

**NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA**

**COURSE CODE / TITLE:**            **ARA383: English-Arabic Translation**

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**MODULE 1: CONCEPT, TYPES AND TECHNIQUES OF TRANSLATION****Unit 1 : The Concept of Translation****Contents**

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**1.0 – Introduction**

Translation, according to Newmark (1981), is an art as well a skill and a science. It rests on three aspects namely: the native and foreign cultures, the two languages, the writer and the translator respectively. It is an indisputable fact that there is a pressing need today for availability of an adequate number of competent translators, as we live in an era in which advanced means of communication such as the electronic and print media (radio, television, internet and the press) have turned the world into a global village, and as a result, news of events around the terrestrial globe reach us just as soon as they happen or at most after few minutes or hours of their occurrence. An attempt shall therefore, be made in this unit to examine the concept and importance of translation.

You would remember that the importance of translation was treated in the Arabic – English course material, here we shall give you a supplementary information to what you may have read in the Arabic – English course material.

**2.0 Objectives**

On successful completion of this unit, students will be able to:

- discuss the concept of translation
- understand the need for translation; and
- identify the difference between translation and interpreting.
- discuss the importance of translation.
- know the nexus between translation, cultures, worlds of thought and perception.

- understand that translation plainly reveals the complexities of language and of specific texts.

### **3.0 Main contents**

#### **3.1 The Concept of Translation**

It may be difficult to provide a comprehensive definition for the term, translation because theorists differ on the precise nature and the processes involved in translation. However, most definitions of translation may be classified under one of two headings. While the first is concerned with the process of translation, the second focuses on translation as a product, and describes what a good translation should be like. Example of definitions that concentrate on translation as a process is that suggested by Catford (1965) and another by Hatim and Mason (1990). Catford defines translation as "a process of substituting a text in one language for a text in another". Thus, he considers translation as an operation performed on language, and so builds his definition on the concept of equivalence. Like Catford, Hatim and Mason consider translation as "a communicative process which takes place within a social context". They argue further that translation is a useful test case for examining the whole issue of the role of language in social life and creating a new act of communication of a previously existing one".

On the other hand, Nida and Taber (1969) and Newmark (1981) in their definitions, focus on translation as a product. Nida and Taber define translation as "producing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly, in terms of style". Thus, they attach greater importance to the forms understood and accepted by the target audience for which a translation is designed, and also emphasize the importance of understanding the original text before constructing a text in the target language. Newmark, in the same manner, defines translation as "a craft consisting in the attempt to replace a written message and/or a statement in one language by the same message and/or statement in another language". Translation, he continues, is rendition of the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended the text.

It would be observed that Newman, like Nida and Taber also stresses the importance of understanding the intention of the original text author before translating it into a target language. Since the comprehension of the intention of the original text author is crucial for producing an accurate text in a target language, we subscribe, therefore, to the definitions here above among many others.

#### **3.2 Understanding the need for Translation**

To facilitate effective communication among peoples of different cultures and languages, translation must take place from native to foreign languages and vice-versa in matters of

socialization, education, administration, diplomatic relations, religion, commerce and etcetera. Furthermore, nearly all companies today use ordinary translators to decode all types of documents such as press releases, reports and other material relevant to their business. Nevertheless, at some point these companies will need to interpret a document of a technical nature. Using the same translation services for a technical paper that we use for general translations might cause a fundamental mistake. Sometimes, the person we rely upon to provide the translation service may not have the requisite skills or training to undertake a technical translation. This is because the technique of translation service is quite different from any other translation service. The major differences are in the intensity of complication in the translation and the level of accuracy required. It is therefore very necessary to understand both aspects when contracting out tasks and projects to translators.

### **3.3. Difference between translation and interpreting**

The professions of translation and interpreting are notably different but the two overlap in some areas. A translator interprets the written word and the result of his/her interpretation is usually in written form. He/she has time to deliberate, conduct research, proof-read, revise, consult colleagues and submit his/her written translation to client. An interpreter, on the other hand, interprets the spoken word and mostly does not have the extra time nor a second chance to revise the result of the interpretation. Many translators, though, will have done some interpreting but this will probably have been secondary to written translation.

### **3.4. The Importance of Translation**

The importance of translation can be brought to a sharp focus if we consider the fact that effective communication among different cultures can only be achieved through translation. It is by way of translation that peoples from different cultural backgrounds are introduced to various languages and ways of thought. Further, to train translators and interpreters, it is very necessary to understand the relationship between language and culture because "translation takes place in the context of the relations between two cultures, two worlds of thought and perception". Newmark opines that there is a cultural value in translation". Culture is also heavily indebted to translation for its intellectual development, and it is through translation that the complexities of language and of specific texts are clearly demonstrated.

In addition to that, good writing and bad writing are easily exposed in the process of translation. Translation is an important source of diffusion of every kind of knowledge; it facilitates the understanding of development of every aspect of culture in other civilizations; and thus enriches people's knowledge and understanding of their own culture.

### **Self Assessment Exercise**

Write a summary note on the concept of translation and discuss the bases for various perspectives.

Of what importance is translation in today's world?

### **4.0 Conclusion**

From the foregoing, one can safely conclude that translation of one language to another is indispensable in today's world for educational, socio-economic and politico-religious development among peoples of different linguistic backgrounds. It breaks the barriers of linguistic differences and "promotes harmonious interaction and mutual understanding". Furthermore, the importance of translation also lies in the fact that translation has today become a major course of offer in most of the universities across the globe.

### **5.0 Summary**

In this unit, we have been able to highlight the concept of translation, its significance in today's world and the perspectives of some translation theorists to the concept. While some view it as a process, others see it as a product, yet others opine that translation is both a process and a product. However, all emphasize the position of the source language and the target language as being vital. The difference between translation and interpretation was also demarcated. In addition to that, the unit explained the importance of translation in cultural relations and effective communication; just as it clearly demonstrate the role of translation in language studies, intellectual development, and knowledge diffusion; and in understanding cultural development in other civilizations. We are also able to understand the significance of translation to calligraphy. In the next unit, we shall look at the historical background of translation.

### **6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment**

- Explain the concept of translation and identify the need for it.
- Distinguish between translation and interpreting.
- Discuss the significance of translation to culture and civilization.
- Identify the connections between translation, language and calligraphy.

### **7.0 References / Further Readings**

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## **Unit 2: Historical Background of Translation**

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### **1.0 Introduction**

In the preceding unit, an attempt was made to shed light on the concept of translation by reviewing some of the various definitions suggested by translation theorists. We also drew a line between translation and interpreting. And we focused attention on the importance of translation - we advanced a number of points to substantiate the relevance of translation in many ways. In this unit, we shall read history backwards to trace the starting point of translation and the eventual beginning of English – Arabic translation. We will also consider some kinds of translation such as full and partial translation, as well as total and restricted translation.

### **2.0 Objectives**

At the end of the lesson in this unit, you should be able to:

- tell the history of translation
- know the several stages, which non-Arabic – Arabic translation passed through
- pinpoint the origin of English – Arabic translation.
- enumerate some kinds of translations
- differentiate between full and partial translation
- explain what difference there is between total and restricted translation.

### **3.0 Main Content**

#### **3.1 The Annals of Translation**

Translation activity is as old as time. There is no doubting the fact that every intellectual or scientific awakening has always been preceded by or begun with active translation. In



the ancient times, strenuous translations from Greek language to Latin had been carried out following the decline of the Greek civilization and emergence of the Roman.

Europe remained under the darkness of the middle ages till the fall of Constantine and transfer of its treasures through the relics of the Greek and the Roman to the then great western nations. Extensive translation exercise thus became active, rendering these antiques into such nascent European languages as English, French and Spanish, most of which developed out of Latin, and from elements of regional dialects or languages of varying impacts and power depending on region. The annal of renaissance period began with those translation works stabilizing, digesting and assimilating the translated, and then impressing it on the shaping of European mentality.

### **3.2. Historical Background of English – Arabic Translation**

Arab civilization likewise, had in history experienced many great translations. Between the 7<sup>th</sup> and the 8<sup>th</sup> centuries and beyond, the heritages of such early nations as Persia and Rome, that preceded the Arab nation, had been translated into Arabic via Sanskrit, Syriac and later directly through the Greek translation. The Arabs, therefore, started learning foreign languages following stability of Islam in conquered regions, hence, they were able to render many alien heritages into Arabic.

The Abbasid period particularly witnessed a widespread of vivacious translation activities as Iraq was populated by a sizeable number of medical practitioners, philosophers and astrologers. Translation during this era passed through several stages: it began by translating materials on Medicine, Astrology, Mathematics, Philosophy and Logic, and culminated in the translation of various books on sciences and literatures. This activity eventually resulted in the diffussion of knowledge, development of thinking styles and growth of Islamic sects, whose methodology is based on dialectic. All of these climaxed in the flourishing of Syntax and the evolution of Rhetoric. It is however, pertinent to mention that the later translation experience, which started by the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when Rifa'at Tahtawi founded in Egypt the language academy for translation of European languages (English inclusive), was an upshot of those early experiences in translation. Thenceforth, translation became a science having its own fundamental principles, after it had been an art relying on the competence and genius of a translator.

### **3.3. Full Translation and Partial Translation**

There are several kinds of translation depending on perspectives of translation theorists and their classification. Though, in the Arabic – English translation module, you have been taken through some types of translation including literal, idiomatic, interlinear and free translation. These are indeed the most popular types nonetheless, in the present unit; you will be exposed to other types such as full and partial translation. Catford (1965) shall be our reference point here as he succinctly distinguishes between these two kinds of translation, depending on the extent to which the source language text is submitted to

the translation process. According to him, in a **full translation**, the entire text is subjected to the translation process and every part of the source text is replaced by target text material. In **partial translation**, on the other hand, he observes that some parts of the source language text are left untranslated and they are simply rendered to and incorporated in the target text.

### 3.4. Total Translation and Restricted Translation

Catford (1965) also draws a line between **total** and **restricted** translations. These have to do with the levels of language involved in translation. Total translation, according to him, is "the replacement of source language grammar and lexis by equivalent target language grammar and lexis with consequential replacement of source language phonology by (non-equivalent) target language phonology". Restricted translation, in contrast, means "the replacement of source language textual material by equivalent target language textual material at only one level".

It needs mentioning that most translation works are concerned with the latter as using the former may pose a greater difficulty in translation process and output.

It is pertinent to mention here that, there exist other types of translation aside from the "**Normal**" translation, which is the well known, traditional lingual process of exchanging and adapting a text from one language to another. The guidelines for normal translation are usually fulfilled by qualified translators, though sometimes, if the translation requires deeper and more special knowledge which can be provided only by professionals in a field, we prefer them to general translators.

These other types include '**Certified Translation**' and '**Localization**'. In cases, when we need to submit documents to authorities, we might need certified translation of financial reports and certificates. In Nigeria for example, the simplest description of "Certified translation" is the translation made by departments of languages in various universities.

Others call it "**Official translation**". Official translation is normal translation, which has been proofread and printed on official paper with a bilingual certification and official stamp.

**Localizing**, on the other hand, is a special type of translation. In this type, the safeguarding of the global content, the form and the desired effect is often more important than the exact meaning of words. It therefore requires different view and way of thinking than "Normal translation". The translator's creativeness comes to play during localization, while it is not typical during "Normal" translation procedures. **Localization** is often used in advertisement spots, in formulating slogans and for designing various digital contents.

#### **Self Assessment Exercise:**

Trace the origin of Translation.

How significant is the Abbasid period to translation?

#### 4.0. Conclusion

Translation had been known since the ancient times in Greek and Latin languages. Other languages such as French and Spanish had been rendered into English before being translated to Arabic. Heritages of non-Arab nations like Persia and Rome had been translated via Syriac and Greek into Arabic between the 7<sup>th</sup> and the 8<sup>th</sup> centuries, and beyond.

Understanding the four kinds of translation elaborated in this unit has shown that translation types are diverse depending on the criteria used by translation theorist in categorization. Bringing these other classifications here is just to acquaint students with other types. Nevertheless, more could still be discovered in translation theory books.

#### 5.0. Summary

We understand in this unit that translation is part of renaissance activity – the Abbasid period was a remarkable era of active translation. The middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was a turning point in the annals of English – Arabic translation due to the founding of language academy in Egypt by Rifa'at Tahtawi. In the just concluded lesson, you were also exposed to other types of translation including full, partial, total and restricted translation. While full and partial translation lays bare the extent to which the source language text is submitted to the translation process, total and restricted translation reveals the degree to which grammar, lexis and phonology of the source language are replaced in the target language.

#### 6.0. Tutor marked Assignment

How did English – Arabic translation evolve and what factors led to its development?  
Explain each of the kinds of translation listed hereunder:

1. Full translation
2. Partial translation
3. Total translation
4. Restricted translation

Distinguish between Certified Translation and Localized Translation.

#### 7.0. References/Further Readings

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<http://www.thetranslationagency.eu>

### Unit 3: Techniques and Strategies for English-Arabic Translation

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- 3.0 Main Contents
  - 3.1 Techniques and Strategies of English – Arabic translation.
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#### 1.0 Introduction

You already have idea about the concept of Translation and what differentiates it from interpreting. And so far we have been majorly concerned with the concept of translation in the contents of the preceding lessons. We also reviewed the history of translation and marked the genesis of English – Arabic translation. Some kinds of translation were also mentioned. In this unit, we shall discuss techniques of rendering meaning and message of English texts into Arabic. It is relevant here to mention that the strategies used in translating English texts into Arabic are those same strategies you have been taught in the Arabic – English translation module. They include transposition, modulation, equivalence and adoption, which are mostly used in indirect translation, where the skill of the translator is seriously engaged. All you need do is just apply those techniques to any English texts you may want to transfer into Arabic. Hence, here we shall just attempt to practically apply those strategies.

#### 2.0 Objectives

At the end of this lesson, students should be able to:

- Know the techniques of translating English texts into Arabic.
- Recognize the technique that suits a particular text for translation.

#### 3.0 Main Content

##### 3.1 Techniques and strategies of English - Arabic Translation

Translation Techniques can broadly be divided into two: **Direct Translation** Techniques and **Indirect Translation** Techniques (Oblique). Direct Translation Techniques are used when theoretical and structural elements of the source language can be transposed into the target language.

**Direct translation** techniques include:

- Borrowing
- Calque
- Literal Translation

### **Borrowing**

Borrowing is the taking of words directly from one language into another without translation. Many English words are "loaned" into other languages; for example *software* in the field of technology and *funk* in culture. English also borrows numerous words from other languages; like *abattoir* and *résumé*, which were loaned from French; *hamburger* and *kindergarten* borrowed from German; and *musk* and *sugar*, which were loaned from Sanskrit. Examples of borrowing from English into Arabic include Radio راديو, Television تلفاز Computer كمبيوتر Brandy براندي Bank البنك etc.

Loaned words are often printed in italics to indicate that they are "foreign".

### **Calque**

A calque or loan translation is a phrase borrowed from another language and translated literally word-for-word. It is often seen in specialized or internationalized fields such as quality assurance (*assurance qualité* taken from English). Examples of calque that have been absorbed into English include *standpoint* and *beer garden* from German *Standpunkt* and *Biergarten*. Some calques can become widely accepted in the target language (such as *standpoint* and *beer garden*). The meaning of other calques can be rather incomprehensible for most people, especially when they have to do with specific vocations or subjects such as science and law. For example *Solución de compromiso* is a Spanish legal term taken from the English *compromise solution* and although Spanish attorneys comprehend it, the meaning is not readily understood by the layman. A fruitless calque can be exceedingly unnatural, and can cause unwanted humor, and is often interpreted as signifying lack of expertise of the translator in the target language.

### **Literal Translation**

This is word-for-word translation. It can be used in some languages and not in others depending on the sentence structure. Sometimes it works and sometimes it does not, because of differences in sentence structures of various languages. And the fact that one sentence can be translated literally across languages does not necessarily mean that all sentences can be translated literally.

### Indirect (Oblique) Translation

Oblique Translation Techniques are used when the structural or theoretical elements of the source language cannot be directly translated without changing meaning or disorganizing the syntactical and stylistics elements of the target language.

Indirect translation techniques include:

- Equivalence or Reformulation
- Transposition
- Modulation
- Adaptation
- Compensation

### Equivalence/Reformulation

Searching the Arabic language for the most similar and apposite phrase that is analogous in English language. It often applies to translation of idioms, proverbs and figures of speech. An example of searching equivalence in English – Arabic translation is: "*Birds of a feather flock together.*" A literal translation of this proverb may read thus: "الطيور ذات"

"إِنَّ الطُّيُورَ فِي أَشْكَالِهَا تَتَّعُ" whereas the corresponding meaning in Arabic is "وَاحِدٌ تَطِيرُ مَعًا

Another example close to that is "*Tell me who you go with and I'll tell you who you are*", which if literally translated into Arabic would read: "قُلْ لِي مَنْ تَذْهَبُ مَعَهُ وَسَأَقُولُ لَكَ مَنْ أَنْتَ" but the matching meaning in Arabic is in the saying: "إِنَّ الْقَرِينَ بِالْمَقَارِنِ يَفْتَدِي".

One would observe that the process of reformulation is though creative but not always easy as translator would have to express an idea in a completely different manner.

### Transposition Technique

In the process of Transposition, parts of speech change their sequence when they are translated. For example, "White House" (in English) when translated into Arabic using transposition becomes الْبَيْتُ الْأَبْيَضُ "National Open University of Nigeria" becomes (الْجَامِعَةُ الْوَطَنِيَّةُ الْمَفْتُوحَةُ لِتَنْجِيرِيَا). It is in a sense a change of word class because of the fact that grammatical structures are often different in diverse languages. This technique requires that the translator knows that it is possible to replace a word category in the target language without altering the meaning of the source language text, for example: the English "Hand written" (noun + participle) becomes in Arabic مَكْتُوبٌ بِأَيْدٍ (passive participle + preposition and accusative noun).

### Modulation Technique

This technique consists in using a phrase that is dissimilar in the source and target languages to express the same idea: “It’s okay” literally means هَذَا حَيْدٌ/هَذِهِ حَيْدَةٌ but translates better as لَا بَأْسَ. It changes the semantics and shifts viewpoint of the source language. Through the process of modulation, the translator generates a change in the judgment of the message without altering meaning and without generating a sense of inelegance in the reader of the target language text. Other examples of modulation include “Safe Journey” literally translates as رِحْلَةٌ أَمِينَةٌ but translates better as رِحْلَةٌ سَعِيدَةٌ; الْعَوْدُ أَحْمَدُ; رِحْلَةٌ سَعِيدَةٌ. Another one is “Happy New Year” which literally translates as عَيْدٌ جَدِيدٌ مَسْرُورٌ but is better translated into Arabic as عَيْدٌ مُبَارَكٌ.

This technique of changing the viewpoint in a message is what makes a reader say: "Yes, this is exactly how we say it in our language".

### Adaptation

This technique applies when something specific to one language culture is expressed in a totally different way that is appropriate to another language culture. It is a shift in cultural environment. It is used when the limit to translation has been reached, i.e. when a simple translation would not work or it would produce confusion in the target language and culture. Titles of books, movies, and characters often fit into this category. Should we translate *Barbecue* in English as مَأْدِبَةٌ in Arabic?

