled me, pushed me away. In that moment of trivial misunderstanding and profound insight I felt my throat twisted by a grief I didn't sound as I left the room. But I had no place to escape to with Spanish. (My brothers were speaking English in

another part of the house.) Again and again in the weeks following, increasingly angry, I would hear my parents uniting to urge, "Speak to us now, en inglés". Only then did it happen, my teachers' achievement, my greatest academic success: I raised my hand in the classroom and volunteered an answer and did not think it remarkable that the entire class understood. That day I moved very far from the disadvantaged child I had been only weeks before.

But this great public success was measured at home by a feeling of loss. We remained a loving family - enormously different. No longer were we as close as we had earlier been. (No longer so desperate for the consolation of intimacy.) My brothers and I didn't rush home after school. Even our parents grew easier in public, following the Americanisation of their children. My mother started referring to neighbours by name.

My father continued to speak about gringos, but the word was no longer charged with bitterness and suspicion. Hearing it sometimes, I was not even sure if my father was saying the Spanish word, gringo, or saying, gringo, in English.

Our house was no longer noisy. And for that I blamed my mother and father, since they had encouraged our classroom success. I flaunted my second-grade knowledge as a kind of punishment. ("Two negatives make a positive!") But this anger was spent after several months, replaced by a feeling of guilt as school became more and more important to me. Increasingly successful in class, I would come home a troubled son, aware that education was making me different from my parents. Sadly I would listen as my mother or father tried unsuccessfully (laughing self-consciously) to help my brothers with homework assignments.

My teachers became the new figures of authority in my life. I began imitating their accents. I trusted their every direction. Each

book they told me to read, I read and then waited for them to tell me which books I enjoyed. Their most casual opinions I adopted. I stayed after school “to help” - to get their attention. It was their encouragement that mattered to me. Memory caressed each word of their praise so that compliments teachers paid me in grammar school classes come quickly to mind even today.

Withheld from my parents was any mention of what happened at school. In late afternoon, in the midst of preparing our dinner, my mother would come up behind me while I read. Her head just above mine, her breath scented with food, she'd ask, “What are you reading?” Or: “Tell me about all your new courses”. I would just barely respond. “Just the usual things, ma”. (Silence, Silence! Instead of the intimate sounds which had once flowed between us, there was this silence.) After dinner, I would rush off to a bedroom with papers and books. As often as possible, I resisted parental pleas to “save lights” by staying in the kitchen to work. I kept so much, so often to myself.

Nights when relatives visited and the front room was warmed by familiar Spanish sounds, I slipped out of the house. I was a fourth-grade student when my mother asked me one day for a “nice” book to read. (“Something not too hard which you think I might like”.) Carefully, I chose Willa Cather's *My Antonia*. When, several days later, I happened to see it next to her bed, unread except for the first several pages, I felt a surge of sorrow, a need for my mother's embrace. That feeling passed by the time I had taken the novel back to my room.

“Your parents must be so proud of you..” People began to say that to me about the time I was in sixth grade. I'd smile shyly, never betraying my sense of the irony.

“Why did not you tell me about the award?” my mother

scolded - although her face was softened by pride. At the grammar school ceremony, several days later, I heard my father speak to a teacher and felt ashamed of his accent. Then guilty for the shame. My teacher's words were edged sharp and clean. I admired her until I sensed that she was condescending to them. I grew resentful. Protective. I tried to move my parents away.

You both must be so proud of him,” she said. They quickly responded. (They were proud.) “We are proud of all our children.” Then this afterthought: “They sure didn't get their brains from us.” They laughed. Always I knew my parents wanted for my brothers and me the chances they had never had. It saddened my mother to learn of relatives who forced their children to start working right after high school. To her children she would say, “Get all the education you can”. In schooling she recognised the key to job advancement. As a girl, new to America, she had been awarded a high school diploma by teachers too careless or busy to notice that she hardly spoke English. On her own, she determined to learn how to type. That skill got her clean office jobs in “letter shops” and nurtured her optimism about the possibility of advancement. (Each morning, when her sisters put on uniforms, she chose a bright-coloured dress.) The years of young womanhood passed and her typing speed increased. Also, she became an excellent speller of words she mispronounced. (“And I've never been to college,” she would say, smiling when her children asked her to spell a word they didn't want to look up in a dictionary.)

After her youngest child began high school, my mother once more got an office job. She worked for the (California) state government in civil service positions, numbered and secured by examinations. The old ambition of her youth was still bright then. Regularly she consulted bulletin boards for news of openings, further advancements. Until one day she saw mentioned something about

an “anti-poverty agency”. A typing job - part of the governor’s staff. (“A knowledge of Spanish required”.) Without hesitation she applied, and grew nervous only when the job was suddenly hers. “Everyone comes to work all dressed up,” - she reported at night. And did not need to say more than that her co-workers would not let her answer the phones. She was, after all, only a typist, though a very fast typist. And an excellent speller. One day there was a letter to be sent to a Washington cabinet officer. On the dictating tape there was reference to urban guerillas. My mother typed (the wrong word, correctly): “gorillas”.

The mistake horrified the anti-poverty bureaucrats. They returned her to her previous job. She would go no further. So she willed her ambition to her children.

“Get all the education you can,” she would repeatedly say. “With education you can do anything.” When I was a freshman in high school, I admitted to her one day that I planned to become a teacher. And that pleased her. Though I never explained that it was not the occupation of teaching I yearned for as much as something more elusive and indefinite: I wanted to know what my teachers knew; to possess their authority and their confidence.

In contrast to my mother, my father never openly encouraged the academic success of his children. Nor did he praise us. The only thing he regularly said to me was that school work wasn’t real work. Those times when I claimed to be tired by writing and reading, he would laugh, not scornful so much as bemused. “You’ll never know what real work is”, he would say smiling, unsmiling. Whereas my mother saw in education the opportunity for job advancement, for my father education implied an even more startling possibility: escape from the workaday world. (After I introduced him to some of my high school friends he remarked that their hands were soft.)

His hands were calloused by a lifetime of work. In Mexico, he was orphaned when he was eight. At eight (my age when I achieved my first academic success) my father had to leave school to work for his uncle. Eighteen years later, in frustration, he left for America. There survive photos of him, in his first American years, dressed in a dandy’s wardrobe. My mother remembers how he used to spend a week’s salary then at the San Francisco opera on Saturday nights. And how they used to watch polo matches on Sundays.

He had great expectations of becoming an engineer. He knew a Catholic priest who had promised money to enable him to study fulltime for a high school diploma. But the promises came to nothing. Instead, there was a dark succession of warehouse, factory, and cannery jobs. Nights, he went to school with my mother. A year, two passed.

Nothing much changed, except that fatigue worked its way into the bone. And then suddenly everything was different. He gave away his fancy clothes. He did not go to the opera. And he stayed outside, on the steps of the night school, while my mother went inside.

