

Unit-VI
The Odds Against Us
Satyajit Ray

Learning Objectives:

- ✓ To understand the difference between Indian films and other films
- ✓ To develop vocabulary – Synonyms - Idioms
- ✓ To get familiar with Reading comprehension
- ✓ To develop writing practice – Information Transfer
- ✓ To enhance listening skills – announcements and directions
- ✓ To improve speaking skills - role plays – interview skills
- To acquaint with grammar – Adverbials

Fill in the Blanks for Objective Paper

1. With the backing of money and materials, it was easy for Hollywood to produce a Spartacus and Russia to produce War and Peace.
2. A director's will depend on two things to select a story 1. His affinity with the theme of the story 2. His belief that the story would make a good film.
3. Ray used a shot of couple kissing in a movie named Devi.
4. As per Ray a good director is someone who learns to lower his brow a little.
5. If directors slightly deviate tiniest part from a classic, a horde of belligerent titans will stoop down and tear them limb from limb
6. Casting is the first step in the process of 'interpretation'
7. Avant-Grade means writers, artists, film makers, or musicians whose work is innovative, experimental, or unconventional.
8. There are roles which can be brought to life b professional actors like Chunibala.
9. In foreign countries there are agents who keep fat dossiers on available extras.
10. Ever since the death of Chabbi Biswas, Ray stopped writing script for middle aged part as it requires high degree of professional talent.

Assignment Questions

1. **According to Satyajit Ray, what are the three factors that should guide a director when he/she chooses a story for a film?**

Ans: Commenting on the first step of film making Satyajit Ray said that story is considered to be the property of any movie. The story is generally, as assumed by him is decided by the director. But a director should not enter this chancy medium to fool his audience and to make some quick money. The author feels that a director's choice of a story is commonly depends on the two major

considerations. The first one is a director's affinity with the theme of the story. The second one is his belief that the story would make a good film. The third one is he has to take his audience interests into account. These three factors are very vital. They help a director to choose a story of a film.

2. How does Ray describe the films that are commonly made in India?

Ans: Speaking about the classic movies, Satyajit Ray opined that Indian directors do not plunge into classics. They do not dare because they do not have money. Even if they did have money they would not have market. This besides, they do not know-how to compete with the Hollywood movies. Hence, Indian directors chose the intimate cinema which is cinema of mood and atmosphere rather than of grandeur and spectacle. Ray felt that Intimate cinema is the most common kind of cinema on Indian silver screen.

3. What kind of balance between the two extremes of avant-garde cinema, which is beyond the understanding of most people, and pure make-believe did Ray try to strike in his films?

Ans: Satyajit Ray strikes a fine balance between the two major extremes. Intimate cinema of India deals with the mood and atmosphere. It also explores new themes and new aspects of society, new facets of human relationships. Avant gardism is considered to be a revolutionary and radical form of cinema. It does its best to show something novel and different which will go beyond the understanding of many.

Avant gardism is considered to be extravagance. Indian directors can never operate such movies like a fashionable aesthete Alain Resnais of French. Indian directors could never afford it because such movies never draw good number of audience and do not bring back the money invested. Hence, Indian directors always take up intimate movies and explore innovative ways to present the society and human relationships. Whatever they do, they do it economically and profitably.

4. What problems do Indian directors face when they make slightly modified versions of classics and films based on political themes?

Ans: Indian directors have many restrictions when making a movie. If they ignore any of these slightly they will face difficulties. They are not allowed to present movies on political themes like Advice and Consent, A Dr.Strangelove and A Judement at Nuremberg.

Narrating Ray's personal experience, he says that we can not show a corrupted congress man. We can not even show a poor bank clerk who came up in his profession through dubious means wearing a Gandhi cap to cover his baldness. If anyone does it (like Ray did it) the sensor board orders to colour the cap black on celluloid. If a director has to present an Anglo-Indian in a poor light in his movie, people may think of the director sharing his prejudice against Anglo-Indians. It will be pointed out when the director movie comes for an official prize in Delhi.

Heaven could only help if directors take up a classic and deviate it slightly. A host of intellectuals turn a short notice and a horde of belligerent titans will pounce the director from limb to limb.