### Compensation

Compensation can be used when something cannot be translated, and the meaning that is lost is expressed elsewhere in the translated text. According to Peter Fawcett, it is: "...making good in one part of the text something that could not be translated in another". Examples that we can give here are pronouns between English and Arabic: English does not have plural for such pronoun of congregation as “you” and as such “you” would translate into Arabic as أَنْتُمْ (for congregation of males) and أَنْتُنَّ (for congregation of females). The same “you” would translate into Arabic as أَنْتَ for a second person (male) and أَنْتِ for a second person (female). These lost meanings are normally compensated elsewhere in the target text through explanation.

### Self-Assessment Exercise

Define the concepts of Calque and Oblique as they relate to translation.



#### **4.0 Conclusion**

To produce a good translation requires mastery of various techniques and knowledge of the particular one that best suits the contents to be translated. In-depth knowledge of cultures of both source and target languages is also a necessary condition to determine which method to employ in a particular case/situation.

#### **5.0 Summary**

The focal point in this unit is the various techniques that are used in translating different contents. They include Borrowing, Calque and Literal translation techniques in the case of Direct translation. As for Indirect or Oblique translation, recommended methods are Reformulation, Transposition, Modulation, Adaptation and Compensation. A few examples were cited to illustrate the techniques.

For detailed information about necessary steps involved in English – Arabic Translation, consult the module on Arabic - English translation. The steps therein are adaptable and applicable to English – Arabic translation. In the next unit, we shall consider the problems of English – Arabic translation.

#### **6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment**

Expatiate the areas of difference between Direct translation from Oblique translation techniques.

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**Unit 4: Problems of English-Arabic Translation****Content**

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**1.0 – Introduction**

In the Arabic – English translation module, you have been intimated with general problems of translation. In this unit, the lesson shall concentrate on difficulties encountered in English – Arabic translation, which majorly are cultural and linguistic.

Culture as a complex whole, includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs, and any other capabilities or lifestyle acquired by man as a member of society (Taylor 1958). Culture plays a crucial role in shaping the correctness of linguistic units. Further, cultural variables affect the level of understanding between various language communities (Kusmaul 1995). Consequently, language is a central part of culture as the lexis and structure of a language derives its meaning from its culture. Arabic as a language is linked with particular cultural and social norms quite different from those of other languages. The effort in this unit shall be focused on examining problems associated with English-Arabic translation. Qualities of a translator would also be highlighted.

**2.0 – Objectives**

At the end of this lesson, students should be able to:

- list some of the socio- cultural problems of English – Arabic translation
- identify the causes of linguistic difficulties in English – Arabic translation
- recognize the skill and qualities required of a good translator
- improve his/her translation ability

### **3.0. Main Content**

#### **3.1. Cultural Problems of English –Arabic Translation**

The cultural factor in translation is indisputable as no meaningful communication can take place unless the message transmitted through texts is well understood by the communicants. But understanding can be achieved only if the information contained in language units is accompanied by background knowledge of facts referred to in the message. People belonging to the same linguistic community are members of one culture. They share in common many traditions, habits, and ways of life. They also have common knowledge about the geography, history, and climate of their country, its political, economic, social and cultural institutions, as well as accepted morals and taboos of their society. All these cultural identities are the basis of the communicants' presumptions which enable them to produce and to decode messages in their linguistic form. It is therefore understandable that in inter lingual communication or translation this common knowledge may be critically limited thereby inhibiting understanding and affecting translation output.

Researchers have observed that general problems of translation include lack of exact equivalent in the target language due to cultural difference, semantic differentiation, grammatical structure, dearth of vocabulary etc. Isabel Alousque, while explaining the implication of cultural domains for translation observes that:

“Words encoding cultural information are difficult to translate since they involve cultural knowledge and a cultural background. Literal translation may not fully render the meaning of culture bound words because they do not have the same semantic range in the source and the target languages”.

These cultural problems could be divided into political, social, religious, material and ecological (Nida1964). There are differences between Western and Arabic cultures, which may cause problem in English - Arabic translation. Therefore, finding translation equivalents for cultural terms would require bridging the cultural gaps between English and Arabic cultures so as to meet readers' expectations.

#### **3.2. Linguistic Problems of English – Arabic Translation**

It is particularly necessary for English – Arabic translators to be conscious of the differences between English and Arabic linguistic systems, as differences between the two systems may cause problems in translation, and affect the quality of the Arabic translation (i.e. the Arabic output). Studies have identified morphology and syntax (such as adjectives, adverbials, prepositions, conjunctions etc) as some of the areas of linguistic problems in English – Arabic translation because both languages differ in morphological and syntactic systems.

Unlike Arabic, some English words may belong to more than one word class such as "fire", which can be both a noun and a verb. On the other hand, some grammatical features which are expressed by morphology in Arabic such as passivation are expressed

in English by syntactic features. One word in Arabic can frequently be a complete sentence in English. For example, the Arabic word عَرَفْتُهُ "I know him" contains the verb, the subject and the object هـ. Further, the morphological endings of words can overturn the functions of nouns. For example, in "لَقِيَ زَيْدٌ عَمْرًا" "Zayd met 'Amr", Zayd is the subject, while in "لَقِيَ عَمْرُو زَيْدًا" "Amr met Zayd" Amr is the subject.

The syntax in the two sentences is the same (verb, subject and object) but the morphological difference reverses the functions of the two nouns.

### 3.3. Qualities of a Translator

Translation as an art and a science is a difficult task and requires constant practice to acquire expertise. It demands sound knowledge of various branches of the source language as well as that of the target language. The task of the translator goes beyond reliance on dictionary; rather he should be able to present the real and appropriate meaning in a language construction in vogue, so that he can express the ideas of the source language.

The flair, skill and experience that are required by a good translator are similar to the qualities that are needed by an 'original' writer; hence, writing and translating often go hand in hand. Experienced members of the Translators Association have therefore produced a profile of a good translator to include the following:

- the translator needs to have a strong interest in language and a feeling for it.
- s/he must have a good knowledge of the source language and of the regional culture and literature, as well as a sound knowledge of any special subject that is dealt with in the work that is being translated.
- the translator should understand the meaning of the source text and be able to present the meaning in the target language through proper grammar and a good writing style.
- s/he should have linguistic competence in both source language and target language so that s/he can analyze grammatical and lexical relationships in texts and deal with complex structures to determine the intended meaning.
- the translator should be familiar with other works of the original author.
- s/he must be an experienced and innovative writer in the target language and nearly will always be a native speaker of it.
- the translator should always be capable of switching between different styles in the language depending on subject of the work being translated.
- the translator should always aim at conveying the message of the original work and not just rendering accurate meaning of the words.
- s/he should be competent to produce a text that reads well, and at the same time echo the tone and style of the original work – as if though the original author were writing in the target language.

**Self Assessment Exercise**

- Mention some of the areas where linguistic problems may manifest in English – Arabic translation.
- Enumerate some of the qualities of a good translator.

**4.0 Conclusion**

Translators must be sensitive to the fact that readers' expectations, their norms and values, are subjective to culture and that their understanding of texts is to a large extent determined by these expectations, norms and values. Better understanding of Western culture is therefore important for translators to overcome cultural difficulties in English - Arabic translation. In addition, they should understand the linguistic systems of both English and Arabic in order to avoid linguistic complexities in translation.

It was established in this lesson that failure of any translator to equip him/herself with the technical know-how of producing quality translation would always result in distortion of the meaning and ideas contained in the source language text.

**5.0 Summary**

The lesson in this unit centers on problems of English – Arabic translation - they are mainly cultural and linguistic in nature. Ways of avoiding the problems in translation were suggested. They include better understanding of English and Arabic cultures and; sound knowledge of the linguistic systems of both languages. The lesson also revolves round the qualities of a good translator. The prime qualities include good knowledge of the source language, the target language and of regional culture and literature; knowledge of the special subject dealt with in the source language text; the translator should also be an innovative writer and must have the ability to switch between different styles in order to echo the tone and style of the original work.

**6.0 Tutor marked Assignment**

- Discuss the major troubles of English – Arabic translation and suggest how they can be overcome.
- Discuss the major qualities of a good translator.
- How would you recognise a bad translation from a good one?

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**MODULE 2: A GENERAL IDEA ABOUT ARABIC PROSE****Unit 1 : A General Overview of Arabic Prose****Contents**

- 3.0 Introduction
- 4.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Body
  - 3.1 Arabic Prose Defined
  - 3.5 Difference between Arabic Prose and Poetry
  - 3.6 Kinds of Arabic Prose
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor marked Assignment
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**1.0. Introduction**

We shall in this unit dwell on the meaning and essence of Arabic prose as one of the two main fields of Arabic literature. The other field is poetry, and both are equally important as they represent the verbal platforms where scholars display their literary skills and insight. These two springboards provide scholars with avenues where they represent their experiences whether real or imagined.

**2.0. Objectives**

Our target in this unit is to:

- give a general outline of Arabic prose
- to spot the difference between Arabic prose and poetry, and
- to enumerate and discuss the various kinds of Arabic prose.

**3.0. Main Body****3.1. Arabic Prose Defined**



Arabic Prose is an aspect of Arabic Literature. It has two divisions: the first is the common prose which applies to language of conversation that has no literary essence except a few of it that may fall within the scope of literary piece such as maxims, aphorisms and parables. The second type is the one whose authors employ artistic, rhetoric and adept language in its composition. This is the type patronized and researched by literary critics for study, in order to analyze stages of events and characteristic features of each stage. This type is majorly classified into artistic writing and oratory. Some litterateurs have chosen to designate it artistic prose. And it encompasses also story (short or long), novel, endorsed literary treatises as well as ornate historical writings.

### 3.2. Difference between Arabic Prose and Poetry

Despite the fact that some similarities occur between Arabic Prose and Poetry in the area of thematic functions, yet Arabic Prose differs from Arabic Poetry in the aspects of its composition. Whereas some rules and regulations such as metres and rhyme (music) govern the composition of poetry in consonance with the standards set by *Al-Khalil bin Ahmad Al-Farahidi*, Prose is fundamentally free from the shackles of metres and rhyme; hence its composition is easier and allows for greater patronage of literati. Furthermore, Arabic poem composers are at liberty to bend some grammatical rules but such manipulations may flaw work of prose writers and render it substandard.

### 3.3. Kinds of Arabic Prose

Majority of litterateurs have unanimously agreed that Arabic Prose may be divided into five different kinds namely:

- a. *المقالة* – A Treatise or An Article

A treatise or an article is a definite idea that treats a topic of research in which a writer gathers his theories and arranges them with proofs so as to arrive at a particular result. A treatise may be a subjective or an

objective one. But brevity, clarity and conciseness are major characteristics of an article, and it usually centres on any issue of human life, be it political, social, historical, literary or scientific. All of these different branches of a Treatise must however, be void of logical and philological errors. The literary treatise is most challenging type to compose. Two schools are mainly recognized in this art namely the conservative and the modernistic.

b. <sup>الخطابة</sup> – Elocution/Oratory

The stronghold of this prosaic art is Logic and Rhetoric. A skillful orator is one that knows how to induce and persuade a gathering of listeners by applying various means like reason and Logic to convince the audience about the appositeness of a particular view and the impropriety of other.

There are various kinds of oratory including political, military, social, religious and judicial oratories. The design of an Oratory normally comprises of an introduction, the body (the real message) and the conclusion. A good orator must take cognizance of the audience's culture and level of civilization so that his/her speech is not misdirected.

c. <sup>الرسالة</sup> – A Letter/An Epistle

In this kind of Arabic Prose, the litterateur - through writing – transmits and conveys his ideas, feelings and emotions to others. It is a means of communicating in writing with persons at the other end, and it serves as interpreter of the writers' intent, just as it helps to fulfill human needs from a distance, and to strengthen bond of relationship among them regardless of the distance between their different locations. An eloquent writer of a letter is one who takes into account the situation and nature of relationship between him/her and the recipient. Its sub-divisions include informal letters (<sup>الرسائل الإخوانية</sup>), secretarial writing (<sup>الرسائل</sup>), and lengthy epistles (<sup>الرسائل المطولة</sup>).

d. <sup>القصة والأفصحة</sup> – The Story

Story has been defined as a collection of imaginary happenings in the life of man, though the imagination in the story derives (with regard to its plots and characters) from factual life occurrences. This division of

prose in Arabic literature is one of the means through which human experiences are depicted. The story is known to serve as a means of entertainment and of teaching moral values to the young ones. It is also employed as a means of correcting social malaises.

The Story may be sub-divided into long and short story. Long story is different from the short story in that the characters of the latter are fewer compared to those of the former. Further, the short story treats one particular idea or experience in a particular time and place setting. The writer tries to be as meticulous as possible and reports the minutest detail. The time setting of short story is also relatively short.

e. **المسرحية** – The Drama

Drama is but a dramatized story for viewers with the aid of drama instruments and with concentration on conversation, dialogue and critical depiction of peculiar features of the drama characters. The two primary branches of drama are Tragedy and Comedy. Drama is one of the means of civilization which Napoleon Bonaparte brought along with him to Egypt in 1798 as this genre in literature was unknown amongst the Arab literati until the Napoleonic invasion of Egypt.

Drama was not known in Classical Arabic literature: the earliest written Arabic drama emerged in 1847 when *Marun Naqqash* in Lebanon dramatized “البخيل” “the miser” in his residence. He followed it up with another one entitled “عصر هارون الرشيد” “the era of Harun Rasheed” and later on in 1853 he dramatized “الحسود السليط”. In 1870 *Ya’qub Sannu’* followed the suit of *Marun*: His main contribution to drama was the introduction of women folk into drama instead of men playing all the roles, both *Naqqash* and *Sannu’* had been motivated by the example of Italian opera and influenced by European drama, particularly French comedy. Drama activities later moved to Egypt where the Opera House was built. This eventually led to the proliferation of drama groups in the Arab world.

### Self Assessment Exercise

- Give a brief outline of the concept of Arabic Prose and distinguish between Arabic Prose and Poetry.

b. Going by the contents of this unit, what differentiates an article from a letter?

#### 4.0. Conclusion

The broad-spectrum of Arabic Prose shows that it is one of the two key literary domains of Arabic literature. Poetry is the other domain and both occupy prominent positions in Arabic literature. Though the two serve as the vocal podiums where scholars enjoy some freedom to exhibit their literary expertise, but prose is more accessible to a larger number of scholars due its easy composition: it is free from restrictions of form (metre and rhyme), which characterize poetry and determine the poetic tone. Moreover, while poets have been granted poetic license to manipulate the linguistic and grammatical rules of Arabic language, prose writers do not enjoy this privilege.

#### 5.0 Summary

In this unit, we have given you the general overview of Arabic prose by defining the concept of Arabic Prose. We also identified the difference between Arabic Prose and Poetry as being basically in the structure. Kinds of Arabic Prose were also examined. They include Treatise *المقال*, Oratory *الخطابة*, Epistle *الرسالة*, Story *القصة* (Long, Short and the Novel) and Drama *المسرحية*. Each of these also has subdivisions. In the next unit, we will look at the origin of Novel in Arabic prose.

#### 6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment

Enumerate and discuss the various kinds of Prose obtainable in Arabic literature.

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## Unit 2: Novelism in Arabic Literature

### Contents

1.0	Introduction
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3.0	Main Body
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3.2	Origin of Novel in Arabic
3.2.1	Emergence of the First Original Novel in Arabic
3.3	Kinds of Arabic Novel
3.4	Scope of Arabic Novel
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### 1.0 Introduction

In the previous unit, we presented you with a general idea about the concept of Arabic prose, its various classifications and what distinguishes prose from poetry. In this unit however, we shall proceed to examine *al-Riwayah*, the Arabic Novel, its origin and scope. This genre in Arabic literature was unpopular until the modern times.

### 2.0 Objectives

This unit aims to achieve the following objectives:

- to delineate the essence of Novel
- to track the beginning of Novelism in Arabic Literature
- to categorize the kinds of Arabic Novel and to

- Recognize the scope of Arabic Novel.

### 3.0 Main Body

#### 3.1 Definition of Novel

*Ar-Riwayah* الرواية, the Arabic word for Novel is a derivative of the trilateral root verb *rawa* رَوَى, which means to relate, recite, transmit or rehearse a story, a poem or a tradition. The word has been used to refer to different categories of fiction in Arabic: stories of historical romance were called *riwayaat*, such as those of *Antar*, *Majnun Layla* and *Hayy ibn Yaqzan*.

Literary scholars and historians have used the term interchangeably to refer to different categories of story, be it short or long, especially in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when European fictional stories were first translated into Arabic. However, the term *riwayah* has commonly been recognized and used to mean a novel or sometimes an acted story. *Shadhili* and others using form, theme and technique as parameters, define *riwayah* as follows:

“The Novel "الرواية" is the most renowned variety of stories from the perspective of its length...it represents a particular era and a milieu, its events are intricately interwoven and multifarious, it affords its writer the opportunity to analyze his characters from behind its various scenes and opinions.”

Focusing on stylistic approach to the genre and its features, Umar, Ali Mustapha says thus:

“The Novel is an expression of a collection of incidents which is narrated in sequence of time devoid of confusion, the writer therefore mentions Wednesday before Thursday; one of its important features is that it awakens the desire of the reader to know what the future portends, or that which lies in the days ahead”.

#### 3.2 Origin of Novel in Arabic Literature

The origin of Novel in Arabic literature is traceable to the surfacing of historical romances as a form of narrative. Popular historical romances such as *Sirat Antar*, *Saif ibn dhi-Yazan* and *Qissah bani Hilal* existed in the Arab world, but all have been observed to be fictional stories of individuals. A number of other stories which have been regarded as “philosophical” and “quasi-scientific” in nature also existed between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries. They include the *Risalatul al-Ghufran* of *Al-Ma’arri* (d.449A.H.), *Al-Insan wal-*

*Hayawan* and *Hayy bin Yaqzan of bin Tufail* (d.581. A. H.). But all have been proved to be of no literary contribution to the art of story writing: “they are rather philosophical expositions in a story form”.

The eventual close and enduring contact between the Arabs and the West was the real facilitator of the appearance of a truly new genre of story writing in Arabic and novel to be specific.

The coming of Napoleon Bonaparte to Egypt in 1798 – as we mentioned in the previous unit – was the foundation for literary renaissance in Egypt and indeed in the Arab world as a whole. Muhammad ‘Ali who took over from Bonaparte successfully continued the good work of the latter. He, in 1826, sent some Arab students to France to learn about the European heritage. He also established a number of schools including *Madrasatul Alsun*. These efforts resulted in the academic and literary regeneration in Egypt starting from the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Literary scholars have thus recognized the evolution of this new genre, *ar-Riwayah*, the Novel, in Arabic literature as one of the earliest impacts of the renaissance efforts.

The art of translation played a crucial role in the emergence of Arabic Novel. It was obvious that some western stories were translated into Arabic. And with exception of a few translations, it was only from 1950’s upward that western fiction was translated and published in Arabic. Factors responsible for delay in the publishing of western fictions in Arabic include but are not limited to the fact that:

- Printing in Arabic was at its developmental stage, with insufficient number of printing machine and experts to master the new art of fiction.
- Non-official magazine or newspaper (agent for publicizing fiction in the West) did not appear in Arabic until the 1960s.
- Non-availability of competent translators among the Arabs by then.

Despite all these deterring factors, three new popular genres were eventually introduced into Arabic from western literature via translation. They are the short story, the drama and the novel. It is pertinent to mention that the first to appear after drama was historical novels. Novels written by Jurji Zaydan fall within this category though they were not perfect looking at them from literary perspective.