In almost my earliest memories of him, my father seems old. (He has never grown old gradually like my mother.) From boyhood to manhood, I have remembered him most powerfully in a single image: seated, asleep, on the sofa, his head thrown back in a hideous grin, the evening newspaper spread out before him. (“You’ll never know what real work is.”)

It was my father who became angry when watching on television a Miss America contestant tell the announcer that she was going to college. (“Majoring in fine arts”.) “College!” he snarled. He despised the trivialisation of higher education, the inflated grades and cheapened diplomas, the half-education that increasingly passed

for mass education in my generation. It was also my father who wondered why I didn't display my awards in my bedroom. He said that he liked to go to doctors' offices and see their certificates on the wall. My awards from school got left at home in closets and drawers.

My father found my high school diploma as it was about to be thrown out with the trash. Without telling me, he put it away with his own things for safekeeping. ("We are proud of all our children".)

The separation which slowly unraveled (so long) between my parents and me was not the much-discussed "generation gap" caused by the tension of youth and experience. Age figured in our separation, but in a very odd way. Year after year, advancing in my studies, I would notice that my parents had not changed as much as I. They oddly measured my progress. Often I realised that my command of English was improving, for example, because at home I would hear myself simplify my diction and syntax when addressing my parents.

Too deeply troubled, I did not join my brothers when, as high school students, they toyed with our parents' opinions, devastating them frequently with superior logic and factual information. My mother and father would usually submit with sudden silence, although there were time when my mother complained that our "big ideas" were going to our heads. More acute was her complaint that the family wasn't as close as some of our relatives. It was toward me that she most often would glance when she mimicked the "yes" and "no" answers she got in response to her questions. (My father never asked.) Why was everyone "so secret", she wondered. (I never said.)

When the time came to go to college, I was the first in the

family who asked to leave home. My departure only made physically apparent the separation that had occurred long before. But it was too stark a reminder. In the months preceding my departure, I heard the question my mother never asked except indirectly. In the hot kitchen, tired at the end of the workday, she demanded to know, "Why are not the colleges around here good enough for you? They were for your brother and sister". Another time, in the car, never turning to face me, she wondered, "Why do you need to go so far away?" Late one night ironing, she said with disgust, "Why do you have to put us through this big expense? You know your scholarship will never cover it all". But when September came, there was a rush to get everything ready. In a bedroom that last night,

I packed the brown valise. My mother sat nearby sewing my initials onto the clothes I would take. And she said nothing more about my leaving.

‘Thou art indeed just, Lord, if I contend’

About the Poet

Gerard Manley Hopkins SJ (28 July 1844 – 8 June 1889) was an English poet, Catholic and Jesuit priest, whose posthumous fame established him among the leading Victorian poets. His manipulation of prosody (particularly his concept of sprung rhythm and use of imagery) established him as an innovative writer of verse. Two of his major themes were nature and religion.

Life

Early Life and Family

Gerard Manley Hopkins was born in Stratford, Essex (now in Greater London), as the eldest of probably nine children to Manley and Catherine (Smith) Hopkins. He was christened at the Anglican church of St John's, Stratford. His father founded a marine insurance firm and at one time served as Hawaiian consul-general in London. He was also for a time church warden at St John-at-Hampstead. His grandfather was the physician John Simm Smith, a university colleague of John Keats, and close friend of the eccentric philanthropist Ann Thwaytes.

As a poet, Hopkins's father published works including *A Philosopher's Stone and Other Poems* (1843), *Pietas Metrica* (1849), and *Spicelegium Poeticum, A Gathering of Verses* by Manley

Hopkins (1892). He reviewed poetry for *The Times* and wrote one novel. Catherine (Smith) Hopkins was the daughter of a London physician, particularly fond of music and of reading, especially German philosophy, literature and the novels of Dickens. Both parents were deeply religious High Church Anglicans. Catherine's sister, Maria Smith Giberne, taught her nephew Gerard to sketch. The interest was supported by his uncle, Edward Smith, his great-uncle Richard James Lane, a professional artist, and many other family members. Hopkins's first ambitions were to be a painter, and he would continue to sketch throughout his life, inspired, as an adult, by the work of John Ruskin and the Pre-Raphaelites.

Hopkins became a skilled draughtsman and found that his early training in visual art supported his later work as a poet. His siblings were greatly inspired by language, religion and the creative arts. Milicent (1849–1946) joined an Anglican sisterhood in 1878. Kate (1856–1933) would go on to help Hopkins publish the first edition of his poetry. Hopkins's youngest sister Grace (1857–1945) set many of his poems to music. Lionel (1854–1952) became a world-famous expert on archaic and colloquial Chinese. Arthur (1848–1930) and Everard (1860–1928) were both highly successful artists. Cyril (1846–1932) would join his father's insurance firm.

Manley Hopkins moved his family to Hampstead in 1852, near to where John Keats had lived thirty years before and close to the wide green spaces of Hampstead Heath. When ten years old, Gerard Manley Hopkins was sent to board at Highgate School (1854–1863). While studying Keats's poetry, he wrote “*The Escorial*” (1860), his earliest extant poem. Here he practised early attempts at asceticism. He once argued that most people drank more liquids than they really needed and bet that he could go without drinking for a week. He persisted until his tongue was

black and he collapsed at drill. On another occasion, he abstained from salt for a week.

Courtesy: Wikipedia

‘Thou art indeed just, Lord, if I contend’

Gerard Manley Hopkins

Thou art indeed just, Lord, if I contend
 With thee; but, sir, so what I plead is just.
 Why do sinners’ ways prosper? and why must
 Disappointment all I endeavour end?
 Wert thou my enemy, O thou my friend,
 How wouldst thou worse, I wonder, than thou dost
 Defeat, thwart me? Oh, the sots and thralls of lust
 Do in spare hours more thrive than I that spend,
 Sir, life upon thy cause. See, banks and brakes
 Now, leavèd how thick! lacèd they are again
 With fretty chervil, look, and fresh wind shakes
 Them; birds build – but not I build; no, but strain,
 Time’s eunuch, and not breed one work that wakes.
 Mine, O thou lord of life, send my roots rain.

Daffodils No More

About the Poet

Gordon Ramel is an American poet who has “come to poetry as a scientist.” His university degrees are in ecology. He won a first poetry prize at the age of 14, but didn’t really find “time to water the seeds of creativity” until he was 43. His poem “Darkness” is based on what might be called a “waking vision.” Gordon Ramel

Courtesy: <http://www.thehypertexts.com/Gordon%20Ramel%20Poet%20Poetry%20Picture%20Bio.htm>

Daffodils No More

– Gordon J L Ramel

I wondered lonely as a crowd
 that flows down streets and avenues
 my spirit darkened by a cloud
 of troubles I could not refuse,
 for I had looked for daffodils
 and found but few in England’s hills.