The upshot of these problems is a director has to operate his movie with in a narrow field. Some of the fond dreams of the directors have to wait until good sense prevails among the public. These are some of the most common problems of the Indian director.

5. What do filmmakers in India usually do in order to find extras?

Ans: As per Ray, once the story is finalised the next step is cast. Some of the roles are always pre-cast like X plays the role of wife; Y plays the role of husband and Z by a little cute girl. But there are many other extra roles like men, women, children, peasants, shopkeepers, prostitutes and professors and they last for a short time. There are many ways to find these extra characters.

In India, there are no agents who carry fat dossiers and supply extra characters. If directors want “unknowns”, they could give ads in news papers or set talent-scouts scouting. Sadly, people who have talent will never answer the ads because of an irrational fear of being rejected. And whatever response the directors could get find its place in a dustbin. This besides, they are left to scour the streets and scan the faces of the pedestrians. They can go to race-meets, cocktails and wedding receptions and all of which they hate from bottom of their heart.

Satyajit Ray was compelled to go to a Chinese brothel for Chinese extras (for Aparajito film). Where he was put to wait and promised extras were shown after a long time. He had to be tolerant to get the scene done as he planned it. Although the directors hate these they can not help it.

6. Why was Satyajit Ray not troubled by the lack of comfort and facilities in the studios where he shot his films?

Ans: Commenting on the facilities in his own time, Satyajit Ray said the studios of Calcutta show their hallowed past in every crevice on the wall, in every tatter on the canvas that covers the ceiling. He said some of the families of the rodents have been there since the beginning of the industry. The floor is eroded and the camera groans when it turns and the voltage begins to drop down in the evening. Facilities available seem to be lack of elegance and frightening. But Ray was unmindful of all these never see them as hurdles. He always feels that we have essentials to make a movie and it all depends on us to make a movie good or bad. The conditions and facilities in India make a director to be inventive and economical. They also give him an opportunity to create beauty in the circumstances of shoddiness and privation. It is this feeling which makes Satyajit Ray exciting and enthralling.

Satyajit Ray feels happy to be working where he is.

7. Reflect on the views of Satyajit Ray in his piece of prose “The Odds against Us”?

Ans: Satyajit Ray is one of the pioneering film makers of the world. He is one of the few Indian directors who introduced Indian cinema to the globe and won many accolades worldwide. The present piece of prose "Odds against Us" is taken from his work "Our Films and their Films". The lesson focuses on the author's twenty years experience in the film industry. It deals with differences between Indian cinema and western cinema. It explains what makes a director successful in India besides some of the restrictions on Indian cinema. It throws light on budget, cast and the limited facilities available for Indian film makers.

Speaking on the role of a filmmaker, Ray said that the exact job of film maker is not widely publicised. People have common and a vague understanding that film making is a tough task. For instance, the big Hollywood blockbusters like Spartacus, War and Peace and Madrid wore this toughness. Hollywood produced movies on conflagrations, orgies, earthquakes, battles and triumphal processions which can not be made by a snap of fingers. They constructed famous cities like Rome, Moscow and Peking for shooting and they remain today as tourist spots. All these were possible for the western movie makers because of money, men and material.

Indian directors do not dare to plunge into epic movies as they do not have money. Even if they did have money they would not have market. This besides, they do not know-how to compete with the Hollywood movies. Though they have predilection for epics they can not make such movies. Hence, Indian directors choose the intimate cinema which deals with mood and atmosphere rather than of grandeur and spectacle. There is a favourite publicity catch line "two years in the making" and the big Hollywood classics do possess it. Ray also used it for a different reason for his most successful intimate film "Pather Panchali". As the money for this film was given in small trickles and they had to wait long stretches sitting idle.

Comparing his own days to today, Ray said that things have been improved in terms of finance. It does not mean that film making is a cushy job for him. It still remains a tough task. He said we are surrounded by a special set of problems which are indigenous to India. They come out of special codes which guide film makers' lives and form their destinies.