### 3.2.1. Emergence of the First Original Novel in Arabic

It is true that Syrian and Lebanese literary scholars had written “novels” in Arabic but their works have been regarded by critics of fiction as being of little



standard, hence were not considered true Arabic Novel. Haywood, in his appraisal of those “novels” remarked thus: “the shackles of high flown classical language were being thrown off, and these novels were readable, but not of the first rank”.

If the above statement is anything to go by, it is a pointer to the fact that novels written by Arabs between 1865 and 1913 did not fulfill the standards of a genuine Arabic novel.

However, vast-majority of scholars have favored Muhammad Hussein Haykal of Egypt with the view that his *Zainab*, written in 1914, is the first original novel in Arabic. Albert Hourani, Gibb, Khemiri and Kampffneyer, Schoonover are among those who uphold this view. The standard of the novel has been the major characteristic that qualifies it as the first true Arabic novel. Gibb, while commenting on its standard observes that “Zaynab broke away decisively in language, style, subject and treatment from anything that had gone before it”.

### 3.3 Kinds of Arabic Novel

Given the fact that Arabic Novel originated from Western literature, it is bound to have many types as there exist different kinds of novel in the Western sense too. Various scholars have classified the Arabic Novel: while Umar Mustapha identified three types, Abu Sa'd categorized it into six or seven types, yet *Shadhili* and others, using the content of a novel as index, recognize five major types of Arabic Novel. Here we shall adopt the categorization by *Shadhili* and his group as follows:

a. The Historical Novel الرُّوَايَةُ التَّارِيخِيَّةُ

This may be sub-divided into two namely: ancient historical novel, which includes the historical romances of the primordial, pre-Islamic and the Islamic eras of the Arab peoples, stories of the *Jahiliyah* period, *alfu laylah wa laylah* and those contained in the Quran fall within this category. The other sub-division includes such stories as ones written by Jurji Zaydan and the "*Rhadopis of Nubia* رَأْدُوْبِيْسُ" by Najib Mahfuz.

b. The Adventure Novel الرُّوَايَةُ المَعَامِرَةُ

This is a novel that has adventure, an exciting task involving risk and physical danger, as its main theme.

c. The Political Novel الرُّوَايَةُ السِّيَاسِيَّةُ

This type of fiction deals with political affairs. It is often used to provide commentary on political events, systems and theories. Political fictional works are often used to "directly criticize an existing society or... present an alternative, sometimes fantastic reality”.

d. The Emotional Novel الرواية العاطفية

An emotional novel is one that transports the reader into the minds of the characters within. The reader by this means feels emotional empathy with the characters of the story and so becomes excited.

e. The Sociological Novel الرواية الاجتماعية

A sociological novel is one that shows the influence of economic and social conditions on characters and events with an eye towards social reform. Some of the Arabic novels of the modern period fall in this category. Examples novels with sociological focus are *Zaynab* written by Muhammad Husain Haykal, *al-Ayyam* of Taha Husain, *Awdatur-Ruh* of Tawfiq al-Hakim and *at-Tariq* of Najib Mahfuz.

### 3.4 Scope of Arabic Novel

From the foregoing exposition, it is apparent that the scope of Arabic Novel is not limited to any field of human endeavor or experience. Rather, it embraces all the ideological basics of novel which include the Traditional (Classical), the Romantic and the Realistic; hence it is as miscellaneous as the varied nature of the universe and its dwellers. Nonetheless, a common theme in the modern Arabic novel is the study of family life with palpable reverberations with the wider family of the Arab world. Many of the novels often treat the politics and conflicts of the region with war frequently “acting as background to small scale family dramas”. The works of *Najib Mahfuz* represent life in Egypt, and his Cairo Trilogy, “Palace Walk *بين القصرين*” (1956), “Palace of Desire *قصر الشوق*” (1957) and “Sugar Street *السُّكَّرِيَّة*” (1957), all describing the struggles of a modern Egyptian family across three generations, won him in 1988 a Nobel Prize for literature. *Mahfuz* was the first Arab writer to win the prize.

#### Self Assessment Exercise

- Explain the meaning of the word “Novel” as it appertains to Arabic Literature.
- Examine the origin of Arabic Novel.

### 4.0 Conclusion

Novelism in Arabic literature owes its origin to the final and permanent contact between the Arabs and Western culture. This was made possible by the military expedition of Napoleon Bonaparte and his men to Egypt in the year 1798. They

brought along with them means of civilization and advancement. Their occupation of Egypt in the year in question put a final stop to decades of literary docility which the Arabs had long suffered following their subjugation by the Tartars. Muhammed 'Ali who took over from Bonaparte built on the foundations of the latter. And one of the first impacts of the literary renaissance in Egypt and the Arab world in general was the evolution of Drama and the Novel in Arabic literature. The Novel, *Zaynab* written by Najib Mahfuz has however been adjudged as the first original Arabic Novel.

### 5.0 **Summary**

The lesson in this unit investigated the definition of Novel, and explored the origin of Novelism in Arabic literature. It also probed into the evolution of the first original novel in Arabic, pinpointed the first true Arabic novel and then examined the scope and various kinds of Arabic Novel. The next lesson shall feature the short story and the modern Arabic short story in particular.

### 6.0 **Tutor marked Assignment**

Identify the scope and types of Arabic Novel, laying particular emphasis on Sociological novel.

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### Unit 3 : A Historical Background of Short-story Writing

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7.0	References/Further Readings

#### 1.0 Introduction

'*Uqsusah*' أفصوصة (plural *aqaaases* أقاصيصُ), is usually used to denote short story. The Arabic word is derived from the trilateral root verb *qassa* 'قَصَّ', technically meaning to relate, narrate or tell a story. But '*qissa qaseera* قصة قصيرة' is also used, '*qaseera* قصيرة' meaning short. In the modern sense, the Short story is a phrase used to refer to a new literary genre that developed in the last part of the 19th century and reached maturation only in the early parts of the 20th century. It normally deals with a single aspect of life or an issue surrounding a particular event or emotional state of being. The theme of short story should be capable of analyzing the event and it should not treat a long span of time.

The short story is a kind of prose fiction, typically more compressed and passionate than the novel and the novelette (the short novel). Defining it classically, scholars have maintained that one should be able to read it in one sitting. Others, in their definition of the genre opine that the maximum word count of the short story should be between 1,000 to 9,000 words. In modern-day usage, the term short story usually denotes a work of fiction no longer than 20,000 words and no shorter than 1,000. Stories of less than 1,000 words however are called flash fiction. The modern short story has been described as a condensed prose narrative intended to elicit a curious and unified emotional response from reader. The short story is known to serve as:

- a means of entertainment during the times of leisure;
- of teaching moral values to the young ones;
- It is also employed as a means of correcting social malaises.

## 2.0 Objectives

This unit intends to achieve the following purposes:

- To review the evolution of the short story genre in the 19<sup>th</sup> century
- To consider the nature of short story writing among the Arabs of the classical times
- To study the origin and development of modern Arabic short story

## 3.0 Main Body

### 3.1 Emergence of Short Story in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

Scholars have viewed the short story genre as a discovery of the 19<sup>th</sup> century because prior to this time, it was not generally regarded as a different literary form - the reason why some look at it as an exceptionally modern genre. But the fact remains that the short prose fiction is nearly as old as language itself. From primeval times man has enjoyed various types of short narratives such as jests, anecdotes, short allegorical romances, moralizing fairy tales, short myths, and abridged historical legends. However, none of these constitutes a short story as the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries have defined the phrase, “but they do make up a large part of the milieu from which the modern short story emerged”.

The modern short story emerged almost at the same time in Germany, the United States, France, and Russia: E.T.A. Hoffman and H.V. Kleist in Germany; Nathaniel Hawthorne and Edgar Allen Poe in the United States; Prosper Merimee in France; Nikolai Gogol and Anton Chekhov in France. All had written standard short story by the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The short story genre had also, by that

century, been known in the United Kingdom: popular writers include Sir Walter Scott and Charles Dickens.

### 3.2 Short story writing among the Arabs of the Classical Times

Arab literary history was never poor in fiction writing. The collection of narratives by *Wahb bn Munabbah*, which was preserved in *Kitabu – teejan fi Muluk Himyar* "كتاب تيجان في ملوك حِمْيَار" is a major source of fictional tales and legends by the Arabs. The battle legends called "أَيَّامُ الْعَرَبِ" are prior forms of Arabian stories. Also, the short narrative or truthful anecdotes called الْأَخْبَارُ is a pure Arabic genre. The Arab innovative writers in the classical and post-classical epochs used several methods in diversifying fiction writing techniques, such diverse methods of writing fiction are obvious in "كَلِيلَةُ وَدَمْنَةُ" (Arabic translation of Indian fables), "أَلْفُ لَيْلَةٍ وَلَيْلَةٍ" (A Thousand and One Night) and "المقامات" (The Assemblies). Nearly all literary scholars have chosen the *Maqamah* as the nub of the novel, the drama and the short story in Arabic. But considering the fact that *Maqamah* pays a particular attention to the coherence of each chapter, hence, it comes closer to the form of the short story.

### 3.3. Modern Arabic Short Story

In the classical Arabic fiction, rhymed prose and rhetorical devices were used. It was replete with wonderful anecdotes as a way of driving home a point or portraying a character. This is based on the conventional technique of writing fiction of varying lengths including the short story. But these stories are deficient in the psychological insight, meticulous and developed characterization which the modern fiction requires.

The growth and development of the modern Arabic short story owes a great deal to the influence of European literature. European literary figures like Guy De Maupassant, Emile Zola and Balzac have great impact on the evolution and maturation of the modern Arabic short story. At the initial stage, thousands of French, Russian, German and American short stories were either translated or adapted by Arab writers. As from the year 1870 when *Salim al-Bustani* published his first story, "رَمِيَّةٌ مِنْ غَيْرِ رَامٍ" in "al-Jinnan" magazine the short story become widely produced. *Al-Bustani's* story represented a transition from old narrative

structure in terms of simple language and restraint from rhetorical devices and difficult words.

Furthermore, the Cairo magazine, “*al-Diyah* الضياء” from its inception in 1897, published one story in every issue. As a result, thousands of short stories appeared in Egypt and Lebanon between 1870 and 1914 regularly in newspapers and magazines. Syrian writers also published their short stories in “*al-Jinnan*” magazine of Lebanon and gradually interest in writing short story developed across the Arab world. This led to the appearance in Tunis of another magazine called “*qasas* قصص” in 1967 which also published many short stories.

Early short story writers among the Arabs include *Mustafa Lufti al-Manfaluti* (1876-1924) in Egypt, *Khaleel Jibran* (1882-1931) and *Mikhail Nuayma* in America. *Al-Manfaluti*'s collections of short stories include “العبرات” (Tears, 1915).

*Jibran* is credited with his short stories collections of “عرائس المروج” (Brides of Meadow, 1906) and “الأرواح المتمردة” (Rebellious Souls, 1908). As for *Mikhail Nuayma*, his short story, “سنتها الجديدة” “Her new year, 1914” is noteworthy.

*Muhammad Taymur* (1892 – 1921) who is generally regarded as the pioneer of the new genre in Egypt is believed to have evolved the artistic structure for the Arabic short story. He published his story *fil-Qitar* (In the train) in 1917, and some of his other stories including “ما تراه العيون” (What the eyes see) appeared in “*assufur*” magazine in 1922. Other pioneers of Arabic short story in the modern times include *Khaleel Bydas* of Palestine, *Labeebah Hashim* of Lebanon and *Mahmud Ahmad Sayyid* of Iraq.

New school of writers eventually emerged in Egypt by the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and this aided the maturation of the Arabic short story. *Mahmud Taymur* (1894 – 1973), *Mahmud Tahir Lashin* (1894 – 1954), *Yahya Haqqy* (1905 – 1993) and *Hussein Fawzy* (1908 – 1988) were the leaders of this school. And in 1925 they produced the weekly journal tagged “*al-Fajr*”. *Mahmud Taymur*, the younger brother of *Muhammad Taymur* was the most prolific short story writer of his time – He in six years published five collections of stories among which is “الشيخ جمعة” (1925).

It is however pertinent to note that whereas European short story writers - from whom the modern Arabic short story was borrowed – were romantic in their themes and styles, early Egyptian short story writers were realistic both in style and theme. Additionally, whereas the short story genre was readily welcomed in the European literary circles as a step forward in literature, it was on the contrary



greeted with mockery and contempt by most literary scholars in the Arab world at its beginning. Nevertheless, Arabic short story writers in the modern times have also been threading the romantic paths in their productions.

### **Self Assessment Exercise**

- Define the short story as a concept and review its origin in European literature.
- What differentiates classical Arabic narratives from modern Arabic short story?

#### **4.0 Conclusion**

One may safely conclude from the foregoing lines that the short story genre is a 19<sup>th</sup> century discovery of the Westerners. It emerged almost simultaneously in Germany, the United States, France and Russia. The Arabs in the 20<sup>th</sup> century borrowed it through translation and adaptation of Western fictions. And the appearance of various journals and magazines in the Arab world aided its widespread. The modern Arabic short story was initially realistic in theme and style but later with the evolution of a radical school it also became romantic in content and structure.

#### **5.0 Summary**

We have been able to, in this unit, studied the growth and development of the short story in the West. We related it to the appearance of the genre in Arabic literature and found that some kinds of narratives existed in the classical Arabic prose but were not properly developed as to merit being called short story. The modern Arabic short story therefore is a “baby” of the intellectual contact between the Arabs and the Westerners. It reached its maturation in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

#### **6.0 Tutor marked Assignment**

Discuss the evolution and maturation of modern Arabic short story identifying factors that aided its efflorescence.

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## **Unit 4: Characteristics of a Short Story**

### **Contents:**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Body – Characteristics of the Short Story
  - 3.1 The Narrative
  - 3.2 The Character
  - 3.3 The Plot
  - 3.4 The Setting
  - 3.5 The Central Thought or Idea (The Theme)
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### **1.0 Introduction**

A short story, as we noted in the previous unit, is a piece of prose fiction which can be read at a single sitting. It ought to combine factual description with poetic impression just as it should present a fused impression of temper, tone, colour, and effect. It often depicts a decisive moment of life. In this unit, we shall consider the characteristics of a short story.

### **2.0 Objectives**

Our objectives in this unit are to:

- expose the students to the elements which a short story is supposed to contain.
- explain how these components integrate to form a meaningful and purposeful short story.
- show how these essentials can be put to effective use in the writing of a short story, using greatest economy of means and utmost emphasis.

### **3.0 Main Body**

#### **3.1 The Narrative**

This is a group of logically and sequentially arranged actions and events surrounding a general subject-matter. These events normally depict characters of the story and expose the conflicts between them. Unity of actions and events is achieved only when the writer provides answers to questions that may be agitating mind of reader, some of which include how, where, when and why did the events and actions surrounding the theme occur.

The writer could present the story from the viewpoint of a narrator having full or partial knowledge of the scenarios and characters involved. This is termed the omniscient point of view as the narrator knows all or part of the thoughts, motives and feelings of each character. He could also write the story without a narrator, thus relying on the conversations/dialogues between the various characters of the story and results of conflicts among them. The story could also be told with a stream of consciousness whereby the reader feels as if he/she is inside the head of one character and knows all his thoughts, dreams and reactions. The readers' understanding of the story's message is often influenced by the author's choice of narrative perspective.

#### **3.2 The Character**

There are two meanings for the word character: one is the person in a work of fiction. The other is the characteristics of a person. Persons in a work of fiction like the short story are referred to as Antagonist and Protagonist. Characters of the short story are normally few, but one is always central and often undergoes a change or some kind of development as a result of events. This is called the protagonist. The opposer of the major character is called the antagonist.

The Characteristics of a Person – For a story to look real to the reader, its characters must appear real. Characterization therefore, is the information the

author supplies the reader about the characters themselves. Characters are persuasive if they are: steady, motivated, and life-like.

The author can reveal the characters in a short story through indirect methods such as:

- 1- Physical description of the characters.
- 2- The characters' thoughts, feelings, words and dreams.
- 3- What others say about him/her and how they react to him/her.
- 4- The actions of the characters.

### **3.3 The Plot**

The plot is how the author arranges events and actions to develop his central theme; it is the sequence of events in a story or play. The plot is a premeditated, logical progression of events having an opening, middle, and an ending. The short story usually has one plot therefore making it possible to be read in one sitting. The plot is set out using most of the following ways:

- A short story normally starts with an opening situation.
- The plot is developed by a complication of issues.
- There at times may be a false resolution where the character believes he has resolved the problem, a further complication then follows.
- And the story ends with a final resolution which often contains a twirl or an unexpected facet.

Additionally, plot is the systematic series of events which make up the short story. Each tie in the procession helps to create suspense and to solve a problem. The protagonist is presented with a problematic situation or conflict which he must resolve. The largest part of the story will deal with the protagonist's struggle to resolve this problem. The conflict can exist within the main character himself (internal conflict) or it may happen between the protagonist and outside forces (external conflict). The point where the conflict is resolved is the climax of the story.

### **3.4 The Setting**

This is the background against which the story is set. It is the natural milieu within which events and actions of story characters proceed. It involves the time and location in which a story takes place. Several aspects of setting should be considered when examining how the background contributes meaningfully to a story. These include:

- Place – the geographical location where the action of the story is taking place.
- Time – When the story is taking place (historical period, time of day, year, etc).

Auxiliary setting includes the weather and social conditions, as well as the mood created at the beginning of the story. The mood can be brilliant and cheery or gloomy and terrifying.

The level of explanation with which setting is portrayed depends upon a number of considerations, all of which the intelligent writer keeps in mind. Perhaps the first consideration is the importance of the setting in relation to the other essential components in the story such as the plot and the character. Another consideration for the meticulous writer is the probable acquaintance with his setting. If the setting is one that is perhaps familiar to most of his readers, the writer needs to describe it in detail; he may presuppose that the details he selects will present his readers with that gratification of recognition which is one of the special values of familiar material. A time and place setting that is remote from most readers would definitely, create a problem in conveying the central idea of the story.

### 3.5 The Central Idea or Theme

This is the controlling idea or the central insight in a fictional writing as the short story. It is the author's underlying meaning or main idea that he is trying to put across. The theme may be the author's thoughts about a topic or view of human nature. The subject of the short story usually indicates what the writer is saying and he may employ various figures of speech to emphasize his theme, such as: symbol, allusion, simile, metaphor, hyperbole, or irony.

The author normally does not proffer solution to the problem in a short story, but rather tries to reveal the negative and positives sides of taking a particular stand. Some authors however, may decide to literally mention the central theme through the speech of one character or another, but most writers often conceal it, leaving it to the discretion of reader. The theme gives a fundamental meaning to a literary piece. Usually, it is inferred from the other elements in the short story and often

comes to fore through conflict(s) experienced by the main character, (the protagonist). Modern short story writers often rely on the current life happenings in societies to derive themes of their stories. Thus, they depict daily life affairs as they see and perceive them. This explains why most of their stories generally treat socio-economic and political aspects of life.

### **Self Assessment Exercise**

Of what significance is characterization and character in a story piece?

Distinguish between drama and narrative.

### **4.0 Conclusion**

The lesson in this unit has brought to our sharp focus, the fact that in designing a short story, some components have to be systematically incorporated. These include all the elements of the short story as enumerated and expatiated in the preceding lines. However, characterization, plot and the fundamental subject matter are very crucial in writing a wonderful short story. A short story without a fascinating focal theme and captivating narrative style shall be found boring and tiresome.