For butterflies, for birds I sought,

for all of nature's finest gems
 that I had long ago been taught
 bedecked the Pennines and the Thames,
 caressed our valleys, blessed our moors
 and danced by thousands on our shores.

But what I found was barbed-wire fence
 protecting repetitious fields
 that offered up in self defense
 statistics on their better yields
 with ne'er a thought towards the cost;
 that fragile beauty we have lost.

A poet could not help but sigh
 on seeing how the world is changed
 and ask himself, or God on high,
 why humankind is so deranged
 it can destroy, for such poor ends,
 the world on which its life depends.

My Young Son Asks Me...

About the Poet

Eugen Berthold Friedrich “Bertolt” Brecht German: 10 February 1898 – 14 August 1956) was a German theatre practitioner, playwright, and poet.

Living in Munich during the Weimar Republic, he had his first successes with theatre plays, whose themes were often influenced by his Marxist thought. He was the main proponent of the genre named epic theatre (which he preferred to call “dialectical theatre”). During the Nazi period and World War II he lived in exile, first in Scandinavia and then in the United States. Returning to East Berlin after the war, he established the theatre company Berliner Ensemble with his wife, long-time collaborator and actress Helene Weigel.

Courtesy: Wikipedia

My Young Son Asks Me....

Bertolt Brecht

My young son asks me: Must I learn mathematics?
 What is the use, I feel like saying. That two pieces
 Of bread are more than one's about all you'll end up with.
 My young son asks me: Must I learn French?

What is the use, I feel like saying. This State's collapsing.
 And if you just rub your belly with your hand and
 Groan, you'll be understood with little trouble.
 My young son asks me: Must I learn history?
 What is the use, I feel like saying. Learn to stick
 Your head in the earth, and maybe you'll still survive.
 Yes, learn mathematics, I tell him.
 Learn your French, learn your history!

A Journey through Africa and America

– Maya Angelou

About the Poet

Maya Angelou born **Marguerite Annie Johnson**; April 4, 1928 – May 28, 2014) was an American poet, singer, memoirist, and civil rights activist. She published seven autobiographies, three books of essays, several books of poetry, and was credited with a list of plays, movies, and television shows spanning over 50 years. She received dozens of awards and more than 50 honorary degrees. Angelou is best known for her series of seven autobiographies, which focus on her childhood and early adult experiences. The first, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1969), tells of her life up to the age of 17 and brought her international recognition and acclaim.

She became a poet and writer after a series of occupations as a young adult, including fry cook, sex worker, nightclub dancer and performer, cast member of the opera *Porgy and Bess*, coordinator for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and journalist in Egypt and Ghana during the decolonization of Africa. She was an actor, writer, director, and producer of plays, movies, and public television programs. In 1982, she was named the first Reynolds Professor of American Studies at Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. She was active in the Civil Rights Movement and worked with Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X. Beginning in the 1990s, she made around 80 appearances a year

on the lecture circuit, something she continued into her eighties. In 1993, Angelou recited her poem “On the Pulse of Morning” (1993) at President Bill Clinton’s inauguration, making her the first poet to make an inaugural recitation since Robert Frost at the inauguration of John F. Kennedy in 1961.

With the publication of *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, Angelou publicly discussed aspects of her personal life. She was respected as a spokesperson for black people and women, and her works have been considered a defence of black culture. Her works are widely used in schools and universities worldwide, although attempts have been made to ban her books from some U.S. libraries. Angelou’s most celebrated works have been labeled as autobiographical fiction, but many critics consider them to be autobiographies. She made a deliberate attempt to challenge the common structure of the autobiography by critiquing, changing and expanding the genre. Her books centre on themes such as racism, identity, family and travel.

Stanza One

An unidentified, omniscient speaker recounts a story to an unspecified listener. The speaker may have witnessed the events to be described or may simply be aware of them. The speaker seems to be describing a female figure. The subject has been lying down—as indicated by the past participle, “lain.” However, as the stanza continues, it becomes clear that the speaker is actually describing Africa. The continent is personified as a beautiful woman. The sugar canes represent the actual crop grown on the continent. The deserts are like a woman’s hair, and what might be presumed to be golden fields are like a woman’s feet. The mountains are like a woman’s breasts. However, the point where the Nile River splits into two branches is described as tears. The beautiful woman that is Africa may be reposing, but not necessarily in peace. She has

been lying down in this way for many years, exquisitely beautiful but always vulnerable.

Stanza Two

The speaker recounts the arrival of mysterious invaders who are never clearly identified. These “brigands,” or bandits, arrive by ship. They sail over icy cold seas, and their own demeanor is cold. When they arrive in Africa, they subject the Africans to violence. Daughters are taken from their families, and sons are sold. These bandits are most likely the white Europeans who arrived in Africa, killed many Africans, and took others back to the New World to serve as slaves. The brigands also imposed their religious beliefs on the Africans, taking away religious freedom. The speaker describes in detail the violence that has torn Africa apart. The Africans have been raped, enslaved, and killed. At the stanza’s conclusion, Africa is once again lying down. However, given the violent descriptions of the stanza, the speaker suggests that at this point in the story, Africa is no longer resting peacefully. Rather, the continent is “lying down” in pain, beaten to the ground by white oppressors.

Stanza Three

The speaker concludes the story of Africa’s past and shifts to the present. Africa is now rising—and will continue to rise—above its troubles. It will not allow its oppressors to win. The speaker then addresses the listener directly for the first time. He appeals to the listener to remember all the atrocities the continent has experienced, describing the African people’s pain and loss. The speaker also reminds the listener of the continent’s worth, emphasizing that the beauty of the African continent, its traditions, and its people have not been lost. Africa has not only stood up again, but “she” is also striding—taking big steps toward a brighter future, even though she was once lying down in pain.

The speaker summarizes the story of the Africans by highlighting their “pain” and “losses”—their freedom, their dignity, and their lives. The continent is once again personified as a woman who once screamed loudly “in vain,” suggesting that despite her determination to survive, she was nonetheless harmed. Her history and heritage was effectively “slain,” or killed, just as its people were. Taking people away from their homeland is also a way of killing their souls. However, as Africa is now rising, she is finally able to take back her power—this time, her screams will *not* be in vain. The “riches” undoubtedly refer to the many beautiful aspects of the African continent and its people, from its geography to its rich traditions.

The last two lines represent hope for the future, as Africa is not only standing once again but “striding.” As a stride entails big steps, the speaker is suggesting that the Africans are taking big strides toward building a better future. The poem was written in the 1970s—a time of great political change in Africa. Gradually, most of the colonies in Africa became politically independent in the 1960s and 1970s, with the notable exception of South Africa, which would remain under apartheid (racial segregation) until the 1990s. The poem therefore celebrates the spirit of the African people as they took back power from European colonizers.