The first step of film making, as Satyajit Ray said is the story which is the property of any movie. The story is generally, as assumed by him is decided by the director. But a director should not enter this chancy medium to fool his audience and to make some quick money. A director's choice of a story is commonly based on the two major considerations. The first one is a director's affinity with the theme of the story. The second one is his belief that the story would make a good film. If the director is not a greenhorn he will also take his audience interests. Experience teaches him all this for his own bright future. If a director's movie fails to bring back the cost involved, his backers will loose faith in him. Others do follow the suit and soon he will be branded as a bad risk. They come from experience and all wise directors learn to lower their brow a little. Avant gardism is considered to be extravagance. Indian directors can never operate such movies made by a fashionable aesthete Alain Resnais of French. Indian directors could never afford it because such movies never draw good number of

audience and do not bring back the money invested. Hence, Indian directors always take up intimate movies and explore innovative ways to present the society and human relationships. Whatever they do, they do it economically and profitably.

Besides balancing the budget, the serious film makers in India face several other problems which are non-existent abroad. For example, the full-bodied treatment of physical passion is there in Indian literature but unthinkable on Indian screen. Ray had to shoot a kissing scene in a movie called 'Devi' and he did not venture beyond a long shot with the lovers silhouetted behind mosquito netting. He knew well that if he had gone for a close-up he would get disapproval calls from the lower stalls and ruin his delicate mood. The scenes of love making in Indian films have been limited to a formula of clasping hands, longing looks, and amorous verbal exchanges which lack imagination and intelligence. Love duets in movies are always sung against artificial romantic backdrops. These restrictions always discourage serious film directors like Satyajit Ray. He decided not to take up a story, however good it is, that calls for an open treatment of love. It is because he does not want to ruin the story by diluting it.

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Satyajit Ray was lucky enough to get the right idle aged characters for his story. He felt that there is dearth for good professional middle aged characters. He told he could not make Pather Panchali again because Chunibala was no more. Stories like Jalsaghar, Devi and Kanchanjungha were written with Chabbi Biswas in mind. He stopped writing stories which require professional middle aged characters after their death.

Commenting on the facilities in his own time, Satyajit Ray said the studios of Calcutta show their hallowed past in every crevice on the wall, in every tatter on the canvas that covers the ceiling. He said some of the families of the rodents have been there since the beginning of the industry. The floor is eroded and the camera groans when it turns and the voltage begins to drop down in the evening. Facilities available seem to be lack of elegance and frightening. But Ray was unmindful of all these never see them as hurdles. He always feels that we have essentials to make a movie and it all depends on us to make a movie good or bad. The conditions and facilities in India make a director to be inventive and economical. They also give him an opportunity to create beauty in the circumstances of shoddiness and privation. It is this feeling which makes Satyajit Ray exciting and enthralling.

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Unit-VI

Ask Not What Your Country Can Do for You
(The Inaugural Address on January 20th 1961)

John F Kennedy

Fill in the Blanks for Objective Paper

1. The speech 'Ask Not What Your Country Can Do for You' was delivered on the inaugural address on January 20th 1961 by John F Kennedy.
2. John F Kennedy referred his victory not as his party's victory but the celebration of freedom-symbolizing an end, as well as beginning - signifying renewal, as well as change.
3. John F Kennedy said he has sworn on the solemn oath which was prescribed nearly a century and three quarters ago.
4. John F Kennedy opined that that in this changed word 'man holds in his mortal hands the power to abolish all forms of human poverty and all forms of human life'.
5. John F Kennedy's speech represented the common enemies of the man like poverty, tyranny war and disease.
6. John F Kennedy stressed the need for internationalism and globalization in his address.
7. Referring to freedom, John F Kennedy said, 'let every nation know, whether it wishes well or ill , that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty'.
8. Commenting on unity, John F Kennedy said, 'united there is little we can not do in a host of co-operative ventures. Divided there is little we can do for we dare not meet a powerful challenge odds and split asunder'.
9. John F Kennedy said 'if a free society can not help the many who are poor, it can not save the few who are rich'
10. John F Kennedy said let us never negotiate out of fear but let us never fear to negotiate.
11. Referring problems, John F Kennedy said let both sides explore what problems unite us instead of belabouring those problems which divide us.
12. John F Kennedy said let us invoke the wonders of science instead of its terrors.
13. John F Kennedy prayed to undo heavy burden – and to let the oppressed go free.
14. He urged people 'ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country'.
15. He requested citizens of the world 'ask not what America will do for you but what together we can do for the freedom of man'.