### **5.0 Summary**

This unit has been able to study the essential ingredients of a short story, which include the narrative style of the author, characterization, plot, central theme and the background against which the story is set. It has however, been observed that modern short story writers often tend to base their narratives on their own experience, and in so doing they focus much more attention on the less stunning aspects of life. This usually results in revealing the subtleties of the human mind and behavior.

### **6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment**

How do plot, setting and theme contribute to successful writing of a short story?

Explain what narration is in relation to author's point of view.

Draw a line between novel and short story.

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### **MODULE 3: TRANSLATION OF SELECT SHORT STORIES FROM**

#### **“A FOREST OF FLOWERS”**

#### **Unit 1: A Short Biography of the Author**

##### **Contents**

1.0	Introduction
2.0	Objectives
3.0	Main Body
3.1	Ken Saro-Wiwa in Few Lines
3.2	A Review of “A Forest of Flowers”
4.0	Conclusion
5.0	Summary
6.0	Tutor Marked Assignment
7.0	References/Further Readings

#### **1.0 Introduction**

You would remember that translation and adaptation played a decisive role in the emergence of modern Arabic novel and short stories: narratives of different languages were deciphered into Arabic before the Arabs eventually launched true Arabic novel and short story. Before proceeding to translate some select short stories, it would not be out of place for us to give a short biographical account of Ken Saro-wiwa, author of “**A Forest of Flowers**”, an anthology of short stories from which we have extracted some stories for translation and appreciation.

#### **2.0 Objectives**

On completion of this unit students should be able to:



- Know the position of Ken Saro-wiwa in Nigerian literary circle and his contribution to Nigerian literature.
- Identify the place of Ken Saro-wiwa on the global literary scene.
- Have adequate information about “**A Forest of Flowers**”, a collection of short stories by Ken Saro-wiwa.

### 3.0 Main Body

#### 3.1 Ken Saro-Wiwa in Few Lines

Kenule "Ken" Beeson Saro-Wiwa, born on October 10, 1941, was a Nigerian author, television producer, environmental activist, and winner of the Right Livelihood Award and the Goldman Environmental Prize. Saro-Wiwa was a member of the Ogoni people, an ethnic minority in Nigeria whose homeland, Ogoniland, in the Niger Delta has been targeted for crude oil extraction since the 1950s and which has suffered extreme and fortuitous environmental damage from decades of unsystematic petroleum waste removal.

Initially as spokesperson, and then as President, of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), Saro-Wiwa led a nonviolent campaign against environmental degradation of the land and waters of Ogoniland by the operations of the multinational petroleum industry, especially Shell. He was also an outspoken critic of the Nigerian government, which he viewed as reluctant to enforce environmental regulations on the foreign petroleum companies operating in the area.

At the peak of his non-violent campaign, Saro-Wiwa was arrested, quickly tried by a special military tribunal. He was found guilty and hanged in 1995 by the military government of General Sani Abacha, all on charges widely viewed as entirely politically motivated and completely groundless. His execution provoked international outrage and resulted in Nigeria's suspension from the Commonwealth of Nations for over three years.

#### His literary contributions

Ken Saro-wiwa is credited with the publication of a number of literary works including the following:

- *In the Shadow of a Saint: A Son's Journey to understand His Father's Legacy.* (Memoirs).
- *A Month and a Day: A Detention Diary* (Journal).
- *Sozaboy: A Novel in Rotten English* (Fiction).
- *A Forest of Flowers* (Short stories).

His best known novel, *Sozaboy*, tells the story of a naive village boy recruited to the army during the Nigerian Civil War of 1967 to 1970; it informs also about the political patronage and corruption in Nigeria's military regime of the time. His war diaries, *On a Darkling Plain*, document Saro-Wiwa's experience during the war. Saro-Wiwa was also a successful businessman and television producer. His satirical television series, *Basi & Company*, is purported to have been one of the most watched soap operas in Africa.

During the 1980s Saro-Wiwa concentrated largely on his writing, journalism and television production. His intellectual work was interrupted in 1987 when he re-entered the political scene on appointment by then Head of State, General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida, to aid the country's transition to democracy. But Ken soon resigned because he felt Babangida's supposed plans for a return to democracy were insincere.

In his satirical piece, *Africa Kills Her Sun* first published in 1989, Ken foreshadowed his execution in a submissive, sorrowful mood. This came to pass few years later, precisely on November 10, 1995 when he was hanged by the then military rule.

### **Ken Saro-Wiwa in Popular Culture and Academic Circles**

In recognition of the role of Ken Saro-Wiwa in the development of African literature and culture, many cultural bands as well as members of the academia have dedicated their works to the memory of this great Nigerian author, television producer and environmental activist: The Finnish band Ultra Bra dedicated their song "*Ken Saro-Wiwa on kuollut*" (Ken Saro-Wiwa is dead) to the remembrance of Ken Saro-Wiwa. The Italian band *Il Teatro degli Orrori* devoted their song "*A sangue freddo*" (In cold blood), to the memory of Ken Saro-Wiwa. An academic book on trade, health and human rights has also been dedicated to Ken Saro-Wiwa. In the same vein, the folk duo Magpie included the song "Saro-Wiwa" on their album "Give Light," crediting it as Words and Music by Terry Leonino and Ken Saro-Wiwa. It includes lines from Saro-Wiwa's poem "Dance".

Ken Saro Wiwa's extermination is quoted and used as an inspiration for Beverley Naidoo's 2000 novel "*The Other Side of Truth*". Another novel, "*Eclipse*", which is based on the events in Nigeria, was published by Richard North Patterson in 2009 to celebrate Ken Saro-Wiwa and his movement.

Additionally, Guitarist and composer, Robin Flower and musical partner, Libby Mc Claren included Saro-Wiwa as an example of a cultural "*Angel of Change*" on

a 2003 recording of the same name. Hip Hop duo Reflection Eternal: *Talib Kweli & HiTek*, in their 2010 album, “*Revolutions Per Minute*”, describe in their song “*Ballad Of The Black Gold*” the activities of Saro-Wiwa and his group as nonviolent, and therefore deserve commendation.

### 3.2 “A Forest of Flowers”: A Short Review

“**A Forest of Flowers**” is a collection of nineteen short stories divided into two parts. The first deals with the happenings in the backwater village of Dukana, where fallacy, dishonesty, and ignorance often have tragic consequences. The second part transports us to the city, where we find these same common human flaws rampant and thriving. In the book, Ken Saro-Wiwa is unrepentantly criticizes the government, the church, and fellow Nigerians. The stories show the bad sides of mankind. In a figurative style, Saro-Wiwa touches on many issues ranging from adultery to violent ethnic clash to public lethargy. But from within this ocean of gloominess comes a sporadic story about an immaculate soul, ready and determined to fight the current.

Each story occupies an average of eight pages, and is quick to the point. They stimulate a wide range of emotions. Some stories cause laughter while some provoke anger. And others are very pitiful. They can be easily read, with a very limited use of “pidgin” English, which may necessitate consulting the glossary. But despite the obscure nature of many of the stories, “**A Forest of Flowers**” contains heart-touching stories.

Some of the titles featuring in “A Forest of Flowers” include the following:

- *Home, Sweet home*
- *A Family Affair*
- *The Overhaul*
- *A Death in Town*
- *Robert and the Dog*
- *Love Song of a Woman*
- *A Caring Man*
- *A Legend on Our Street.*

### Self Assessment Exercise

Write a short biographical account on Ken Saro-Wiwa.

#### 4.0 Conclusion

Ken Saro-Wiwa was a celebrated Nigerian writer, television producer and political activist, who as a result of his campaign for the rights of his people, the Ogoni, was arrested, imprisoned, tried and hanged in November 1995 by the Nigerian military dictatorship headed by Late General Sanni Abacha. “**A Forest of Flowers**” is one of the fictional writings of Saro-Wiwa in which he embraces with passion various issues ranging from the socio-political, economic, and cultural to feminism, themes of alliance, conflict between the individual conscience and society at large.

#### 5.0 Summary

This unit presented us with an abridged biographical note on Ken Saro-Wiwa, as a prologue to a condensed evaluation of one of his fictive works, “A Forest of Flowers”. Accordingly, his life and contribution to the African literature were examined. The study nonetheless, found that Ken Saro-Wiwa was not only a Nigerian intellectual and environmental activist, but was also a literary figure of international reputation.

#### 6.0 Tutor marked Assignment

Give a literary description of “*A Forest of Flowers*” written by Ken Saro-Wiwa.

#### 7.0 References / Further Readings

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**Unit 2: Translation of “A Family Affair”**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Body: “A Family Affair” translated into Arabic.
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

- 1.0 Introduction

This unit will present us with an Arabic translation of one story from Saro Wiwa's stories collection, "A Forest of Flowers". The story is a seven-page narrative entitled "A Family Affair", and it is the fourth story in the first division of the collection. It is a sociological narrative based on greed and iniquitous search for wealth.

## 2.0 Objectives

At the end of the lesson in this unit, students should be able to:

- render some English passages into Arabic
- draw out some of the derivable lessons from the translated story
- improve their use of Arabic Grammar and Morphology
- develop their Arabic sentence constructions

## 3.0 Main Body: "A Family Affair" (The Original Version)

When one morning Dabo, one of Dukana's most successful fishermen, instead of heading for the creeks, suddenly burst out into song, there was consternation in town. Every man is entitled to his private enjoyment, and anyone who chooses to may entertain his friends. Certain times are apt and proper. Such as when the harvest is over and the hardworking and hardy men of Dukana take time off to enjoy their wealth such as it is, in leisurely and manly pursuits: in song and dance, in chats in the playground, in revels in bedrooms far from the rumour-mongers and gossips. But, when a man of dignity and substance, having arranged his affairs properly, and given orders to his subordinates to meet him early at dawn so they can set out on a trip; when such a man suddenly forgets himself and greets his staff and friends with lewd songs, well, Dukana does not laugh.

That morning, Dukana was not amused. Ripples of worry gradually spread around town and drew everyone to Dabo's house. It was like Duzia to trivialize matters as soon as he got there. 'I say the man does have a powerful voice. He's been in the wrong profession all along,' laughed he as soon as he found opportunity.

‘Cha, cha, you flabby footed son-of-a-bitch, give your tongue a rest. This is no joking matter,’ Terr Kole chastised him. ‘Who’s joking? I say the man has my type of chest, and I’m not joking,’ Duzia replied. Nor was Dabo joking. Because he soon started dancing and you could not have faulted his nimble feet and the rhythmic swaying of his body. ‘I should say this is something different,’ muttered Duzia, as the import of the event began to register on his mind. ‘Something different, indeed,’ replied Terr Kole, ‘You do hide your brain among your flailing toes some of the time, I should say.’ ‘I believe you, Terr Kole,’ Duzia said. ‘You are certainly right this time.’

‘So you should learn to shut your trap some of the time.’ ‘I’ll try to, Terr Kole. If only I had the legs and could dance like our friend there, I’m sure I should talk less.’ ‘Oh, you’re quite incorrigible,’ said Terr Kole. And he moved away. Dabo sang and danced. And then he started removing his clothes, peeling them off his body one by one until he was completely naked. Dabo had gone mad. Plain mad.

The news ran through Dukana like fire in a dry wind, leaving everyone who heard it dumbstruck. And the story was told how members of his family did everything in their power to calm him down, but he would not be controlled. Even after the family had him thoroughly bound hand and foot with ropes, he still sang blissfully.

Such an unmitigated disaster was bound to invoke bright ideas in Dukana. And now they poured forth by the score. Some said he should be taken to a church so they could pray for him and cast out the devil that was tormenting him. Not one of the regular churches where they only prayed to God and sang. But a real church where members saw visions and healed the sick. Others said Oyeoku the powerful juju should be consulted. He was the only one who could restore the man to his normal senses. And for all anyone knew, he might be the one who had brought this visitation on Dabo.

Some, in the sanctuary of their living rooms, said they were not surprised. For a man did not make the wealth which was Dabo’s by just working hard. You had to have sold your soul to the devil to earn that much money. It began to be said that Dabo had even murdered a young girl years back and offered her as a sacrifice to Sarogua, the rain-maker and ancestral spirit of Dukana, so that he could be the richest man in town. And when you sell yourself to the devil what do you expect? Dabo had been a living lie. After making his pact with the forces of darkness, he had turned to the church and no man was a better son of the church. But he was going to be caught some day, wasn’t he? The chicken had to return home to roost. Money was a good thing, no doubt, but if in its acquisition you did certain untoward things, why, you had to bear the punishment when it came, as it was such to do.

So the whispers went, until it became the common talk away from the ears of members of Dabo's family. All the latter heard were words of sympathy, of advice as to where the eminent man could be cured in a matter of days.

The Holy Spiritual Church of Mount Zion was suggested and thence Dabo was taken. After a month, he continued to sing and dance; not all the prayers said and the sacrifice made or the fees paid could cure Dabo.

Then it was said that the Brotherhood of the Cross and Star whose membership extended from Calabar to London and America and God knows where else in the world would be sure to drive away the millions of devils who had conspired to drive Dabo to dance and song. Accordingly, he was taken across the river to the headquarters of the Brotherhood. They poured holy water on him; they anointed him with holy cream; they fed him on holy bread; they manacled him head and foot to the foot of his bamboo bed; they saw visions on his behalf; they prayed for the salvation of his soul. Yet Dabo continued to sing and dance. And when the Holy Spirit ordered that all his earthly goods be sold and the proceeds given to the church because in one of the visions it had appeared that his great wealth was the scourge of the man, the family duly complied. They dug into the grass mattress on his bed; they dug the floor of his bedroom; they dug the soil in his yam barn, and as was suspected, found a bag of money there. They sent all proceeds to the Brotherhood. Still Dabo sang and danced from morning to night. So the family decided that the Brotherhood was not the right place for him.

Now there was in Ko, a town famous for its powers, a man, a doctor who advertised himself on a painted notice board. He was very famous because even the government had given him a certificate with a long number on it. The notice on the board said so. Those who could read, and there were not very many of them, had said that his number was very long, beginning with several naught; government must have known of his many abilities otherwise they would not have given him such a tremendous and impressive number. It was said that his notice board proclaimed him to be a doctor who owned a herbal healing home, in which Veedee could be cured; madness could be cured; infertility could be cured. This native doctor's potions were the mortal enemy of witchcraft and necromancy, of snake and dog bites, of bee and scorpion stings. In short, he was the one to whom all could turn when everything else in heaven and earth had failed.

Dabo's family heard of the doctor in Ko rather late in the day. But they went to him as soon as they heard of him and placed Dabo in his powerful hands. And he beat Dabo night and day with a leather belt, leaving wicked marks on the man's back and bottom. The devil had to be beaten out of the madman. It was the only way of curing madness. And now instead of singing and dancing, Dabo let out frightful and horrendous



howls as of a beast in pain. With a shaven head, cicatrices around his wrists and ankles and now deep lacerations on his back, Dabo was a terrible sight. One day, he bolted from the doctor's famed herbal healing home and found his way, nobody knows how, back to Dukana. And to his empty house.

He no longer danced and sang. He went around in the nude begging for food and water. Once each day, precisely at noon, he would yell out the words 'You are all liars, all.' He was the town's only beggar. And he was a shame to his family. A walking scandal. They discussed him often in subdued tones far from the prying eyes, the sniffing noses and the flapping ears of the lights of Dukana. And came to an unspoken and menacing agreement; 'One day shall be one day.'

As the days passed into months and months grew into years, Dabo became a familiar sight in Dukana. Strange to say, he would sometimes recognize a relation or an old friend and greet them normally as in the old days. Such occasions, though rare, went to show that there was somewhere in his madness, a lucidity which could break through his brain as the sun sometimes breaks through rain-bearing clouds.

In Dukana, there is a proverb which states that it's an unfortunate man who feels like easing himself on a rainy day. For, among us, the bush does not only hold the terrors and beauties of nature, it has been designated a toilet. A rainy day is a terrible day therefore on which to answer the call of nature. Even if one can find a banana leaf to give protection from the falling rain, even if one can wade through the muddy, running water and arrive in the bush, the wet branches, the wet undergrowth, the wet leaves hold further discomforts. Therefore a rainy day is a day to stay indoors, and refuse to answer the call of nature.

On one particularly rainy day, when the roofs of the skies were open and the gods were pouring the waters by the bucketful into Dukana, the beggar could not do his usual rounds. Nor did he feel the urge of nature. Or did he? Because he felt asleep in his empty house. There is another saying which everyone in Dukana knows well. 'If you don't know death, look upon sleep.' So the beggar slept. His relatives, however, believed him to be dead. An ululating female carried the news through the length and breadth of Dukana.

When a mad beggar dies, it is not much news, and nobody really cares. Some even have a sigh of relief. For it is a well-known fact that should a pregnant woman see a mad beggar first thing in the morning, or should she hate the beggar and refuse to feed him or give him money, she is likely to give birth to a child who will look like the beggar or grow up to be an imbecile. But it being criminal not to mourn a departed one and a

relative at that, the family raised a loud cry for the benefit of the listening public of Dukana. In the midst of the noise and fuss the beggar woke up from sleep.

The beggar was confounded to find himself the centre of attention. Never since he could remember had so many of his relatives taken an interest in him. He threw them a weak greeting. No one answered him. He repeated the greeting. Again, no one answered him. He repeated the greeting a second time. 'You are dead, so shut up,' one of the relatives whispered hoarsely.

'I'm not dead,' the beggar replied. 'I was only sleeping.' 'Sleeping. Huh! What's the difference between sleep and death? You are dead.'

'You are dead. Brothers, help me carry him away.' 'But I'm not dead yet.' 'You will die today. You died this afternoon.' 'God, I'm not dead. I'm not dead yet. I don't want to die,' the beggar whined like a dog. The brothers joined hands and heaved Dabo from his seat. They wrapped him in a raffia mat and picking up machetes, hoes and an axe, moved in the direction of the bush.

Rain poured down heavily. From time to time lightning streaked through the dark sky. The relatives waded resolutely through the running stream of rain, firmly holding their precious bundle. And Dukana, fearful as ever of the numbing rain, sat indoors oblivious of everything.

Eventually, the party arrived in the depths of the forest. The silence was deep. The thick foliage of the trees shut out the rain. The dead leaves dampened by rain lay soggy and silent underfoot. The birds had all, it seemed, gone to sleep. In the eerie, weird silence the party set down their miserable bundle. The relatives dug a hasty grave, not deep, very narrow. From within the bundle, a voice could be heard. 'I am not yet dead, oh God.' 'Then you must die today, you eyesore, you disgrace of the family. You must die today.'

'I'm not dead yet, oh God, I'm not dead yet.' The relatives were surprised at the amazing clarity of the man. Was he not mad? How was he able to distinguish between life and death? Could even madness know the difference between these two? Each asked himself the question. Each resolved within himself to bury the answer with the mad beggar.

The grave was dug. From the confines of the enveloping dirty mat, the voice could still be heard. They picked up the bundle roughly and tying it firmly with cord cut from the forest, lowered it into the shallow grave. The voice persisted ever so faintly, ever so insistently, even as they covered the grave with the wet earth and huge logs of wood.

Then when they heard no more sounds, when they felt sure their troubles had been buried deep in the bowels of the earth, they looked at each other, turned upon their heels and picked their silent way through the secretive forest back to Dukana.