A Journey through Africa and America

– Maya Angelou

Africa

Thus she had lain
sugar cane sweet
deserts her hair

golden her feet
mountains her breasts
two Niles her tears
Thus she has lain
Black through the years.

Over the white seas
rime white and cold
brigands ungentled
icicle bold
took her young daughters
sold her strong sons
churched her with Jesus
bled her with guns.
Thus she has lain.

Now she is rising
remember her pain
remember the losses
her screams loud and vain
remember her riches
her history slain
now she is striding
although she had lain.

America

The gold of her promise
has never been mined

Her borders of justice
not clearly defined

Her crops of abundance
the fruit and the grain

Have not fed the hungry
nor eased that deep pain

Her proud declarations
are leaves on the wind

Her southern exposure
black death did befriend

Discover this country
dead centuries cry

Erect noble tablets
where none can decry

“She kills her bright future
and rapes for a sou

Then entraps her children
with legends untrue”

I beg you
Discover this country.

Functional Grammar

1. Transformation of Sentences

Affirmative, Negative, Interrogative, etc., Simple, Compound, Complex; Direct and Indirect Speech; Voice; Active and Passive.

2. The Verb

Transitive and Intransitive, Linking Verbs, Phrasal Verbs.

3. Tenses

Uses of Tenses; Simple Present, Present Continuous, Simple Past, Past Continuous, Present Perfect, Present Perfect Continuous, Past Perfect, Past Perfect Continuous, Simple Future, Future Continuous, Future Perfect, Future Perfect Continuous; The Sequence of Tenses; Conditionals; Real, Unreal, Impossible.

4. Word Classes : Function Class

Determiners, Prepositions, Conjunctions, Pronouns.

5. Concord

Subject Verb Agreement

6. Linkers

7. Punctuation

8. Letter Writing

Business Correspondence : Structure, Complaint Letter, Bio-data; Social Correspondence; Letter of Congratulation, Letter of Regret.

9. Essay Writing

10. Precis Writing

Vocabulary

1. Words Similar in Pronunciation

2. Synonymous Words Often Confused

3. Idioms and Phrases

4. Idiomatic Phrasal Verbs

5. Foreign Words and Phrases in Common Use

6. Proverbs

7. Common Errors of Indian Students

Key to Answers

Foreign Words and Phrases in Common Use

Some of the Foreign words and phrases commonly used in English are given below :

1. **ab initio** (L) : from the beginning

They revised the lessons ab initio before the examination.

2. **ad hoc** (L) : for this special purpose

An ad hoc committee was formed to supervise the drought relief operations.

3. **ad infinitum** (L) : for the time being

The frontiers of science are expanding ad infinitum.

4. **ad interim** (L) : for the time being

The increment was expected to satisfy the workers ad interim.

5. **ad nauseam** (L) : to the point of producing disgust

His boasting continued ad nauseam when we had to intervene and stop him.

6. **ad valorem** (L) : according to value

Taxes on commodities should be ad valorem.

7. **a la carte** (F) : according to menu

The restaurant he chose offered a la carte dinner.

8. **alma mater** (L) : school or university attended

The final year student in her farewell speech hailed her alma mater as a foster mother.

9. **apropos (F)** : with regard to

The teacher tried to collect the students' opinion apropos the introduction of a school parliament.

10. **avante garde (F)** : progressive

The new literary movement was ushered in by the avante garde writers.

11. **bona fide (L)** : genuine

The bona fide report submitted by the CBI gives a true picture of the whole case.

12. **bon voyage (F)** : wish you a good voyage

As he turned to board the train, she bade bon voyage.

13. **billet doux (F)** : love letter

She treasures her first billet doux from her lover.

14. **boutique (F)** : a small shop selling articles of the latest fashion

Jessie opened her new dress boutique on 11th cross street.

15. **carte blanche (F)** : full authority

The ambassador was given carte blanche to handle the delicate situation.

16. **coup d'etat (F)** : take over of government by violent means

The government of Papondilli was toppled by the rebels in a coup d'etat.

17. **coup de grace (F)** : finishing blow to put out of pain

The groom delivered the coup de grace to end the agony of the fatally injured horse.

18. **cuisine (F)** : (style of) cooking

French restaurants are known for their excellent cuisine.

19. **de facto (L)** : in actual fact

The Prime Minister is the de facto head of government.

20. **de jure (L)** : by right, by law

The Indian President is the de jure head of the government.

21. **deluxe (F)** : of very high quality

The deluxe model of the car is more comfortable than the standard one.

22. **en mass (F)** : in a body

As a sign of protest, the audience moved out of the hall en masse as the minister began his speech.

23. **action d'eclat (F)** : brilliant success/display; applause from all

His outstanding music performance was received with action d'eclat by the appreciative audience.

24. **enfant terrible (F)** : young or new person whose behaviour, ideas, etc. cause annoyance or embarrassment to those who hold conventional opinions.

Her first assignment as a babysitter to an enfant terrible gave her nightmares for days to come.

25. **esprit de corps (F)** : spirit of loyalty

The esprit de corps exhibited by the soldiers was quite remarkable.

26. **et al (L)** : and others

The book was authored by Ramanujan et al.

27. **ex gratia (L)** : an act of grace

The Railway Minister promised an ex gratia payment for the next of kin of those killed in the rail accident.

28. **ex parte (L)** : on one side; partisan

The tax reforms announced was ex parte, tending to pamper the rich.

29. **fait accompli** (F) : a thing already done
He was forced to accept the fait accompli unconditionally though he was not happy about it.
30. **faux pas** (F) : blunder
The debutante inadvertently committed a social faux pas.
31. **id est** (i.e.) : 'that is'
Social sciences, i.e., anthropology, sociology, etc., are assuming importance these days.
32. **impasse** (F) : deadlock
The breakdown of talks between the management and the workers led to an impasse.
33. **in memoriam** (L) : to the memory of
Shahjahan loved Mumtaz and on her death built the Taj in memoriam.
34. **inter alia** (L) : among other things
The enquiry committee's report included inter alia the cause of the crime.
35. **in toto** (L) : wholly, in total
The eye witness gave an in toto account of the accident.
36. **joie de vivre** (F) : joy of living
The happy kids radiated a spirit of joie de vivre.
37. **laissez - faire** (F) : government policy of non-intervention, especially in economic matters
In the mwake of the newly liberalized economic environment the government announced a laissez-faire policy.
38. **lingua franca** (F) : common language of communication among speakers of different languages
The government has been trying for a long time to make Hindi the lingua franca in India.