Assignment Question

1Q Give a detailed sketch of John F Kennedy's presidential speech?

Ans: John F Kennedy was one of the world renowned presidents of America. He was the 35th president of the America and the second youngest president after Theodore Roosevelt. He served America from 1961 to 1963. He was assassinated on 22nd Nov, 1963. During his service, he addressed major issues like tyranny, poverty, disease and stressed on internationalism and globalization.

The present piece of prose was the inaugural address of John F Kennedy delivered on 20th January, 1961. This speech is considered to be one of the best speeches ever delivered in the world. He began his speech addressing Vice President Mr. Johnson, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Chief Justice, President Nixon, President Truman, reverend clergy, and fellow citizens. Describing his victory, he said, it is not the victory of his party, but the celebration of freedom –symbolizing an end and a new beginning to change. He took the solemn oath prescribed by forefathers of America nearly a century and three quarters ago.

Speaking n the world scenario he said, the world is very different now. Humans have the power to abolish all forms of human poverty and all forms of human life. He further said the rights of man come not from the state but from the God.

He said we should not forget that we are the heirs of the first revolution and the same should be passed to the new generation of America. America is always committed for protecting human rights both at home and around the world. He further said whether a country is a friend or a foe to us we work for every nation's survival and the success of liberty.

We extend our pledge to all our old allies that “united there is little we cannot do in a host of cooperative ventures. Divided there is little we can do – for we dare not meet powerful challenge at odds and split asunder”

He said we appeal to the nations who have got independence that we never dominate them but always support them. We shall not always expect them to support us. We always support and respect these nations' freedom.

He added we have strongly determined to help the poor and needy. Whatever period it takes we will put our best efforts to empower them. We are not doing it because communists do it or they may vote us. It is because it is right. He said “if a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich”.

Offering a special pledge to America's sister republics, Kennedy prayed to turn their good words into good deeds and eradicate poverty. He mentioned that America wants to be the master of its own country and overcome all hurdles that stammer its progress.

Next, he expressed his last best hope for the world assembly of sovereign nations and United Nations. We entered an age of mass destructive instruments of war which have outpaced the instruments of peace. Hence, we renew our pledge and determine to prevent all those events which endanger human life.

Finally, he extended not pledge but a request to all those adversary nations of America. He appealed that let the both sides start afresh the quest for peace. Let us speed up before the deadly nuclear weapons unleashed by the science destroy the human race. He added let both sides are not over burdened with the cost of modern weapons and a feeling of insecurity. He rightly said in this context that “let us not negotiate out of fear but let us never fear to negotiate”.

He said instead of belabouring one another we should identify our common problems that divide us. He said let us, for the first time, formulate serious and accurate proposals to have a control on the arms as well as the nations possess them beyond the limit. We must make the best use of science for all its wonders rather than its terrors. We should use science wonders to explore skies, eradicate diseases and encourage the arts and commerce.

Let us be united and pray that may the oppressed go free and undo all those heavy burdens. If our unity continues in the future it will surely create a new endeavour. It is not a balance of a new power but a new world of law where the riches maintain righteousness and weak are protected and peace is preserved.

This hope seems to be impossible because it can not be achieved in the first hundred or thousand years. It can not be done in the entire lifetime of this administration, not even in our life time of this planet. But it should be begun now.

He said the success rate of this optimistic course will depend more on the fellow citizens than on me. So let every citizen shoulder this noble responsibility and march forward to realize this dream. He exhorted further that we should fight against the common enemies of man: tyranny, poverty, disease and war itself.

He pleaded people round the globe (north, east south and west) to join this righteous historic effort. He reminded everyone of the few generations who have been granted the role of protecting freedom in its optimum danger. He told he was not evading from his responsibility and he was ready for it. He mentioned that with this energy, devotion and faith Americans could enlighten their country which will lead to light the world.

He told my dear citizens “ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country” and “ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of the man”.

He concluded by saying that whether you are citizens of America or the world ask us the same high standards of strength and sacrifice. He further told that we should pray the almighty with good conscience. We should seek his blessings and help to lead this land with love, universal peace and prosperity.