## "A Family Affair" (Arabic Translation)

## شأن أسروي

كان دأبو أحد السَّمَاكِينَ النَّاجِحِينَ فِي بَلَدَةِ دُكَّانَا، وَبَدَلَ مِنْ أَنْ يَتَّجِهَ إِلَى التُّهَيْرَاتِ فِي صَبِيحَةِ ذَاتِ يَوْمٍ، صَدَعَ فُجَاءَةً بِغِنَاءٍ يُنْشِدُ، فَحَدَّثَ ذَعْرًا فِي الْبَلَدَةِ.

وَطَبَعًا، إِنَّ كُلَّ وَاحِدٍ مُؤَهَّلٌ لِتَمَتُّعِ خَاصٍّ، وَأَيُّ وَاحِدٍ شَاءَ ذَلِكَ، لَهُ حَقُّ تَسْلِيَةِ أَصْدِقَائِهِ. وَكَانَ بَعْضُ الْأَوْقَاتِ مُلَائِمًا لِذَلِكَ وَمُنَاسِبًا، مِثْلَ نَهَايَةِ مَوْسِمِ الْحَصَادِ، عِنْدَمَا يَأْخُذُ الرَّجَالُ الْمُجْتَهِدُونَ الْأَقْوِيَاءُ الْوَقْتَ لِلرَّاحَةِ وَلِمُتَعَةِ ثَرَائِهِمْ فِي وَقْتِ الْفَرَاغِ: يَتَسَلَّوْنَ بِغِنَاءٍ وَرَقْصٍ، وَبِشَرْتَرَةٍ فِي الْمَلْعَبِ، وَبِأَفْرَاحٍ فِي غُرْفِ النَّوْمِ، بَعِيدًا عَنِ مُشِيعِينَ الْأَخْبَارِ وَتَرْتَارِينَ. لَكِنْ، إِذَا حَدَّثَ أَنَّ رَجُلًا عَزِيزًا، ذَا مَكَانَةٍ، بَعَدَ تَرْتِيبِ أُمُورِهِ جَيِّدًا، وَبَعَدَ إِصْدَارِ الْأَوَامِرِ إِلَى مَأْمُورِيهِ أَنْ يَجْتَمِعُوا مَعَهُ بُكْرَةَ الْيَوْمِ الثَّانِي حَتَّى يَخْرُجُوا فِي رِحْلَةٍ؛ إِذَا حَدَّثَ أَنَّ مِثْلَ هَذَا الرَّجُلِ نَسِيَ نَفْسَهُ فُجَاءَةً، وَحَيًّا مُوظَّفِيهِ وَأَصْدِقَائِهِ بِأَغْنِيَةٍ فَاسِقَةٍ، حَقِيقَةً، إِنَّ هَذَا الْأَمْرَ لَيْسَ مِمَّا يُحْدِثُ الضَّحْكَ لِأَهْلِ بَلَدَةِ دُكَّانَا.

فِي صَبِيحَةِ ذَاتِ يَوْمٍ، لَمْ يَكُنْ أَهْلُ بَلَدَةِ دُكَّانَا مُبْتَهَجِينَ، حَيْثُ شَاعَ الْقَلْقُ تَدْرِيجِيًّا فِي الْبَلَدَةِ، فَاسْرَعَ كُلُّ وَاحِدٍ إِلَى بَيْتِ دَابُو. وَكَأَنَّ دُوزِيَا جَعَلَ الْأُمُورَ تَافِهَةً، فَسُرَّعَانَ مَا حَضَرَ فِي الْمَكَانِ. "إِنِّي أَقُولُ أَنَّ لِلرَّجُلِ صَوْتٌ قَوِيٌّ. لَقَدْ كَانَ فِي مِهْنَةِ خَاطِئَةٍ مُنْذُ الزَّمَانِ،" وَقَدْ ضَحِكَ فَوْرًا مَا وَجَدَ فُرْصَةً لِذَلِكَ.

"شَا شَا، أَنْتَ يَا وَاهِنُ، مُتْرَهَّلُ، ابْنُ كَلْبٍ (بَعِيُّ الْأُمِّ)، أَسْكُتْ. هَذَا لَيْسَ بِأَمْرٍ مُضْحِكٍ،" وَقَدْ تَبَّهَ تَارُ كُولِ.

مَنْ يَمْرَحُ؟ إِنِّي أَقُولُ إِنَّ لِلرَّجُلِ صَوْتًا صَدْرِيًّا مِثْلَ صَوْتِ صَدْرِي، وَكَسْتُ أَمْرَحُ، "رَدَّ دُوزِيَا. وَلَمْ يَكُنْ دَابُو يَمْرَحُ أَيْضًا. لِأَنَّهُ بَدَأَ يَرْقُصُ بَعْدَ قَلِيلٍ، فَلَيْسَ بِإِمْكَانِكَ أَنْ تُعَيِّبَ حِفَّةَ حَرَكَةِ قَدَمِهِ وَتَمَائِلَ جَسَدِهِ الْإِيقَاعِيِّ.

"يَبْغِي لِي أَنْ أَقُولَ إِنَّ هَذَا شَيْءٌ غَرِيبٌ (مُخْتَلِفٌ)"، هَمَّهُمْ دُوزِيَا، عندما بدأتِ الحَادِثَةُ تُثَبِّتُ فِي قَلْبِهِ.

"شَيْءٌ غَرِيبٌ جِدًّا"، رَدَّتَار كُول. "أَحْيَانًا يَجُوزُ لَكَ أَنْ تُخْفِيَ مُخَّكَ فِي قَدَمَيْكَ الْمُتَخَبِّطَيْنِ، جازَ لِي أَنْ أَقُولَ هَذَا."

إِنِّي أُصَدِّقُكَ، يَاتَار كُول، "قالَ دُوزِيَا. "أَنْتَ عَلَى الْحَقِّ فِي هَذَا الْوَقْتِ."

"إِذَنْ يَبْغِي لَكَ أَنْ تَسْكُتَ فِي بَعْضِ الْأَحْيَانِ."

"سَأُحَاوِلُ ذَلِكَ، يَاتَار كُول، ما دَامَ عِنْدِي أَرْجُلُ، وَأَسْتَطِيعُ الرَّقْصَ كَصَدِيقِنَا هُنَاكَ، أَكِيدُ، يَبْغِي لِي الْاِخْتِصَارُ فِي الْكَلَامِ."

"ها، أَنْتَ مِمَّنْ لَا يُصْلِحُ،" قالَ تَار كُول، ثُمَّ انْصَرَفَ.

عَنِّي وَرَقْصَ دَابُو، ثُمَّ بَدَأَ يَخْلَعُ ثِيَابَهُ عَن جَسَدِهِ وَاحِدًا تَلَوَ آخَرَ حَتَّى بَقِيَ عُرْيَانًا، وَقَدْ تَجَنَّنَ دَابُو، جُنُونًا وَاضِحًا. وَشَاعَ خَبْرُ جُنُونِهِ فِي بَلَدَةِ دُكَانَا كَعَدْوَى نَارٍ فِي عَاصِفَةِ قَاسِيَةٍ، مِمَّا جَعَلَ كُلَّ مَنْ سَمِعَ بِالْخَبْرِ مَذْهُولًا. وَقَدْ قُصَّتِ الْقِصَّةُ عَن مُحَاوَلَةِ أَعْضَاءِ أُسْرَتِهِ حَيْثُ أَنَّهُمْ فَعَلُوا كُلَّ مَا فِي وَسْعِهِمْ لِإِرَاحَتِهِ، لَكِنْ فَشَلَتْ كُلُّ الْمُحَاوَلَةِ. وَحَتَّى بَعْدَ أَنْ أَوْثَقُوهُ بِجِبَالٍ يَدًا وَرِجْلًا، اسْتَمَرَّ يُعْنِي مَسْرُورًا.

وَمِثْلُ هَذِهِ الْمُصِيبَةِ الْفَاجِعَةِ، لَا بُدَّ أَنْ تَجْدِبَ أَفْكَارًا نَيِّرَةً فِي بَلَدَةِ دُكَانَا، فَبَدَأَ النَّاسُ يُفِيضُونَ إِلَى بَيْتِهِ عَشْرَاتٍ (أَفْوَاجًا). وَقَدْ اقْتَرَحَ بَعْضُهُمْ أَنْ يَذْهَبُوا بِهِ إِلَى كَنِيسَةِ لِدُعَاءِ وَلَطْرُدِ الْجِنِّ الَّذِي يُعَدُّهُ، وَكَيْسَتْ الْكَنِيسَةُ الْمَعْنِيَةُ إِحْدَى الْكِنَائِسِ الْمَعْرُوفَةِ الَّتِي تُدْعَى فِيهَا وَتُعْنَى فَحَسْبُ، بَلْ مَفْرُوضٌ أَنْ تَكُونَ كَنِيسَةً حَقِيقِيَّةً تَرَى جَمَاعَتَهَا رُؤَى وَتُبْرِئُ الْمَرْضَى. وَقَالَ بَعْضُ آخَرٍ يَجِبُ اسْتِشَارَةُ أُوَيِنَاوُكُو، رَجُلٍ كَاهِنٍ ذِي قُوَّةٍ، لِأَنَّهُ هُوَ الْكَاهِنُ الْوَحِيدُ يَسْتَطِيعُ اسْتِعَادَةَ عَقْلِ الرَّجُلِ، وَحَتَّى إِنْ بَعْضُهُمْ ظَنَّ أَنَّهُ (أَيُّ أُوَيِنَاوُكُو) هُوَ الَّذِي أَصَابَ دَابُوًا بِهَذِهِ الْكَارِثَةِ.

وَبَعْضُهُمْ فِي حَرَمٍ غَرَفِهِمْ، قَالَ إِنَّ الْأَمْرَ لَمْ يَدْعُ لِأَيِّ اسْتِعْرَابٍ، لِأَنَّهُ لَيْسَ بِإِمْكَانٍ أَيُّ رَجُلٍ أَنْ يَكْسِبَ ثَرْوَةً مِثْلَ ثَرْوَةِ دَابُورٍ بِعَمَلٍ جَادٍ فَحَسَبُ، فَلَا بُدَّ لِكُلِّ مَنْ يُرِيدُ أَنْ يَجْمَعَ الثَّرْوَةَ بِهَذِهِ الْكَثْرَةِ أَنْ يَبِيعَ نَفْسَهُ لِلشَّيْطَانِ. فَبَدَأَ النَّاسُ يَقُولُونَ إِنَّ دَابُورًا قَدْ قَتَلَ فَتَاةً قَبْلَ سَنَوَاتٍ وَقَدَّمَهَا أُضْحِيَّةً لِسَارُوَعُوَا، إِلَهٍ، مُنْزِلِ الْمَطْرِ، وَرَوْحَانِيَّةِ سَلْفِيَّةِ لِبَلَدَةِ دُكَانَا، لِيَكُونَ هُوَ أَعْنَى رَجُلٍ فِي الْبَلَدَةِ. وَإِذَا أَنْتَ بَعْتَ نَفْسَكَ لِلشَّيْطَانِ، فَمَاذَا تَتَوَقَّعُ؟ فَقَدْ كَانَ دَابُورٌ خُرَافَةً حَيًّا. بَعْدَ أَنْ اتَّخَذَ مِيثَاقًا مَعَ قُوَى ظُلْمَانِيَّةٍ، رَجَعَ إِلَى الْكَنِيسَةِ وَصَارَ هُوَ أَقْوَمَ رَجُلٍ مِنَ الْجَمَاعَةِ. لَكِنْ لَا بُدَّ مِنْ أَنْ تُبْلَى سَرَائِرُهُ يَوْمًا مَّا، أَلَيْسَ كَذَلِكَ؟ لَا بُدَّ مِنْ أَنْ يَرْجِعَ الْفَرُوحُ إِلَى الْمَأْوَى. الْمَالُ شَيْءٌ جَيِّدٌ، لَا شَكَّ، لَكِنْ، إِذَا أَنْتَ فَعَلْتَ أَشْيَاءَ مُتَمَرِّدَةً فِي جَمْعِهِ، عَلَيْكَ أَنْ تَتَحَمَّلَ الْعَذَابَ إِذَا جَاءَ، إِذْ لَا مَانِعَ مِنْ وُقُوعِهِ.

وَهَكَذَا شَاعَتِ الْهَمْسَاتُ، حَتَّى صَارَ الْخَبْرُ مُتَوَاتِرًا فِي الْبَلَدَةِ، بَعِيدًا عَنِ مَسَامِعِ أَعْضَاءِ أُسْرَةِ دَابُورٍ، فَلَمْ يَسْمَعُوا (مِنَ النَّاسِ) غَيْرَ كَلِمَاتِ التَّعَاطُفِ، وَالنُّصْحِ بِالْمَكَانِ الَّذِي يُذْهَبُ بِهَذَا الرَّجُلِ الْمَشْهُورِ حَتَّى يُشْفَى مِنْ خِلَالِ أَيَّامٍ. وَقَدْ اقْتَرَحَ بَعْضُهُمُ الْكَنِيسَةَ الرَّوْحَانِيَّةَ الْمُقَدَّسَةَ الَّتِي تَمْلِكُهَا مَأْوَتْ زَايُونَ، فَذَهَبُوا بِهِ إِلَيْهَا تَوًّا. وَبَعْدَ مُدَّةٍ شَهْرٍ، اسْتَمَرَ (دَابُورٌ) يُعْنَى وَيَرْقُصُ؛ فَالْأَدْعِيَّةُ وَاللَّأصَاحِي وَالْأَجْرَاتُ الَّتِي قَدَّمَتْ، لَمْ تَنْفَعْ فِي شِفَاءِ دَابُورٍ.

ثُمَّ بَعْدَ حِينٍ، قِيلَ إِنَّ الْجَمْعِيَّةَ الدِّينِيَّةَ الصَّيْلِيَّةَ وَالنَّجْمِيَّةَ الَّتِي تَمْتَدُّ عَضُوبِيَّتُهَا مِنْ كَالَابَرِ إِلَى لَنْدُنْ وَأَمْرِيكَا وَبِلَادِ أُخْرَى فِي الْعَالَمِ، تَسْتَطِيعُ أَنْ تَطْرُدَ مَلَائِينَ الشَّيَاطِينِ الَّذِينَ قَدْ تَأَمَّرُوا عَلَى دَابُورٍ وَمَسَّوَهُ بِالْجُنُونِ، فَيَرْقُصُ وَيُعْنَى. وَبِمُوجِبِ ذَلِكَ، سَفَرُوهُ إِلَى مَا وَرَاءَ الْبَحْرِ إِلَى مَجْلِسِ الْجَمْعِيَّةِ الرَّئِيسِ، فَصَبَّوْا عَلَيْهِ مَاءً مُقَدَّسًا؛ مَسَّحُوهُ بِدُهْنٍ مُقَدَّسٍ؛ أَطْعَمُوهُ بِخَبْزٍ مُقَدَّسٍ؛ فَيَدُوهُ رَأْسًا وَرِجْلًا إِلَى رَجُلٍ سَرِيرِهِ الْخَيْرَانِي؛ رَأَى رُؤْيَا نِيَابَةً عَنْهُ؛ قَدَّمُوا أَدْعِيَّةً لِخِلَاصِ رُوحِهِ. وَمَعَ كُلِّ ذَلِكَ، اسْتَمَرَ دَابُورٌ يُعْنَى وَيَرْقُصُ. وَعِنْدَمَا أَمَرَتِ الرُّوحُ الْمُقَدَّسَةُ بِبَيْعِ بَضَائِعِهِ وَأَمْتِعَتِهِ وَمُمْتَلِكَاتِهِ، ثُمَّ إِهْدَاءِ عَائِدَاتِهَا إِلَى الْكَنِيسَةِ، لِأَنَّهَا رَأَتْ فِي إِحْدَى رُؤْيَايَ أَنَّ ثَرَوَاتِهِ الْكَبِيرَةَ هِيَ سَبَبُ بَلَاءِ الرَّجُلِ، وَقَدْ وَافَقَتِ الْأُسْرَةَ

على ذلك، فحَفَرُوا فِي فِرَاشِهِ الْمُعْشَوْشَبِ عَلَى سَرِيرِهِ؛ وَحَفَرُوا فِي أَرْضِ غُرْفَتِهِ؛ ثُمَّ حَفَرُوا فِي تُرَابِ مُسْتَوْدَعِ حَصِيدِ الْبُقْلِ، وَكَمَا تَوَقَّعُوا، وَجَدُوا فِيهَا حَقِيبَةً مَلِيئَةً بِالْفُلُوسِ، فَأَرْسَلُوا بِالْحَصِيلَةِ إِلَى الْجَمْعِيَّةِ الدِّينِيَّةِ، إِلَّا أَنَّ ذَلِكَ لَمْ يَمْنَعْ دَابُو مِنَ التَّغْنِيِ وَالرَّقْصِ مِنَ الصَّبَاحِ إِلَى الْمَسَاءِ، فَفَرَّرَتِ الْأُسْرَةُ أَنَّ الْجَمْعِيَّةَ الدِّينِيَّةَ لَيْسَتْ مَكَانًا مُنَاسِبًا لَشِفَاءِ دَابُو.

والآن، هناك في كَو، بلدة مشهورة لقواها، رجلٌ دكتورٌ يُسَوِّقُ نَفْسَهُ عَلَى لَوْحَةٍ مَدْهُونَةٍ. وكان رجلاً مشهوراً لأنَّ الحُكُومَةَ قَدْ أَعْطَتْهُ شَهَادَةً عَلَيْهَا رَقْمٌ طَوِيلٌ، وَالْإِعْلَانُ عَلَى اللَّوْحَةِ يُؤَكِّدُ ذَلِكَ. والذين يَسْتَطِيعُونَ الْقِرَاءَةَ - مَعَ قَلْتِهِمْ - قَالُوا إِنَّ رَقْمَهُ طَوِيلٌ جِدًّا، وَيَبْدَأُ الرَّقْمُ بِصِفْرَاتٍ عَدِيدَةٍ؛ مِمَّا يُؤَكِّدُ أَنَّ الْحُكُومَةَ اعْتَرَفَتْ بِقُدْرَاتِهِ، وَإِلَّا مَا أَعْطَتْهُ مِثْلَ هَذَا الرَّقْمِ الْكَبِيرِ الْمُحَرِّكَ لِلْعَوَاطِفِ. وَقَدْ قِيلَ إِنَّ لَوْحَتَهُ تُعْلِنُ بِكَوْنِهِ دُكْتُورًا يَمْلِكُ مَعْشَبَةَ التَّنْدِيبِ، حَيْثُ تُشْفَى مِنَ الْأَمْرَاضِ التَّنَاسُلِيَّةِ؛ وَتُشْفَى أَيْضًا مِنَ الْجُنُونِ؛ كَمَا تُشْفَى فِيهَا مِنَ الْعَقْمِ. فَمَكَانَاتُ هَذَا الدُّكْتُورِ هِيَ عَدُوٌّ قَاتِلٌ لِلشَّعْوَذَةِ وَالْعَرَاةِ، وَلَدَغَاتِ الثُّعْبَانِ وَالْكَلبِ وَلِلْسَعَاتِ النَّحْلِ وَالْعَقْرَبِ. وَبِالِاخْتِصَارِ، كَانَ هَذَا الرَّجُلُ مَنْ يُرْجَعُ إِلَيْهِ إِذَا فَشَلَتْ كُلُّ الْمَحَاوَلَةِ فِي الْأُمُورِ الْعِظَامِ.