39. **magnum opus** (L) : great literary work
Paradise Lost can be called Milton's magnum opus.
40. **mala fide** (F) : in bad faith
Nobody realised till the last moment that his intentions were mala fide.
41. **mal a propos** (F) : ill-timed
The public revelation of the business' huge losses soon after the death of the owner was mal a propos.
42. **modus operandi** (L) : mode of operation
The modus operandi of underworld dons seems to be strikingly similar everywhere.
43. **modus vivendi** (L) : temporary agreement
A modus vivendi was struck up between the management and the trade unions.
44. **mutatis mutandis** (L) : with necessary changes
We decided to implement the Japanese plan in our country mutatis mutandis.
45. **non grata** (L) : unacceptable
His ideas were considered non grata by his superiors.
46. **par excellence** (F) : beyond comparison
His oil painting of the scenery was par excellence.
47. **penchant** (F) : liking
he has a penchant for good food.
48. **persona grata** (L) : person who is acceptable to those to whom he is sent
The new Managing Director was considered persona grata by the office personnel.
49. **prima facie** (L) : at first glance

He could not be convicted since there was no prima facie evidence against him.

50. **quid pro quo** (L) : something given or taken as equivalent to another

The manager's quid pro quo proposal to offer better incentives and thus enhance productivity was acceptable to all.

51. **raison d'être** (F) : reason for existence

The raison d'être of man on earth has intrigued philosophers over the years.

52. **sine die** (L) : indefinitely adjourned

The judge declared the trial sine die.

53. **sine qua non** (L) : an indispensable condition

Freedom of expression is a sine qua non of a healthy democracy.

54. **status quo** (L) : in the former state

The court ordered that status quo be maintained until a thorough enquiry was conducted.

55. **sub judice** (L) : under judicial consideration

The Police Commissioner could not comment on the murder case as it was sub judice.

56. **summum bonum** (L) : of supreme good

The opening of a charitable hospital by the Trust was an act summum bonum.

57. **tete-a-tete** (F) : private conversation

The Ambassador had a tete-a-tete with the President of the country.

58. **tour de force** (F) : remarkable deed

The grand comeback of the retired actress was indeed a tour de force.

59. **ultra vires** (L) : illegal

The newly passed state regulation was declared ultra vires by the Supreme Court.

60. **via media** (L) : middle course

The management adopted a via media stand, neither too lax nor too rigid, with regard to the strikers.

61. **vice versa** (L) : the other way round

During war time, one country spreads scandals about its enemy countries and vice versa.

62. **vis a vis** (F) : in relation to

The status of English in India has to be studied vis a vis the peculiar linguistic condition existing here.

63. **viva voce** (L) : oral

Most postgraduate courses include a viva voce examination at the end of the final year.

64. **volte face** (L) : reversal of attitude

His persuasive power was such that he could bring about a volte face in his father, with regard to his marriage.

65. **vive !** (F) : long live

Vive the Republic !

Proverbs

Proverbs add charm and spice to a language and English is rich with an abundance of them. A proverb expresses in few words a truth which relates to everyday experience, a brief saying with a lot of wisdom locked in it. They are handy as a word of advice or warning or a wise timely comment on a situation, expressed in a precise, pithy style. Some proverbs are direct and some metaphorical, in which case the meaning has to be transferred to the literal plane. Following is a short list of proverbs in common use in English, along with brief explanatory notes on them.

1. A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush
Be contented with what you have, instead of yearning for something better which is doubtful of being gained.
2. A creaking gate hangs long
A person in poor health usually does not die soon but pulls on to reach old age.
3. A miss is as good as a mile
Even if you fail only by a narrow margin, it is a failure. The degree by which you miss your mark is immaterial. Failure is failure.
4. A new broom sweeps clean
When a person newly takes charge, he tends to be over enthusiastic about thoroughness and perfection in his new job.

5. A rolling stone gathers no moss
One who often changes one's work or home does not gain much skill, money, friendship or trust.
6. A stitch in time saves nine
Prompt and timely action prevents unnecessary troubles and difficulties in future.
7. A word spoken is past recalling
Whatever is said once cannot be taken back, however much it may be regretted. Hence think well before saying anything.
8. A watched kettle never boils
If we are too eagerly or anxiously waiting for something to happen, time seems to drag.
9. Absence makes the heart grow fonder
When people are parted for some time, they tend to be more appreciative of each other.
10. All's fair in love and war
The same goal or target can be achieved through different means.
11. All roads lead to Rome
The same goal or target can be achieved through different means.
12. All that glitters is not gold
All that is bright and beautiful need not necessarily be good. Appearance can be deceptive and hence should not be the basis of judgements of value.
13. All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy
Devoting one's whole time to work and not finding time for relaxation at all can have ill effects.

14. All's well that ends well

If things end well, all previous difficulties and troubles do not matter, for the end result is what counts most.

15. As you make your bed so you must lie in it

Each one must accept the consequences of one's actions, whether they are favourable or unfavourable.

16. A friend in need is a friend indeed

A true friend is one who helps you in times of need.

17. A bad workman always blames his tools

One always tends to cover up one's deficiency or lack of skill by blaming external factors like the tools at his disposal.

18. Barking dogs seldom bite

People who often burst into loud angry outbursts or create a lot of ruckus, are usually harmless and not to be feared.

19. Beauty is only skin deep

The inner qualities of the mind are more important than mere good looks which is superficial, i.e., only skin deep.

20. Beggars can't be choosers

When we are in an unfavourable position with no choices, we should unquestionably accept whatever is offered, even if it is not exactly what we want.

21. Better late than never

It is better to do something, however late it may be, than not to do it at all.

22. Better the devil you know than the devil you don't know

Any evil or unpleasantness, of which we already have some experience is better than an evil or unpleasantness which is totally unknown.

23. Clothes do not make the man

It is not the outward appearance but the inner qualities of a person that show his true nature.

24. Cut your coat according to your cloth

We should not be overambitious but should try to manage things without our means. Our expenditure should not exceed our income.

25. Do as you would be done by

Treat others as you wish them to treat you.

26. Don't count your chickens before they hatch/are hatched

Don't be sure of the result or success until it is definitely known.

27. Don't cross a bridge until you come to it

Don't unnecessarily worry about problems or difficulties before they actually arise.

28. Don't have too many irons in the fire

It is better to concentrate on one thing at a time instead of attempting too many things at the same time.

29. Don't make a mountain out of a mole-hill

Don't give undue importance to trivial and silly matters.

30. Don't put all your eggs in one basket

It is not advisable to pin all your hopes, money etc., on only one thing, for if that is lost, you won't have anything to rely on.

31. Don't put the cart before the horse

Do things in the right order and not in the wrong order, putting first what should come later.

32. The early bird catches the worm

Only those who act promptly and early enough will win their ends. Delayed action is detrimental to success.

33. Every dog has his/its day

In every man's life will come a time of success or good fortune.

34. An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth

Pay one back in the same coin as he paid you. If someone has been unfair to you, you also treat him in the like manner.

35. Fine feathers make fine birds

People judge you by appearance. Be well-dressed in order to impress people.

36. First come, first served

Those who arrive first will have the best chances.