سَمِعَتْ أُسْرَةُ دَابُو بِالدُّكْتُورِ فِي بَلَدَةِ كَو مُتَأَخِّرًا فِي الْيَوْمِ، لَكِنْ تَسَرَّعُوا إِلَيْهِ فَوْرَ مَا سَمِعُوا بِهِ وَجَعَلُوا دَابُو تَحْتَ مُرَاقَبَتِهِ، فَبَدَأَ يَضْرِبُ دَابُو صَبَاحَ مَسَاءٍ بِحِزَامٍ جِلْدِيٍّ كَبِيرٍ يَتْرُكُ وَسْمَاتٍ خَبِيثَةً عَلَى ظَهْرِ الرَّجُلِ وَعَجِيزَتِهِ. فَمِنَ الْمَفْرُوضِ أَنْ يُضْرَبَ الشَّيْطَانُ حَتَّى يَخْرُجَ مِنْ جَسَدِ هَذَا الرَّجُلِ الْمَجْنُونِ، فَهَذَا هُوَ الطَّرِيقُ الْوَحِيدُ لِعِلَاجِ الْجُنُونِ. وَالْآنَ، بَدَلَ مِنَ التَّغْنِيِ وَالرَّقْصِ، صَرَخَ دَابُو بِعَوَاءٍ مُرْعِبَةٍ مُخِيفَةٍ كَدَابَةِ مُتَأَلِّمَةٍ. وَمَعَ رَأْسٍ مُحَلَّقٍ، وَنَدَبَاتٍ حَوْلَ مِعْصَمِيهِ وَكَاحِلِهِ وَمَرْقَاتٍ عَمِيقَةٍ عَلَى ظَهْرِهِ، كَانَ دَابُو مَنْظَرًا رَهيبًا. وَذَاتَ يَوْمٍ، انْسَلَخَ دَابُو مِنَ الْمَعْشَبَةِ الشَّهِيرَةِ وَفَرَّ مِنْهَا، وَلَمْ يَدْرِ أَيُّ وَاحِدٍ كَيْفَ اسْتَطَاعَ عَلَى ذَلِكَ حَتَّى أَخَذَ طَرِيقَهُ عَائِدًا إِلَى بَلَدَةِ دُكَانَا، وَإِلَى بَيْتِهِ الْفَارِغِ. وَالْآنَ لَمْ يَعُدْ يَرْقُصُ وَيُعْنِي، بَلْ بَدَأَ يَتَجَوَّلُ عُرْيَانًا يَتَسَوَّلُ لِلطَّعَامِ وَالْمَاءِ. وَمَرَّةً فِي كُلِّ يَوْمٍ، وَفِي النَّهَارِ بِالضَّبْطِ،

يَصْرُخُ بِالْكَلِمَاتِ "كُلُّكُمْ كَاذِبُونَ". فَكَانَ هُوَ الْمُتَسَوِّلُ الْوَحِيدُ فِي الْبَلَدَةِ، عَارًا عَلَى أُسْرَتِهِ، وَفَضِيحَةً مُتَجَوِّلاً، يَتَحَدَّثُ عَنْهُ النَّاسُ سِرًّا بَعِيدًا عَنِ الْأَعْيُنِ الْمُتَفَحِّصَةِ، وَالْأَنْوْفِ الْمُتَرَقِّبَةِ وَأَذَانِ أَهْلِ دُكَانَا الْخَفَافَةِ إِلَى أَنْ اتَّخَذُوا عَلَيْهِ قَرَارًا خَطِيرًا سِرِّيًّا مَفَادُهُ؛ "سَيَأْتِي يَوْمٌ نَقْضِي عَلَيْهِ".

وَكَمَا تَقَدَّمَتِ الْأَيَّامُ إِلَى أَشْهُرٍ، وَتَقَدَّمَتِ الْأَشْهُرُ إِلَى سَنَوَاتٍ، صَارَ دَابُو مَنْظَرًا مُتَعَوِّدًا فِي بَلَدَةِ دُكَانَا. وَمِنَ الْعَرِيبِ أَنْ يُقَالَ إِنَّهُ أَحْيَانًا، يَتَعَرَّفُ عَلَى قَرِيبٍ أَوْ صَدِيقٍ قَدِيمٍ وَيُحْيِيهِمْ كَالْعَادَةِ فِي الْأَيَّامِ الْمَاضِيَةِ. وَمِثْلَ هَذِهِ الْمُنَاسَبَاتِ، وَإِنْ كَانَتْ نَادِرَةً، دَلَّتْ عَلَى أَنَّ هُنَاكَ بَعْضَ الصَّحْوِ فِي جُنُونِهِ، صَحْوٍ يَخْتَرِقُ فِي عَقْلِهِ كَمَا تَخْتَرِقُ الشَّمْسُ عِبْرَ السُّحُبِ ذَاتِ الْمَطَرِ.

وَفِي بَلَدَةِ دُكَانَا، هُنَاكَ مِثْلُ يَقُولُ إِنَّ الرَّجُلَ التَّعِيسَ هُوَ الَّذِي يَشْعُرُ بِالذَّهَابِ إِلَى الْخَلَاءِ (لِلتَّعَوُّطِ) فِي يَوْمٍ مُمَطَّرٍ، لِأَنَّ الْعَابَةَ لَيْسَتْ مَكَانًا مُخَيَّفًا مُرْعِبًا، وَلَا مَوْضِعًا أُوْدِعَتْ فِيهِ جَمَالَاتُ الطَّبِيعَةِ فَحَسَبُ؛ بَلْ قَدْ خُصِّصَتْ أَيْضًا كَثِيفًا. فَالْيَوْمَ الْمَطَّرُ إِذَنْ يَوْمٌ مَهُولٌ لِلتَّعَوُّطِ، حَتَّى وَإِنْ أَمَكْنَ وَجُودُ أَوْرَاقِ مَوْزٍ لِلتَّسْتُرِ مِنَ الْمَطَرِ النَّازِلِ، حَتَّى وَإِنْ أَمَكْنَ الْخَوْضُ فِي الطِّينِ الْعَكِرِ وَفِي الْعَيْنِ الْجَارِيَةِ لِلْوُصُولِ فِي الْعَابَةِ، فَإِنَّ الْفُرُوعَ الْمُرْتَبَةَ وَالشُّجَيْرَاتِ الْمُبَلَّلَةَ وَالْأَوْرَاقَ الْمُرْتَبَةَ تُسَبِّبُ مَزِيدًا مِنَ الضِّيْقِ. لِذَلِكَ، فَإِنَّ الْيَوْمَ الْمَطَّرَ يَوْمٌ لِلْبَقَاءِ دَاخِلَ الْبَيْتِ وَلِلْإِمْتِنَاعِ مِنَ التَّعَوُّطِ فِي خَلَاءِ الْعَابَةِ.

وَفِي ذَاتِ يَوْمٍ مُمَطَّرٍ، عِنْدَمَا تَفْتَحَتِ أَبْوَابُ السَّمَاوَاتِ بِالْمِيَاهِ، وَالْآلِهَةُ تُنْزِلُ الْمَطَرَ مِلَى الدَّلْوِ (غَزِيرًا) فِي بَلَدَةِ دُكَانَا، لَمْ يَتِمَكَّنِ الْمُتَسَوِّلُ (أَيُّ دَابُو) مِنَ الْخُرُوجِ لِلتَّسَوُّلِ كَعَادَتِهِ، وَلَمْ يَشْعُرْ بِالتَّعَوُّطِ، وَهَلْ شَعَرَ بِذَلِكَ؟ لِأَنَّهُ وَقَعَ نَائِمًا فِي بَيْتِهِ الْفَارِغِ. وَهُنَاكَ مِثْلُ آخَرَ مَشْهُورٌ عِنْدَ أَهْلِ دُكَانَا، يُقَالُ فِيهِ أَنَّهُ "إِذَا أَنْتَ لَمْ تَعْرِفِ الْمَوْتَ، اعْتَبِرِ النَّوْمَ". وَقَدْ نَامَ الْمُتَسَوِّلُ (أَيُّ الرَّجُلِ الْمَجْنُونِ). فَظَنَّ أَقْرَبَاؤَهُ أَنَّهُ قَدْ مَاتَ، فَذَهَبَتْ امْرَأَةٌ مُعَاوِيَةً تَنْشُرُ خَبَرَ مَوْتِهِ فِي طُولِ وَعَرْضِ بَلَدَةِ دُكَانَا.

وَخَبِرَ مَوْتَ الْمَجْنُونِ لَا يُحَدِّثُ أَيُّ دَهْشَةٍ، إِذْ لَا يُبَالُ أَيُّ وَاحِدٍ مِنْ سَمَاعِهِ، حَتَّى إِنْ بَعْضَ النَّاسِ يَعُدُّ مَوْتَهُ نَوْعًا مِنَ التَّفْرِيحِ. وَمِنَ الْمَعْلُومِ أَنَّهُ إِذَا رَأَتْ امْرَأَةٌ حَبْلَى مَجْنُونًا أَوَّلَ شَيْءٍ فِي الصَّبَاحِ، أَوْ إِذَا

كَرِهَتْ رُؤْيَتَهُ وَامْتَنَعَتْ مِنَ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَيْهِ بِإِطْعَامٍ أَوْ تَصَدُّقٍ، فِيهِ احْتِمَالٌ أَنْ تَلِدَ الْمَرْأَةُ الْحَبْلَى ابْنًا يُشْبِهُ الْمَجْنُونِ الْمَتَسَوَّلَ أَوْ أَنْ يَكْبُرَ الْمَوْلُودُ أَحْمَقًا. وَبِمَا أَنَّ الْأَمْتِنَاعَ مِنَ نَوْحِ الْمَيْتِ نَوْعًا مِنَ الْإِجْرَامِ، لَا سِيَّمَا إِذَا كَانَ الْمَيْتُ مِنَ الْأَقْرَبَاءِ، لِذَلِكَ نَاحَتْ أُسْرَةُ هَذَا الْمَجْنُونِ عَلَيَّ وَفَاتِهِ حَتَّى يَسْمَعَ أَهْلُ دُكَّانَا بِمَوْتِهِ. وَأَثْنَاءَ الضَّوْضَاءِ وَالْبَهْرَجَةِ، اسْتَيْقَظَ الْمَجْنُونُ مِنَ الرَّقَادِ.

انْذَهَلَ الْمَجْنُونُ لِيَجِدَ نَفْسَهُ سَبَبَ اتِّبَاهِ النَّاسِ، لِأَنَّ أَقْرَبَاءَهُ لَمْ يَكُونُوا يَهْتَمُّونَ بِهِ فِي الْمَاضِي، فَحَيَّاهُمْ تَحِيَّةً بَارِدَةً، غَيْرَ أَنَّهُمْ لَمْ يُحْيِيُوهُ، وَكَرَّرَ التَّحِيَّةَ، وَلَمْ يَرُدَّ عَلَيْهِ أَحَدٌ، ثُمَّ كَرَّرَهَا مَرَّةً ثَانِيَةً، فَصَرَخَ وَاحِدٌ مِنَ الْأَقْرَبَاءِ بِأَعْلَى صَوْتِهِ قَائِلًا "أَنْتَ مَيْتٌ، أُسْكُتْ". فَردَّ الْمَجْنُونُ السَّائِلُ بِقَوْلِهِ، "لَمْ أَمُتْ بَعْدُ، بَلْ كُنْتُ نَائِمًا فَقَطْ". ثُمَّ قَالَ وَاحِدٌ مِنْهُمْ "كُنْتَ نَائِمًا، هَا! وَمَا الْفَارِقُ بَيْنَ النَّوْمِ وَالْمَوْتِ؟ أَنْتَ مَيْتٌ".

قال المجنون بصوتٍ ضعيفٍ، "لست ميتًا" وبدأ يبكي.

قال آخرٌ منهم، "أنت ميتٌ، يا إخوة، ساعدوني على حمله لكي ندفنه".

قال المجنون، "لكن لم أمت بعد". قالوا: "سَمِوتُ اليوم، وقد مُتَ هذا النهار". عَوَى الْمَجْنُونُ كَالْكَلْبِ قَائِلًا: يَا اللَّهُ، لَمْ أَمُتْ بَعْدَ، لَمْ أَمُتْ بَعْدُ. لَا أُرِيدُ أَنْ أَمُوتَ الْآنَ.

جَمَعَ الْإِخْوَةَ أَيْدِيَهُمْ وَرَفَعُوا دَابُوَ مِنْ مَجْلِسِهِ، وَدَثَرُوهُ بِحَصِيرٍ رَافِيٍّ ثُمَّ أَخَذُوا مِعْزَفَاتٍ وَمِنْكَاشٍ وَقَاسٍ، وَتَوَجَّهُوا نَحْوَ الْغَابَةِ. أَمْطَرَتِ السَّمَاءُ مَطْرًا غَزِيرًا، وَمِنْ حِينٍ لِآخِرٍ لَمَعَ الْبَرَقُ فِي السَّمَاءِ الْقَاتِمَةِ، وَأَقْرَبَاءُ الرَّجُلِ خَاضُوا بِعِزْمٍ خِلَالَ وَحْلِ الْمَطْرِ، يَتَمَاسِكُ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ بِشِدَّةٍ، فِي حِينٍ بَقِيَ أَهْلُ بَلَدِهِ دُكَّانًا فِي بُيُوتِهِمْ يَتَنَاسُونَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ، خَائِفِينَ مِنَ الْمَطْرِ الْمُتَخَدِّرِ.

أَخِيرًا، وَصَلَتِ الْجَمَاعَةُ فِي عُمُقِ الْغَابَةِ حَيْثُ سُكُونٌ عَمِيقٌ. وَقَدْ مَنَعَتْ أَوْراقُ الْأَشْجَارِ الْكَثِيفَةِ مِنْ وُصُولِ قَطْرَاتِ الْمَطْرِ عَلَى الْجَمَاعَةِ، وَصَارَتِ الْأَوْراقُ الْيَابِسَةُ مُبْتَلَّةً بِالْمَطْرِ، فِي صَمْتٍ عَمِيقٍ. وَكَانَ الطُّيُورَ قَدْ عَادَتْ إِلَى عُشَّهَا لِلرُّقُودِ. وَفِي سُكُونٍ غَرِيبٍ مُخِيفٍ، وَقَفَتِ الْجَمَاعَةُ الْبَائِسَةُ.



وبالسرعة حفر الأقرباء قبراً ضحلاً ضيقاً، وسمع صوت من الجماعة يقول: "يا الله، لم أمت بعد." فرد عليه صوت من الجماعة يقول: "إذا، لا بد أن تموت اليوم، أنت فضيحة وعار على الأسرة. لا بد أن تموت اليوم."

قال المجنون: "لم أمت بعد، يا الله، لم أمت بعد."

أدهش الأقرباء وضوح كلام هذا الرجل، فتساءل كل واحد منهم، أليس هو مجنون؟ وكيف استطاع أن يفرق بين الحياة والموت؟ وهل يمكن أن يفرق المجنون بين هذين؟ ثم قرر كل واحد في نفسه أن يقبر الجواب مع هذا الرجل المجنون السائل.

حفر القبر، ومن داخل الحصير القدير المعطي، سمع - بلا انقطاع - صوت الرجل المجنون، لكن الجماعة حملت "الميت" بقسوة وربطوه بحبل اقتطعوه من الغابة، ثم وضعوه في قبر سطحي. لكن استمر الصوت بضغف كما غطوا القبر بتراب مبلل وقطع حطبات كبيرة.

وبعد ما تأكدوا من سكوت صوت الرجل، وأنهم قد دفنوا مشاكلهم في أحشاء الأرض، نظروا بعضهم إلى بعض، ثم انصرفوا على أقدامهم، وبسكون، مشوا خلال الغابة الخفية عائدين إلى بلدة دكانا.

### Self Assessment Exercise

Identify the following elements in the story translated above:

- The narrative style
- The characters and
- The setting

### 4.0 Conclusion

The above passage is a translation of the story, "A Family Affair". It was observed in the original version of the story that the author, in constructing the story, combined between idiomatic and figurative expressions, hence making the story sound very fictitious and literary even in its Arabic version.

### 5.0 Summary

This unit was able to introduce to students one of Saro-Wiwa's stories, "A Family Affair"; it proceeded by recognizing the objectives of the unit; and later presented an Arabic translation of the story. Lessons derivable from the story include the following:

- Moderation is necessary in the search for wealth
- Patience is virtuous
- Good reputation is better than silver and gold
- Health is wealth
- Wealth acquired from dubious means never lasts.

#### 6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment

Translate the first paragraph of "A Family Affair" into Arabic using your own construction.

#### 7.0 References/Further Readings

Saro-Wiwa, Ken, (1986) "*A Forest of Flowers*" Saros International Publishers: Port Harcourt.

Wehr, Hans (1960) *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, Macdonald & Evans Ltd: London.

Hornby, A.S (2010) *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition, Oxford University Press: Oxford.

### Unit 3: Translation of “Robert and the Dog”

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Body: Translation of “Robert and the Dog”
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

#### 1.0 Introduction

The previous unit showed the effort to make out an Arabic translation of a story from Saro-Wiwa’s anthology of stories entitled “A Forest of Flowers”. In this unit too, we shall attempt a rendition, into English, of another story from the same collection. However, what is important for students is to study how some words and expressions are selected in the target language to replace lexis of the first language in order to convey the intended meaning of the author.

#### 2.0 Objectives

On completion of this unit, students should be able to:

- Identify the technique (s) applied in translating the story.
- Recognize how Arabic words are used in different contents to convey various meanings.
- Derive new lessons from the story.

#### 3.0 Main Body: “Robert and the Dog” (The Original Version)

Robert’s new employer was a young medical doctor just returned from abroad. He was cheerful, exuberant and polite. It was obvious to Robert that he had not been in the country for a long time. Because he did not once lose his temper, he did not shout at Robert, he called him by his first name and always asked him about his wife, children and other members of his family. Robert, accustomed to moving from household to

household, thought he had at last found fulfillment. The more so as the young doctor appeared to be a bachelor.

Stewards, including Robert, prefer to serve a bachelor. Because every bachelor is as wax in the hands of his steward. The later determines what is to be spent on grocery, how much food is to be served at meat times, what is to be done with the remnants of food. In short, he holds the bachelor's life in his hands. And that is tremendous power.

Robert quickly settled into his new situation and took full control of the house. Experience had taught him never to occupy the servants quarters which were attached to a situation rather messy. So it was that Robert's family lived in the filth and quagmire of Ajegunle which the wags termed The Jungle. In his one bedroom apartment in The Jungle, Robert was king. And he always repaired there nightly to exercise his authority over his wife and six children. The experience he had gained in running his household helped him a great deal in organising the life of every new employer. Robert was particularly happy in his new situation because the young man was carefree and happy. There was, as has been said, no wife breathing down. Robert's neck and limiting his abundant authority. There were no children whose nappies and numerous clothes had to be washed. He did not have to cook several meals a day. The young man ate but once a day, except for the cup of coffee and toast early in the morning.

Trouble began when the young man announced after six months that his wife was about to join him. Robert's face fell visibly at the announcement. But he did not worry very much at the expected curtailment of his wide powers. Who knew, the lady might not be an ogre after all.

Which is precisely what happened in the event. The lady was as young and cheerful as her husband. She too, took an interest in Robert. She was European and excited about the first visit to Africa. She appeared pleased to have Robert's assistance. She spent the day asking Robert about African food, watching Robert at work in the kitchen and lending a helping hand where possible. She made sure Robert stopped work early so that he could get home to his family and did not make a fuss if Robert turned up late some odd mornings. And she got Robert paid every fortnight. She even offered to go and visit his wife and family in The Jungle. Robert carefully and politely turned down her offer. He could not imagine her picking her neat way through the filth and squalor of The Jungle to the hovel which was his home. Maybe, he thought, if she once knew where he lived and sampled the mess that was his home, her regard for him would diminish and he might lose his job. Yet the young lady extended every consideration to him. Robert began to feel like a human being, and he felt extremely grateful to his new employers.

The only source of worry in the new situation was the dog. For the young lady had arrived with a dog, called Bingo. And Robert watched with absolute amazement and great incredulity as the lady spoke tenderly to the dog. As she ensured that he was well fed with tinned food and milk and meat and bones. And she held the dog lovingly in her arms, brushed his hair and tended him carefully. The dog appeared as important to the lady as her husband and, indeed, Robert thought, in the order of things, the dog was more important than himself. Try as hard as he could, he could not dismiss from his mind the fact that the dog was doing better than himself. And he detested this state of affairs. He could understand a stray, mangy dog with flies around its ears being beaten and chased away from the dwellings of men. He could understand a dog wandering around rubbish heaps in search of sustenance. But a dog who slept on the settee, a dog who was fed tinned food on a plate, a dog who was brushed and cleaned, a dog who drank good tinned milk, was entirely beyond his comprehension. On one occasion, the lady took the dog to a doctor. And that was the straw that broke the camel's back.

All that day, Robert felt his stomach turn. And when he got home in the evening and saw his children with distended stomachs gamboling in the filth which simmered in a swollen stream at his door, and watched them hungrily swallow small balls of 'eba', he asked himself, 'Who born dog?' And all of a sudden he developed a pathological hatred for Bingo the dog, his master's dog. All night long, he saw in the eye of his mind, the dog cuddled in the warmth of the settee which he would have to clean and brush in the morning. And he asked himself again and again 'Who born dog?'

The object of Robert's hatred was totally oblivious of the feelings which he bred in the cook-steward. He reveled in the love of his master and mistress. He ate his food with relish and wagged his tail in contented gratitude. He loved and served the lady, doing as he was bid. And he wagged his tail contentedly at Robert. He slept in the day and kept watch over his owners at night. But each wag of his tail was like so many pin-pricks in the heart of Robert who secretly vowed to 'show' the dog some day.

That day duly arrived and much sooner than Robert and expected. The young doctor announced to him that they would be going away on holiday for six weeks. He wanted Robert to take care of the house. As they would not be traveling with the dog, he would be most delighted if Robert would be kind enough to take care of Bingo. They were going to leave enough tinned food and milk for Bingo and some money so Robert could purchase bones to supplement his food. He hoped Robert did not mind.

Not in the least, Robert replied. But in his innermost heart, he knew he had found the opportunity he wanted. After the departure of the couple, Robert, true to his training, obeyed his master's orders to the letter. On the first and second days. On the third day, watching the dog lap his milk from a plate, a voice spoke to Robert. 'Who born dog?'

And to this ponderous question, Robert could find no other answer than 'Dog'. And the anger in him welled. He looked at the dog, and the dog looked at him, wagging his tail. Well may you wag your tail, Robert thought, but I can tell you, I'm not going to waste my life taking care of you.

He gathered up all the tins of dog food, all the tins of milk, tethered the dog to the settee and walked off, out of the house and the job he had loved to do. He gave the milk and dog food to his children when he got home.

And the dog died.

#### Arabic Translation of "Robert and the Dog"

### رَوْبَارْتُ وَالْكَلْبُ

كَانَ مُوظَّفُ رَوْبَارْتِ الْجَدِيدُ شَابًّا طَبِيبًا عَادَ جَدِيدًا مِنْ بِلَادِ الْعُرْبَةِ. وَكَانَ بَشُوشًا نَزَقًا أَدِيمًا لَطِيفًا. وَوَاضِحٌ لِرَوْبَارْتِ أَنَّ مُوظَّفَهُ هَذَا قَدْ غَابَ عَنِ الْبِلَادِ لِمُدَّةٍ طَوِيلَةٍ، لِأَنَّهُ لَمْ يَنْفَعِلْ قَطُّ ضِدَّ رَوْبَارْتِ سُوءَ أَنْفِعَالٍ حَيْثُ لَمْ يَكُنْ يَصِيحُ عَلَى رَوْبَارْتِ، وَكَانَ يُنَادِيهِ بِاسْمِهِ الْأَوَّلِ، وَيَسْأَلُهُ عَنْ أَحْوَالِ أُسْرَتِهِ مِنْ الزَّوْجِ وَالْأَوْلَادِ وَبَقِيَّةِ أَعْضَاءِ أُسْرَتِهِ. وَرَوْبَارْتِ الَّذِي قَدْ تَعَوَّدَ عَلَى الْإِنْتِقَالِ مِنْ مَنْزِلٍ إِلَى آخَرَ لِلْعَمَلِ، ظَنَّ أَنَّهُ قَدْ حَقَّقَ الْهَدَفَ الْمَطْلُوبَ أَحْيَرًا، لِأَسِيْمَا عِنْدَمَا بَدَأَ لَهُ أَنَّ الشَّابَّ الطَّبِيبَ أَعْزَبٌ. وَالْخَدْمُ بِمَا فِيهِمْ رَوْبَارْتِ يُفَضِّلُونَ خِدْمَةَ الْأَعْزَبِ لِأَنَّ كُلَّ أَعْزَبٍ كَالشَّمْعِ فِي أَيْدِي خَادِمِهِ، (ذَلِكَ فِي الْمُرُونَةِ وَالسُّهُولَةِ الَّتِي يَتَمَتَّعُونَ بِهَا عِنْدَ الْأَعْزَبِ): فَالْخَادِمُ هُوَ الَّذِي يُحَدِّدُ كَمْ يُنْفَقَ عَلَى الْبِقَالَةِ، وَمِقْدَارَ الطَّعَامِ الَّذِي يُقَدِّمُ عِنْدَ كُلِّ وَجَبَةٍ، وَمَاذَا يُفَعَّلُ بِفَضْلَاتِ الطَّعَامِ. وَبِاخْتِصَارٍ، إِنَّ بِيَدِهِ تَدْبِيرَ حَيَاةٍ وَمَعِيشَةٍ الْأَعْزَبِ، وَذَلِكَ سُلْطَةٌ كَبِيرَةٌ.

اسْتَقَرَّ رَوْبَارْتِ بِسُرْعَةٍ فِي وَضْعِهِ الْجَدِيدِ وَتَمَلَّكَ عَلَى تَدْبِيرِ الْمَنْزِلِ كَلِيًّا. وَقَدْ عَلَّمَتْهُ التَّجْرِبَةُ إِلَّا يَسْكُنُ فِي مَحَلَّاتِ الْخَدْمِ الَّتِي ضُمَّتْ إِلَى الْمَنْزِلِ الرَّئِيسِ، وَهَذَا جَعَلَ رَفْضَ الْوَضْعِ أَمْرًا فَوْضَوِيًّا، فَكَانَ لِأُسْرَةِ رَوْبَارْتِ أَنْ تَسْكُنَ فِي وَسَاخَةٍ وَمُسْتَنْقَعٍ أَجْيَعُنَلِي الَّتِي يُسَمِّيهَا الْمَهْدَارُ بِالذَّغَلِ. وَفِي شَقَّتِهِ ذَاتِ غُرْفَةٍ وَاحِدَةٍ فِي الذَّغَلِ، كَانَ رَوْبَارْتِ مَلِكًا، وَكَانَ يَرْتَاخُ هُنَاكَ دَائِمًا كُلَّ لَيْلَةٍ لِيُجَرِّبَ سُلْطَتَهُ عَلَى زَوْجَتِهِ وَأَوْلَادِهِ السُّتَّةِ. وَالتَّجْرِبَةُ الَّتِي كَسَبَهَا فِي تَدْبِيرِ مَنْزِلِهِ قَدْ سَاعَدَتْهُ كَثِيرًا فِي تَرْتِيبِ أُمُورِ حَيَاةِ كُلِّ سَيِّدٍ مُوظَّفٍ جَدِيدٍ. وَكَانَ رَوْبَارْتِ مَسْرُورًا خَاصَّةً فِي وَضْعِهِ الْجَدِيدِ لِكُونَ الْفَتَى خَلِيَّ الْبَالِ

وَمَسْرُورًا. وكما قلنا سابقاً لَيْسَ عِنْدَ الْفَتَى زَوْجَةٌ تُجْرَحُ مَشَاعِرَ رَوْبَارْتِ وَتُحَدِّدُ سُلْطَنَةَ الْكَبِيرَةِ. وليس عنده (الفتى الطيب) أولادٌ تُنْظَفُ مِنْشَفَائِهِمْ وَثِيَابُهُمْ الْكَثِيرَةَ. وليس له أن يَطْبَخَ أَطْعَمَةً كَثِيرَةً يَوْمِيًّا، فَالشَّابُّ يَأْكُلُ مَرَّةً فَقَطْ فِي الْيَوْمِ، بِاسْتِثْنَاءِ كُوبِ الْقَهْوَةِ وَالنَّخْبِ الَّذِي كَانَ يَتَنَاوَلُهُ بَاكِرًا فِي الصَّبَاحِ.

بَدَأَتْ مُشْكِلةً عِنْدَمَا أَعْلَنَ الشَّابُّ بَعْدَ سِتَّةِ أَشْهُرٍ أَنَّ زَوْجَتَهُ سَتَنْضَمُّ إِلَيْهِ، عَبَسَ رَوْبَارْتِ عَلَى هَذَا الْإِعْلَانِ، لَكِنْ لَمْ يَقْلُقْ كَثِيرًا عَلَى تَوَقُّعِ أَنَّ سُلْطَنَةَ الْكَبِيرَةَ سَتَكُونُ مَحْدُودَةً، وَلَمْ يُعْرِفْ أَنَّ قَدْ لَا تَكُونُ الْمَرْأَةُ مَخْلُوقَةً خُرَافِيَّةً (غُولًا) بَعْدَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ.

وَهَذَا مَا حَدَثَ بِالضَّبْطِ فِي الْحَادِثَةِ - كَانَتْ الْمَرْأَةُ فَتَاةً بِشَوْشَةٍ كَزَوْجِهَا، وَأَحَبَّتْ رَوْبَارْتِ أَيْضًا حُبَّ زَوْجِهَا لَهُ. وَكَانَتْ أُرُوْبِيَّةً مُتَحَمِّسَةً عَلَى زِيَارَتِهَا الْأُولَى إِلَى أَفْرِيقِيَا، وَيَبْدُو أَنَّهَا سَعِيدَةٌ بِبَيْلِ مُسَاعَدَةِ رَوْبَارْتِ حَيْثُ قَضَتْ الْيَوْمَ وَهِيَ تَسْأَلُ رَوْبَارْتِ عَنِ أَكْلَةِ أَفْرِيقِيَّةِ، وَتُرَاقِبُ رَوْبَارْتِ وَهُوَ يَنْشَغَلُ فِي الْمَطْبَخِ وَتُسَاعِدُهُ حَيْثُ أَمْكَنَ. وَتَأَكَّدَتْ مِنْ أَنَّ رَوْبَارْتِ تَوَقَّفَ عَنِ الْعَمَلِ مُبَكَّرًا حَتَّى يَرْجِعَ إِلَى أُسْرَتِهِ، وَلَمْ تَكُنْ تُبْهَرِجُ إِذَا تَأَخَّرَ رَوْبَارْتِ فِي الْحُضُورِ بَعْضَ الصَّبَاحَاتِ الضَّيِّقَةِ. كَمَا تَأَكَّدَتْ أَيْضًا مِنْ دَفْعِ رَوَاتِبِ رَوْبَارْتِ بَعْدَ كُلِّ أُسْبُوعَيْنِ. وَقَدْ طَلَبَتْ مِنْهُ أَنْ تَزُورَ زَوْجَتَهُ وَأُسْرَتَهُ فِي الدَّغْلِ، لَكِنْ رَفَضَ رَوْبَارْتِ هَذَا الطَّلَبَ بِحَذَرٍ وَأَدَبٍ، حَيْثُ صَعِبَ عَلَيْهِ أَنْ يَتَخَيَّلَ أَنَّ هَذِهِ الْمَرْأَةَ النَّظِيفَةَ سَتَمَشِي وَتَمُرُّ بِالْمَكَانِ الْقَدِيرِ مِنَ الدَّغْلِ إِلَى الْكُوخِ الَّذِي يَسْكُنُهُ، ظَنًّا مِنْهُ أَنَّهَا إِذَا اكْتَشَفَتْ بَيْتَهُ وَرَأَتْ الْفَوْضَى/الْمَيْسَ الَّذِي يَسْكُنُ فِيهِ، سَيُنْقِصُ هَذَا مِنْ احْتِرَامِهَا لَهُ، وَقَدْ يَضِيعُ عَنْهُ عَمَلُهُ بِهَذَا السَّبَبِ. وَمَعَ ذَلِكَ، قَدِّمَتْ لَهُ هَذِهِ الْمَرْأَةُ كُلَّ احْتِرَامٍ وَتَقْدِيرٍ، فَبَدَأَ يَشْعُرُ رَوْبَارْتِشَ بِإِنْسَانِيَّةٍ، وَشَكَرَ مُوظَّفِيهِ الْجُدُّ شُكْرًا جَزِيلًا.

فَكَانَ سَبَبُ الْقَلْقِ الْوَحِيدِ (لرَوْبَارْتِ) فِي هَذَا الْوَضْعِ الْجَدِيدِ هُوَ الْكَلْبُ، لِأَنَّ الْفَتَاةَ قَدِّمَتْ وَمَعَهَا كَلْبٌ يُسَمَّى "بَنْعُو"، فَبِدَهْشَةٍ كَبِيرَةٍ وَارْتِيَابٍ تَامٍّ رَاقِبَ رَوْبَارْتِ الْفَتَاةَ وَهِيَ تُحَدِّثُ الْكَلْبَ بِحَنَانٍ، حَيْثُ أَنَّهَا تَأَكَّدَتْ مِنْ أَنَّ الْكَلْبَ أَطْعَمَ جَيِّدًا بِطَعَامٍ مُعَلَّبٍ وَحَلِيبٍ وَلَحْمٍ وَعِظَامٍ. وَهِيَ تُعَانِقُ الْكَلْبَ فِي أَعْضُدِهَا بِرَفَقَةٍ وَحَنَانٍ، وَتَفْرُكُ شَعْرَهُ وَتَرَعَاهُ بِحَذَرٍ. وَيَبْدُو أَنَّ الْكَلْبَ يَهْمُ الْفَتَاةَ كَمَا يَهْمُهَا زَوْجُهَا. حَقِيقَةً، وَقَدْ ظَنَّ رَوْبَارْتِ - كَمَا يَبْدُو فِي الْوَضْعِ - أَنَّ الْكَلْبَ كَانَ أَعَزَّ عَلَى الْفَتَاةِ مِنْهُ،

حاولَ بدونِ نجاحٍ أن يتغافلَ عن حقيقةِ أن الكلبَ يتمتّعُ بعنايةٍ أكبرَ من التي يتمتّعُ به هو كإنسانٍ. وقد كرّهَ هذا الوضعَ من الأمورِ. سهّلَ عليه أن يفهمَ إمكانَ رؤيةِ كلبٍ يُنادى لأكلِ غائطِ الطفلِ، أو رؤيةِ كلبٍ شارِدٍ ذي مرضِ الجربِ معَ ذباباتٍ حولَ أذنيه يُضربُ ويُطرَدُ عن مساكنِشِ الناسِ، أو رؤيةِ كلبٍ متحوّلٍ حولَ كتلاتِ التفايا في البَحْثِ عن المعيشةِ. لكن صعبَ عليه رؤيةُ كلبٍ ينامُ على المتكأ، كلبٍ يطعمُ أكلةً مُعلّبةً على صحنٍ، كلبٍ يُفركُ شعره ويُنظّفُ، كلبٍ يشربُ حليباً مُعلّباً جيّداً... صعبَ عليه أن يتخيّلَ رؤيةَ مثلِ هذا الكلبِ. وفي مناسبةٍ، أخذتِ الفتاةُ الكلبَ معها إلى طبيبٍ، وبهذا، بلغَ الأمرُ مُنتهاهَ لدى روبرتِ.

طوّلَ ذلكَ اليومِ، شعرَ روبرتِ بوجعِ البطنِ من شدّةِ الجوعِ والغضبِ ممّا شاهدَ. وعندما وصلَ في البيتِ في المساءِ، ووَجَدَ أبنائه بالبطنِ الخاليةِ من الجوعِ وهم يقفزونَ في الوسخِ الذي تَضَخَّمَ في نهرٍ عندَ بابِ مسكنه، وشاهدَهُم يبتلعونَ لفيقةً صغيرةً كُرةً "أيبا"، من شدّةِ الجوعِ، تساءلَ، "مَنْ وَلَدَ الكلبِ؟" وفجأةً، شعرَ بكرهه باثولوجيةٍ لـ "بنغو" الكلبِ، كلبِ مولاة. وطوّلَ الليلِ، رأى في عينِ قلبه، كيفَ أن الكلبَ يُعانقُ في حرارةِ المتكأ الذي من واجبه تَنظيفُه وفركُه كلَّ صباحٍ. ثمّ تساءلَ مراراً: "مَنْ وَلَدَ الكلبِ؟"

وموضوعُ كرهه روبرتِ قد نسيَ تماماً المشاعرَ التي يُثيرها في الخادمِ الطابخِ، وهو يمرحُ في حُبِّ مولاة وسيدته، حيثُ أكلَ طعامه بنكهةٍ وتلذذَ وهزَّ ذيله في شكرٍ مُقنعٍ، وأحبَّ الفتاةَ وخدمها كما **يُتوقَّعُ منه**، وهزَّ ذيله إلى روبرتِ شاكراً مُقنعاً، فهو ينامُ بالنهارِ ويحرسُ على مالكيه بالليلِ. لكنَّ كلَّ هزةٍ لذيله كانتُ كآلامٍ في قلبِ روبرتِ الذي نذرَ سرياً بتأديبه يوماً ما.

وأخيراً، جاء ذلكَ اليومُ لكن عاجلاً أكثرَ ممّا توقَّعَ روبرتِ. أعلنَ الشابُّ الطبيبُ عليه أنه وزوجه سيسافران لعطلةٍ لمدّةِ سِتّةِ أسابيعٍ، فهو يريدُ من روبرتِ أن يتعهدَ بالبيتِ، لاسيّما أنّهم لا يأخذونَ معهم الكلبَ، فيسرّه أن يعتنيَ روبرتِ بـ "بنغو" بلطفٍ. فسيتروكونَ طعاماً مُعلّباً وحليباً كافياً لـ "بنغو" وفلثوساً يستعينُ به روبرتِ على شراءِ عظامٍ إضافةً إلى طعامه. فهو يرجو من روبرتِ أن ينتبهَ ويتولّى ذلكَ الأمرَ.



كان جوابُ رَوبارتِ على هذا الطَّلَبِ في الإِيجابِ، لكن في أَعْمَاقِ قَلْبِهِ، يَعْرِفُ أَنَّهُ قد وَجَدَ الفُرْصَةَ الطَّيِّبَةَ الَّتِي طالما يَنْتَظِرُ.