37. Fools rush in where angels fear to tread

Whatever is forbidden becomes the most attractive.

38. Help a lame dog over a stile

Help those who are in difficulty.

39. Honesty is the best policy

Dishonesty may help you for the time being, but in the long run, honesty alone will help you.

40. It's easy to be wise after the event

There is no credit in saying what could have avoided a mishapening or failure after it has happened.

41. It's never too late to mend

It's never too late to improve yourself, your conduct, behaviour, attitude etc.

42. It's no use crying over spilt milk

It's no use worrying over something, about which nothing can be done.

43. It never rains but it pours

Misfortunes never occur one at a time but together at one stroke.

44. Learn to walk before you run

Do not attempt to do high and mighty things before learning the basic lessons first. Proceed in order from the easiest to more difficult ones later.

45. Let sleeping dogs lie

Do not unnecessarily stir issues which are dormant and which do not give trouble at present, but might create problems once disturbed.

46. Look before you leap

Consider all the possible consequences of an action before you do it. Rash action might lead to damages.

47. Make hay while the sun shines

Act at the appropriate time and make the most of opportunities.

48. Where there is a will, there is a way

If you have a strong will to achieve something, you will achieve it somehow or other.

49. Necessity is the mother of invention

Driven by necessity, one invents some solution or way out, however difficult the problem or situation may be.

50. Never look a gift horse in the mouth

Don't find fault with a gift, which is not your right, but a gesture of the giver's good-heartedness. Be thankful that you've got it.

51. No pains, no gains

You cannot achieve anything worthwhile without taking pains.

52. One swallow doesn't make a summer

Do not make generalisations or conclusions based on any one or two particular or isolated features.

53. Out of sight, out of mind

You tend to forget friends who are away and out of contact.

54. Practice makes perfect

Constant practice is essential for perfecting any art or skill.

55. The proof of the pudding is in the eating

The true worth of anything can be tested or proved only when it is put to its actual use.

56. Rome was not built in a day

Any achievement worth the name requires time and effort.

57. Still waters run deep

A man of few words may be a serious thinker and a man of substance.

58. Time and tide wait for no man

Time and opportunities in life do not wait for anyone. Prompt and timely action is essential for success.

59. Too many cooks spoil the broth

If too many people are engaged in the same work at the same time, they may make a mess of it.

60. You can't have your cake and eat it

Often you have to sacrifice something in order to gain something. You can't have both the alternatives, for example, you can't keep the money with you and buy something with it.

61. You can't teach an old dog new tricks

Old people are resistant to change and it is difficult to change their ways and beliefs.

Common Erros of Indian Students

English is taught and learnt as a second language in India. Though some of the Indian learners of English do attain fairly high proficiency, especially with regard to grammar, the majority commit a number of errors of various types. Some most commonly made errors are listed below, along with the corrected versions.

Incorrect	Correct
1. The sceneries here are fantastic.	The scenery here is fantastic.
2. I've bought some furnitures.	I've bought some furniture.
3. We don't have any informations.	We don't have any information.
4. Please excuse the troubles.	Please excuse the trouble (I have caused).
5. We climbed a ten feet wall.	We climbed a ten foot wall.
6. Pack your luggages quickly.	Pack your luggage quickly.
7. She took troubles to do her work.	She took trouble over her work (or) She took pains over her work.
8. She provided them food.	She provided them with food.
9. I am unable to read due to my headache.	I am unable to read owing to my headache.
10. My family members are also invited.	The members of my family are also invited.

11. There is no place in this compartment. There is no room in this compartment.
12. She is writing new poetry. She is writing new poem.
13. The joker at the circus was very talented. The clown at the circus was very talented.
14. We watched a good play of football. We watched a good game of football.
15. We saw the Eiffel Tower flying from London to Paris. We saw the Eiffel Tower, while flying from London to Paris (or) While flying from London to Paris, we saw the Eiffel Tower.
16. There are two females in the room. There are two women in the room.
17. She got a bad companionship. She got into bad company.
18. I met my cousin brother today. I met my cousin today.
19. You've to put your sign here. You've to put your signature here.
20. She took insult at this. She took offence at this.
21. I go to school walking. I go to school on foot.
22. The front/back side of . The front/back of the home.
the home
23. I can't help but think that you are wrong. I can't but think that you are wrong (or) I can't help thinking that you are wrong.
24. We all did not go. None of us went (or) All of us did not go.
25. He tested the boy if he could understand English. He tested the boy to see if he could understand English.
26. I with some friends went to the beach. I went to the beach with some friends.

27. I and she went for shopping. She and I went for shopping.
28. Who did this? Myself. Who did this? I/Me.
29. Whoever comes first, he will get the chance. Whoever comes first, will get the chance.
30. The one who tops the list, he will get a prize. The one who tops the list will get a prize.
31. I've brought the bottle. Please fill. I've brought the bottle. Please fill it.
32. "Are they ready?" "Yes, I think". "Are they ready?" "Yes, I think so".
33. He joined the party and enjoyed. He joined the party and enjoyed himself.
34. I asked for a pen, but nobody gave me. I asked for a pen, but nobody gave it to me.
35. The area of the plot must be the same as my plot. The area of the plot must be the same as that of my plot.
36. The climate of Bangalore is better than any city in India. The climate of Bangalore is better than that of any city in India.
37. I shall test the instrument whether it works well. I shall test whether the instrument works well.
38. How did you fare in the test? 38. How did you fair in the test?
39. Everyone is happy when they get a holiday. Everyone is happy when te gets a holiday.
40. Open your book at nine pages. Open your book at page nine.
41. No one lived here prior to the present tenant. No one lived here before the present tenant.
42. This pen costs rupees thirty. This pen costs thirty rupees.
43. They visited me a 2nd time. They visited me a second time.
44. She is in class eighth. She is in class eight (or) She is in the eighth class.

45. He took it in the both hands. He took it in both hands both his hands.
46. The plague broke out due to unhygienic conditions. The outbreak of plague was due to unhygienic conditions.
47. She is elder than I. She is older than me.
48. He repeated the same story again. He repeated the same story.
49. She is growing healthy every day. She is growing healthier every day.
50. No country in the world has as large a population like China. No country in the world has as large a population as China.
51. We are going to Kulu in summer as it is cool than Chennai. We are going to Kulu in summer as it is cooler than Chennai.
52. The more you eat, you grow fatter. The more you eat, you fatter you grow.
53. No dramatist is as widely read as Shaw. No other dramatist is as widely read as Shaw.
54. Of the four, he is more clever. He is the cleverest of the four.
55. Of the two plans this is the best. Of the two plans this is the better.
56. This story is as interesting if not better than the other. This story is as interesting as, if not better than the other.
57. Of the two brothers, the older is the cleverest. Of the two brothers, the older is the cleverer.
58. He will spend his future/ remaining life in this village. He will spend his life in this village.

59. Ganges is a sacred river originating from Himalayas. The Ganges is a sacred river originating from the Himalayas.
60. He was only teacher who participated the games. He was the only teacher who participated in the games.
61. Pen is mightier than sword. The pen is mightier than the sword.
62. Kochi is Venice of the East. Kochi is the Venice of the East.
63. Have you ever listened to the roaring sound of sea? Have you ever listened to the roaring sound of the sea?
64. He was so fat man that he could not run fast. He was so fat a man that he could not run fast.
65. He is best student in the class. He is the best student in the class.
66. The gold is precious metal. Gold is precious metal.
67. The mankind should protect the nature. Mankind should protect nature.
68. I have an urgent business. I have (some) urgent business.
69. He earned hundred rupees. He earned a hundred rupees.
70. He managed to get an employment there. He managed to get employment there.
71. Moon sheds her rays on rich and poor alike. The moon sheds her rays on the rich and the poor alike.
72. What a fun! What fun!
73. Each of us love our country. Each of us loves his country.
74. Much efforts bring their reward. Much effort brings its reward.
75. He is coward man. He is coward (or) He is a cowardly man.
76. The people demanded a sifting inquiry. The people demanded a thorough inquiry.

77. Asia is the largest of all other continents. Asia is the largest of all continents.
78. By the time I woke up the rainbow was disappeared. By the time I woke up, the rainbow had disappeared.
79. He doesn't care for my words. He pays no attention to my words (or to what I say).
80. He asked had we reserved our tickets. He asked if/whether we had reserved our tickets.
81. He said, "Why you are late?" He said, "Why are you late?"
82. He said, "Why you didn't tell me?" He said, "Why didn't you tell me?"
83. She told me that she wrote to him about to. She told me that she had written to him about it.
84. They have arrived from Chennai yesterday. They arrived from Chennai yesterday.
85. He left the house before I reached there. He had left the house before I reached there.
86. This was going on since a long time. This has been going on for a long time.
87. If I told you the truth, you'll be angry with me. If I tell you the truth, you'll be angry with me.
88. If I knew, I would have told you. If I knew, I would tell you (or) If I had known, I would have told you.
89. I have left scouting. I have given up scouting.
90. He had to leave his claim. He had to abandon his claim.
91. He knows to ride a bicycle. He knows how to ride a bicycle.
92. By and by she knew her mistake. By and by she realized her mistake.

93. They always cut jokes about him. They always make jokes about him.
94. He said to me to go. He told to me to go (or) He asked me to go.
95. With a guillotine they cut the heads of barons. With a guillotine they cut off the heads of barons.
96. I have cut my pencil. I have sharpened my pencil.
97. My foot is paining. I've a pain in my foot (or) My foot is hurting.
98. My tooth is paining. My tooth is aching.
99. I must give a farewell speech. I must make a farewell speech.
100. He made an inspiring lecture. He gave an inspiring lecture.
101. He has given his examination. He has done/taken his examination.
102. I asked my servant to lay the table. I told my servant to lay the table.
103. I told my teacher to excuse me for being late. I asked my teacher to excuse me for being late (told where you can order ans asked where you can only request)
104. He got down from his bicycle. He got off from his bicycle.
105. She took out her shoes. She took off her shoes.
106. Why don't you hear me? Why don't you listen to me?
107. As it was raining, he was putting on a raincoat. As it was raining, he was wearing a raincoat.
108. I find it difficult to pull on with my work. I find it difficult to manage my work.
109. I have ordered for lunch at one. I have ordered lunch at one.
110. The old woman puts her money in a box. The old woman keeps her money in a box.

111. I struck a blow on his face. I struck him in the face.
112. He shot the tiger but missed. He shot at the tiger but missed.
113. He is playing mischief again. He is up to mischief again.
114. She stood first in her class. She was first in her class.
115. The ship was drowned into the sea. The ship sank into the sea.
116. He filled petrol in the tank. He filled the tank with petrol.
117. This poor home was found by a charitable trust. This poor home was founded by a charitable trust.
118. Who invented Africa? Who discovered Africa?
119. She denied to go to school. She refused to go to school.
120. He didn't do any fault. He didn't commit any fault.
121. The committee is consisted of twelve people. The committee consisted of twelve people.
122. It is written in this letter that ... (clumsy construction) This letter says that ...
123. He decided to revenge his enemy. He decided to take revenge his enemy.
124. He decided to revenge his friend. He decided to avenge his friend.
125. You may either have tea or coffee. You may have either tea or coffee.
126. She neither cares for power nor glory. She cares neither for power nor glory.
127. I marked what she was doing. I noticed what she was doing.
128. He is very much sorry. He is very sorry.
129. He is not only insulted his friends but also his brothers. He insulted not only his friends but also his brothers.

130. He both insulted his friends and his brothers. He insulted both his friends and his brothers.
131. He was very kind enough to help me. He was so kind as to help me. (or) He was kind enough to help me.
132. Not only the thief stole the money but also poisoned the dog. The thief not only stole the money but also poisoned the dog.
133. To tell in brief, they were reunited. In short, they were reunited.
134. Yesterday in the night we dined out. Last night we dined out.
135. If he fails again, he will be nowhere. If he fails again, he will be ruined.
136. Really speaking this tea is cold. As a matter of fact, (or to speak the truth, or in fact,) this tea is cold.
137. No sooner it started raining when we stopped the game. No sooner did it start raining then we stopped the game.
138. Never I have witnessed such an event. Never have I witnessed such an event.
139. Hardly I had reached home then the telephone bell rang. Hardly had I reached home, when the telephone bell rang.
140. I seldom waste my time. Seldom do I waste my time.
141. What for do you want to meet me? Why do you want to meet me? (or) What do you want to meet me for?

142. We are confident to win the game. We are confident to winning the game.
143. I want to know as to why the picnic has been put off. I want to know why the picnic has been put off.
144. Any of the two can be entrusted with the work. Either of the two can be entrusted with the work.
145. He called me as a coward. He called me a coward.
146. I like all kinds of ice-creams as for an example vanilla. I like all kinds of ice-creams, for example, vanilla.
147. Supposing if it rains, what shall we do? Supposing it rains, (or if it rains), what shall we do?
148. This is the novel, I was telling you about it. This is the novel about which I was telling you. (or) This is the novel I was telling you about.
149. He is an idiot, isn't it? He is an idiot, isn't he?
150. You've understood this lesson, isn't? You've understood this lesson, haven't you?
151. We are going to Kovalam, isn't it? We are going to Kovalam, aren't we?
152. I was reading a book, at that time he was troubling me. While I was reading a book, he was disturbing me.
153. Arnold is greater than any Victorian poet. Arnold is greater than any other Victorian poet.
154. This paint is cheap but it is inferior than the other in quality. This paint is cheap but it is inferior to the other in quality.
155. This rice is superior than the other. This rice is superior to the other.

156. He suggested me this plan. He suggested this plan to me.
157. You send the book on my address. You send the book to my address.
158. You are bound to explain them the situation. You are bound to explain the situation to them.
159. Your ideas are different than mine. Your ideas are different from mine.
160. He resembles to his father. He resembles his father.
161. His appearance does not correspond to your description. His appearance does not correspond with your description.
162. Did he ask any question to you? Did he ask you any question?
163. I'm searching the lost book. I'm searching for the lost book.
164. They pitied on her. They pitied her. (or) They took pity on her.
165. They discussed about all the main issues. They discussed all the main issues.
166. He wrote that letter with red ink. He wrote that letter in red ink.
167. He went for riding. He went riding. (or) He went for a ride.
168. He rides a cycle. He rides on a cycle.
169. You will be cured from your fever in three days. You will be cured of your fever in three days.
170. He has gone to Delhi for doing business. He has gone to Delhi on business.

171. The second semester begins from May 1st. The second semester begins on May 1st.
172. They spend much money for luxuries. They spend much money on luxuries.
173. They waste much time in trifles. They waste much time on/over trifles.
174. This is a clean locality to live. This is a clean locality to live in.
175. I want a pen to write. I want a pen to write with.
176. These plants are called with different names. These plants are called by different names.
177. He was seated on an armchair. He was seated in an armchair.
178. The railway will compensate us the loss. The railway will compensate us for the loss.
179. In my opinion I think it is wrong. In my opinion, it is wrong.
180. Will you please inform them this? Will you please inform them of this?
181. When he was asked what was his next move, he said he was awaiting for his father's instructions. When he was asked what his next move was, he said he was awaiting his father's instructions.
182. The leader along with his followers were ready. The leader along with his followers, was ready.
183. The leader as well as his followers were ready. The leader, as well as his followers, was ready.
184. It is I who is responsible for this action. It is I who am responsible for this action.
185. The five boys decided to

- divide the sweets between them. the sweets among them.
186. Much water was flown under the bridge. Much water was flowed under the bridge.
187. The bird has flown away. The bird has flown away.
188. He lied in bed for a long time. He lay in bed for a long time.
189. He lay the plan on the table. He laid the plan on the table.
190. He was not honest and often laid to his teacher. He was not honest and often lied to his teacher.
191. I like to dance, read and swimming. I like to dance, read and swim.
192. They plan an expedition of hunting, fishing and to climb mountains. They plan an expedition of hunting, fishing and climbing mountains.
193. The reason for my delay is because I missed the bus. The reason for my delay is by missing the bus. (or) My delay is because I missed the bus.
194. I shall try and attend the meeting. I shall try to attend the meeting.
195. The table's leg is broken. The leg of the table is broken.
196. Both did not come. Neither came.
197. His ankle has been operated by the surgeon. His ankle has been operated on/ upon by the surgeon.
198. I'm tall, amn't I? I'm tall, aren't I?
199. I'm not tall, amn't I? I'm not tall, am I?
200. He said, 'I'm working in a bank presently.' He said, 'I'm working in a bank at present.'

201. Here comes my sister and her fiance. Here come my sister and her fiance.
202. Its the largest cave in Asia. It's the largest cave in Asia.
203. He chose Peter and myself for the task. He chose Peter and me for the task.
204. The Doctor told us that calcium was good for our teeth. The Doctor told us that calcium is good for our teeth.
205. Nehru was one of the great men in our history. Nehru is one of the great men in our history.
206. If you eat slow and steady, you can eat more. If you eat slowly and steadily, you can eat more.
207. Now is when a friend is needed. Now is the time when a friend is needed.
208. The reason why he came is that he needs money. The reason for his coming is that he needs money.
209. We shall meet at about two o'clock. We shall meet at two o'clock. (or) We shall meet about two o'clock.
210. They blamed the failure on their Fate. They blamed their Fate for the failure.
211. This carton is more square than that box. This carton is more nearly square than that box.
212. These roads are less parallel than those. These roads are less nearly parallel than those.
213. There are two ms in the word 'Malayalam'. There are two m's in the word 'Malayalam'.
214. This dress is her's. This dress is her's.
215. Each individual person must take care of himself. Each individual (or person) must take care of himself.

216. The judge referred back to the previous case. The judge referred to the previous case.
217. This is the kind of a work that makes me bored. This is the kind of work that makes me bored.
218. The reason he laughed is because she tickled him. The reason his laughing is that she tickled him.
219. They couldn't cope up with the situation. They couldn't cope with the situation.
220. The baby eats like an adult does. The baby eats like an adult. (or) The baby eats as an adult does.
221. John plus his friends fell into a ditch. John and his friends fell into a ditch.
222. Unni quietly entered into the room. Unni quietly entered the room.
223. In Africa they eat snake meat (clumsy construction) The African's eat snake meat.
224. I had dinner with him yesterday night. I had dinner with him last night.
225. They have less guests than they had last year. They have fewer guests than they had last year.
226. He has not and will not participate in any strike. He has not participated in and will not participate in any strike.
227. The effect of the new rule has resulted in better discipline. The effect of the new rule is better discipline. (or) The new rule has resulted in better discipline.
228. She invited all her friends for dinner. She invited all her friends to dinner.
229. He pleaded to the judge for mercy. He pleaded with the judge for mercy.

230. They have decided to partake in the feast. They have decided to partake of the feast.
231. They went on a picnic and enjoyed. They went on a picnic and enjoyed themselves.
232. The old lady lost her money purse. The old lady lost her purse.
233. Have you disposed off your old car? Have you disposed of your old car?
234. Since he is incompetent, I've decided to dispense of his services. Since he is incompetent, I've decided to dispense with his services.
235. He was searching his lost pen everywhere. He was searching for his lost pen everywhere.
236. Despite of the setback, he worked his way up. Despited the setback, he worked his way up.
237. He felt unhappy to part with his friend. He felt unhappy to part from his friend.
238. At the board meeting, the MD was on the chair. At the board meeting, the MD was in the chair.
239. Judy got nearly cent per cent marks. Judy got nearly full marks.
240. The food prepared was not adequate enough for the feast. The food prepared was not adequate for the feast.
241. The child was disinterested in the story. The child was not interested in the story.
242. The kid excitedly described about his first day in school. The kid excitedly described his first day in school.

243. This book comprises of five chapters. This book comprises five chapters.
244. The weather of this country is fine. The climate of this country is fine.
245. She was careless in handling the crockery, as it was price-less. She was careless in handling the crockery, as it was cheap.
246. Let's accept this challenge. Shalln't we? Let's accept this challenge. Shall we?
247. He worked hard to make both his ends meet. He worked hard to make both ends meet.
248. I tried to escape the drowning child. I tried to save the drowning child.
249. He complemented the winner. He complimented the winner.