وَبَعْدَ مُعَادَرَةِ الزَّوْجَيْنِ، رَوبارتِ - تَصْدِيقاً لِتَرْبِيَّتِهِ - امْتَثَلَ أوامِرَ مَوْلَاهُ تَمَاماً في اليَوْمِ الأوَّلِ والثَّانِي. وفي اليَوْمِ الثَّالِثِ، كما يُراقِبُ الكَلْبَ يَلْعَقُ حَلِيبَهُ مِنْ صَحْنٍ، حَدَّثَتْ رَوبارتِ صَوْتاً، قائلاً: "مَنْ وَلَدَ الكَلْبِ؟" وَعَلَى هذا السُّؤالِ الخَطِرِ، لَمْ يَجِدْ رَوبارتِ جَواباً سِوَى "كَلْب"، فَنَبَعَ العُضْبُ في قَلْبِهِ، وَنَظَرَ إلى الكَلْبِ، وَنَظَرَ الكَلْبُ إليه وَهُوَ يَهْزُ ذَيْلَهُ. فَقَالَ رَوبارتِ: لِتَهْزُ ذَيْلَكَ، لكن سَأَقُولُ لَكَ اليَوْمَ أَنَّنِي لَنْ أُضَيِّعَ حَيَاتِي أَعْتَنِي بِكَ وَأَرْعَاكَ.

وَهَكَذَا جَمَعَ رَوبارتِ كُلَّ عُلبَاتِ طَعَامِ الكَلْبِ، وَكُلَّ صَفَائِحِ الحَلِيبِ، ثُمَّ قَادَ الكَلْبَ إلى المَتَكِّ، وَأَنْصَرَفَ خَارِجاً مِنَ البَيْتِ وَتَارِكاً العَمَلَ الَّذِي يُحِبُّهُ. وَعِنْدَ وُصُولِهِ البَيْتِ، نَاولَ الحَلِيبَ وَأَطْعَمَهُ الكَلْبَ إِيَّا أبنائِهِ. وَمَاتَ الكَلْبُ.

#### Self Assessment Exercise

Write out some of the new Arabic vocabularies you have learnt in the translation above.

#### 4.0 Conclusion

The above Arabic passage is a translation of another story from the collection of Saro-Wiwa, "A Forest of Flowers". Though this story is shorter than the one translated in the previous unit, but the author was still able to maintain the style of writing, which includes using classical language and blending witticism with seriousness, yet picturing the happenings of his local community in an attempt to criticize them.

#### 5.0 Summary

This unit has introduced the students to another story entitled "Robert and the Dog" from the collection of the same author, Saro-Wiwa. The story was also translated into Arabic and it treats the lavishness and extravagance of the socially and economically highly placed people who use their position to oppress the down-trodden or the poverty-stricken members of the society.

#### 6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment

Bring out some of the derivable lessons from the story translated in this unit.

### 7.0 References and Further Readings

Saro-Wiwa, Ken, (1986) “*A Forest of Flowers*” Saros International Publishers: Port Harcourt.

Wehr, Hans (1960) *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, Macdonald & Evans Ltd: London.

Hornby, A.S (2010) *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English*, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition, Oxford University Press: Oxford.

### Unit 4: Translation of “Love Song of a Housewife”

#### 1.0 Introduction

#### 2.0 Objectives

#### 3.0 Main Body: Translation of “Love Song of a Housewife”

#### 4.0 Conclusion

#### 5.0 Summary

#### 6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment

#### 7.0 References/Further Reading

#### 1.0 Introduction

The previous unit saw an Arabic translation of another story from Saro-Wiwa’s collection. This unit will feature another one from the same collection. The story is tagged “Love Song of a Housewife”. It is a three page story and the sixteenth in the collection. It falls among the stories that make up the second part of the collection. It is important for students to critically study the author’s style of constructing stories and how he manages the components. This will really help students acquire story writing skills.

#### 2.0 Objectives

It is expected that at the end of this unit, students should be able to:

- Decode some English texts into Arabic language
- Differentiate between humorous and serious narrative
- Analyze narratives of varying lengths

#### 3.0 Main Body: English text of “**Love Song of a Housewife**”

I have waited here all evening for him to return so we can dine together. But there is no sign of him. I’d have phoned the office, but should I do so and he’s there, he’ll fly into a rage. And should he not be there, my fears will have been confirmed. Or will they?

The late nights he keeps these days cannot be because of his work. I'm sure he is busy in another woman's arms. I have seen lipstick on his shirt several times. I definitely found face-powder all over his shirt-front. I knew he was up to something. But I couldn't confront him. And I kept on hoping I was wrong. But I'm sure I'm not wrong. Or am I?

He was always a deeply caring man. I was proud of him and have lived for him, determined to live up to his high standards. Ten years together and not one day have I looked at another man with desire. I thought he'd be equally faithful to me. Or has he been?

I cannot be said to have grown any worse. Time has not taken much from me. Indeed I should think I was even more desirable now, in my maturity. A little more flesh here and there, some fat on the upper arms, but surely that was to be expected? After three children. Two boys, one girl. And he always told me he didn't want any more children. I could have more children if he wanted them. And I'm sure we'd be able to care for them. I'd make any sacrifice that was needed. I'm willing to do so. God, I'm willing. Whatever he says. Whatever he wants. If that will only stop him from dancing. Or have I been too accommodating? Too nice to him? Would it have driven the lesson home to him if I'd nagged him some, challenged him some, called him to his senses? Would that have helped? What does he want? What do men want? You are a pretty, elegant, faithful, hard-working mother and wife; you have read all the books about how to keep a family happy and your husband contented; you know what he wants and you give it all to him; he does not ever show any signs of dissatisfaction with you, and yet? What does he want? Fun? You're willing to go to parties and nightclubs with him and you can dance as well as any other woman young or old. What does he want?

I think I hear the sound of a car outside. Yes, No, it's not him. And his food's grown cold. How I wish I could have my dinner all alone. But habit has made me want to have him opposite me at table. I've grown accustomed to him guzzling his drink; I love to hear him commend my cooking. My cooking ... Is that what he hates? Does it bore him to have good food all the time? But he's never complained? If he as much as raised a whimper of a protest, I'd go and purchase all the cookery books in the world and give him exactly what he wanted ... Did I hear the telephone ring? No. my senses begin to deceive me. Why won't he call, just to let me know exactly where he is? Frankly, I wouldn't mind if he were at a cocktail party, or at the club or even in another woman's house... Another woman's house? Really, it's the suspense that bites. Kills. Suppose he's had an accident on his way home? What then? Maybe I should call the hospital or the police? I should make a fool of myself in public, you say. Probably. But at least it would ease the burden on my mind. Or would it?

You know what I dread most? That one day, I'll hear he's had a baby by some wretched young girl in some crummy part of town. On, I should commit suicide. No, wait ... That will please some people, honour them. And who'll take care of my children? No, not suicide. Rather, I should get into my very best clothes, call up his dearest friend or his assistant in the office and offer to make love to them. Make love to them. That should serve him right. Cut his ego to size. The son-of-a-bitch. Let him but bring a bastard to this house. I'll set the children on him! Could I?

But suppose he were actually to inform me some day that he's acquired a new wife? After all, his friends are doing it, so why shouldn't he? Ugh, that would really mortify me. To share his love on a regulated basis ... It's better to have him doing it quietly on the side rather than it institutionalized, programmed, time-tabled. Monday, Wednesday, Friday, my turn. Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday, hers. And Sunday s? God defend us against these terrible monsters! Come to think of it, the Europeans do it better. When you are fed up with each other, you cut the links, share the responsibilities and go and start all over again with someone else. But the male beasts here just want it all their way. The pigs! Harems, harems. Lord, why did you make women in so cruel a world? Why will two, three or four of them want to share one man? Can you see a man agreeing to share a woman with another man? Yet most women do not think twice before doing it. I thank God I'm not like other women. If he dares, I'll show him a thing or two. Surely.

But wait. What's that I hear in his room? Sounds like snoring. Oh, he might have come in while I was having a shower and making myself desirable to him ... Goodness, and his dinner is all cold! He must have been mad at not seeing his dinner on the table when he arrived home. How often he's told me about that! ... Oh Lord, it's him indeed, snoring away his hunger and anger! Oh dear, oh dear ... And to think I've been worrying myself stiff...

'Honey! Darling! Wake up! It's dinner time. Honey! Please'

Arabic translation of "Love Song of a Housewife"

### أغنية الحب من ربة بيت

لقد قفتُ هنا طولَ المساءِ أتتظرُ عودتهُ لكيَ نتعشىَ معاً، لكن ليس هناك دليلٌ على قدومه، ولكنتُ  
اتصلتُ بمكتبه هاتيفياً، لكن إذا فعلتُ وهو حاضرٌ فيه سيغضبُ عني، وإن اتصلتُ وهو غائبٌ عن  
المكتبِ، سيكون قلقي مُتبتاً، أليس كذلك؟ إن عادةً تأخره إلى البيتِ ليلاً هذه الأيامَ ليست بسببِ  
شغله. إنني متأكدةٌ أنه مشغولٌ في أعضدِ امرأةٍ أخرى، ولقد رأيتُ أحمرَ الشفاهِ على قميصه مراراً

وَتَكَرَّارًا، كَمَا وَجَدْتُ ذُرُورَ الْوَجْهِ عَلَى قَمِيصِهِ، إِنِّي أَعْرِفُ أَنَّهُ يُحَطِّطُ لِشَيْءٍ غَرِيبٍ، لَكِنْ لَا أَتَجَرَّأُ عَلَى مُوَاجَهَتِهِ، فَاسْتَمَرَّرْتُ أَعْتَقْدُ أَنَّيَ أَنَا الْمُقَصِّرُ، غَيْرَ أَنَّيَ مُتَيَقِّنٌ أَنْ لَسْتُ مُقَصِّرًا، وَهَلْ أَنَا مُقَصِّرٌ؟

كَانَ فِي الْمَاضِي رَجُلًا مُهْتَمًّا بِأَسْرَتِهِ، وَكُنْتُ أَفْخَرُ بِهِ فَعِشْتُ لَهُ وَحَيَّيْتُ، وَحَزَمْتُ عَلَى أَنْ أَعِيشَ وَأَحْيَا حَيَاتِي وَفَقَّ الْمُسْتَوِيَّاتِ الْعَالِيَةِ الَّتِي يَتَطَاوَلُ إِلَيْهَا. لَقَدْ قَضَيْتُنَا عَشْرَ سَنَوَاتٍ مَعًا، وَكَلِمَةُ أَشْتَهَ قَطُّ رَجُلًا آخَرَ، وَلَمْ أَرْغَبْ فِيهِ، وَظَنَنْتُ أَنَّهُ يُخْلِصُ لِي الْوَدَّ مُكَافَأَةً. وَهَلْ كَانَ لِي مُخْلِصًا؟

لَا يُمَكِّنُ أَنْ يُقَالَ أَنَّيَ قَدْ تَقَدَّمْتُ فِي السِّنِّ إِلَى حَدٍّ لَا أَفْتِنُ رَجُلًا، لَمْ يَسْتَوْلِ عَلَيَّ الزَّمَنُ بَعْدُ. حَقِيقَةً، أَرَى نَفْسِي هَذِهِ الْأَيَّامَ مِمَّنْ نُشْتَهَى أَكْثَرَ، لِنُضْجِي وَإِكْتِمَالِي، حَيْثُ قَدْ زَادَتْ جِسْمًا وَجَمَالًا، وَزَادَتْ شَحْمَةً عَلَى أَعْلَى الْأَذْرَعِ، طَبْعًا هَذَا مِمَّا يُتَوَقَّعُ؟ بَعْدَ إِنجَابِ ثَلَاثَةِ أَوْلَادٍ، وَكَلْدَيْنِ وَبِنْتٍ. وَكَانَ يَقُولُ لِي دَائِمًا أَنَّهُ مَا يُرِيدُ مَزِيدًا مِنَ الْأَوْلَادِ. يُمَكِّنُ لِي أَنْ أُنجِبَ أَكْثَرَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ إِذَا طَلَبَ، إِذْ أَعْرِفُ يَقِينًا أَنَّنَا نَسْتَطِيعُ رِعَايَتَهُمْ، سَأُضْحِي كُلَّ مَا يَطْلُبُ الْأُمُّ، أَنَا مُسْتَعِدَّةٌ لِذَلِكَ، يَا اللَّهُ إِنِّي أُرِيدُ. كُلَّمَا طَلَبَ مِنِّي سَأُوتِيهِ، إِنْ يَمَعُهُ ذَلِكَ مِنَ التَّفْسُقِ وَالتَّرَنُّدِ وَالزَّيْنِ. وَهَلْ كُنْتُ لَهُ لَطِيفَةً، ظَرِيفَةً، مُحْسِنَةً أَكْثَرَ مِنَ اللَّازِمِ؟ وَهَلْ يَفْهَمُنِي لَوْ تَذَمَّرْتُ عَلَيْهِ مَرَّةً، أَوْ تَحَدَيْتُهُ وَدَعَوْتُهُ إِلَى التَّعَقُّلِ؟ هَلْ يَنْفَعُ ذَلِكَ فِي شَيْءٍ؟ مَاذَا يُرِيدُ؟ مَاذَا يُرِيدُ الرَّجَالُ؟ أَنْتِ أُمٌّ، رَبَّةُ بَيْتٍ، زَوْجَةُ مُجْتَهِدَةٍ، مُخْلِصَةٌ، أَيْقَنَةُ، جَمِيلَةٌ؛ لَقَدْ قَرَأْتُ كُلَّ الْكُتُبِ عَنْ كَيْفَ تَجْعَلُ الْأُسْرَةَ سَعِيدَةً وَكَيْفَ تَجْعَلُ بَعْلَكَ رَاضِيًا عَنْكَ؛ تَعْرِفِينَ مَاذَا يُرِيدُ وَتُؤْتِينَهُ إِيَّاهُ كَامِلًا؛ فَهَوَ مَا يُظْهِرُ لَكَ عِلَامَاتِ السُّخْطِ عَنْكَ، وَمَعَ ذَلِكَ؟ مَاذَا يُرِيدُ هُوَ؟ تَسْلِيَّةٌ، مَرَحٌ؟ أَنْتِ مُسْتَعِدَّةٌ لِحُضُورِ حَفَلَاتِ وَمَلَاهِي لَيْلِيَّةٍ مَعَهُ، وَتَسْتَطِيعِينَ الرِّقْصَ كَأَيِّ

إِمْرَأَةٍ أُخْرَى رَاقِصَةٍ، فَتَاءَ كَانَتْ أُمٌّ عَجُوزَةً، مَاذَا يُرِيدُ؟

كَأَنَّيَ أَسْمَعُ صَوْتَ سَيَّارَةٍ فِي الْخَارِجِ. نَعَمْ. لَا، لَيْسَ هُوَ. وَقَدْ بَرَدَ طَعَامُهُ. أَتَمَنِّي لَوْ أَسْتَطِيعُ أَنْ أُنْعَشِيَ لِوَحْدِي، لَكِنْ لَقَدْ تَعَوَّدْتُ أَنْ أَرَاهُ قُبَالَتِي عِنْدَ الْعِشَاءِ، وَقَدْ تَعَوَّدْتُ النَّظَرَ إِلَيْهِ وَهُوَ يَلْتَهُمْ طَعَامُهُ وَشَرَابُهُ؛ وَأُحِبُّ أَنْ أَسْتَمِعَ إِلَيْهِ وَهُوَ يَمْدَحُ طَبْخِي. طَبْخِي... هَلْ ذَلِكَ مَا يَكْرَهُ؟ هَلْ هُوَ يَمْلُ

أَنْ يَتَنَاوَلَ أَكْلَةً شَهِيَّةً كُلَّ مَرَّةٍ؟ لَكِنْ لَمْ يَتَشَكَّ ذَلِكَ قَطُّ. وَلَوْ قَامَ بِاعْتِرَاضٍ ضِدَّ أُسْلُوبِ طَبْخِي، لَدَهَبْتُ وَاشْتَرَيْتُ كُلَّ الْكُتُبِ عَنِ فَنَّ الطَّبْخِ فِي الْعَالَمِ وَلَطَبَخْتُ لَهُ مَا يَشْتَهِي مِنَ الْوَجَبَاتِ... هَلْ سَمِعْتُ رَيْنَ الْهَاتِفِ؟ لَا. بَدَأْتُ حَاسِي تَخْدَعُنِي. وَمَاذَا لَا يَتَّصِلُ بِي هَاتِفِيًّا حَتَّى أَعْرِفَ بِالضَّبْطِ أَيْنَ هُوَ؟ صِرَاحَةً، إِنِّي لَنْ أَفْلِقَ إِذَا هُوَ فِي حَفْلَةٍ كَوَكْتِيلِ (مَخْلُوطَةٍ)، أَوْ إِذَا هُوَ فِي مَلْهَى، حَتَّى وَلَوْ هُوَ فِي بَيْتِ امْرَأَةٍ أُخْرَى...

فِي بَيْتِ امْرَأَةٍ أُخْرَى؟ فِي الْحَقِيقَةِ، إِنَّ هَذَا التَّرَقُّبَ شَيْءٌ يَضُرُّ، يُؤْذِي وَيَقْتُلُ، افْتَرَضُ لَوْ حَدَّثْتُ لَهُ حَادِثَةَ اصْطِدَامِ السِّيَّارَاتِ فِي طَرِيقِهِ إِلَى الْبَيْتِ؟ مَاذَا سَيَتَّبِعُ ذَلِكَ؟ لَعَلَّهُ يَكُونُ بَعْضَ الْحُسْنِ لَوْ اتَّصَلْتُ بِالْمُسْتَشْفَى أَوْ الشَّرْطَةِ؟ أَلَيْسَ يَعْنِي هَذَا أَنِّي أَجْعَلُ نَفْسِي عُرْضَةً لِلْحِمَاقَةِ جِهَارًا. لَكِنْ عَلَى الْأَقْلَى، سَيُخَفِّفُ ذَلِكَ الْقَلْقَ فِي نَفْسِي. أَلَيْسَ كَذَلِكَ؟

هَلْ تَعْرِفُ مَاذَا يُفْرِعُنِي أَكْثَرَ؟ هُوَ أَنْ أَسْمَعَ يَوْمًا أَنَّهُ قَدْ أَنْجَبَ وَوَلَدًا مِنْ فَتَاةٍ فِي جُزْءِ سَحِيقِ مِنَ الْبَلَدِ. سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ، سَأَتَّجِرُ نَفْسِي. لَا، انْتَظِرْ، سَيُرْضِي هَذَا بَعْضَ النَّاسِ، وَسَيَكْرُمُهُمْ. وَمَنْ الَّذِي سَيَقُومُ بِرِعايَةِ أَوْلَادِي وَتَرْبِيَّتِهِمْ؟ لَا، لَيْسَ الْإِنْتِحَارُ هُوَ الْحَلُّ. بَلَا، مَفْرُوضٌ أَنْزِينِ بِأَجْمَلِ زَيْي، ثُمَّ أَنَادِي عَلَى أَعَزِّ صَدِيقِهِ عَلَيْهِ أَوْ مُسَاعِدِهِ فِي مَكْتَبِهِ ثُمَّ أُغْرِبِهِمْ إِلَى الْفَسَادِ مَعِي، الْمُضَاجَعَةِ مَعَهُمْ؟ سَيُكَافِؤُهُ ذَلِكَ عَلَى ظُلْمِهِ وَأَنَانِيَّتِهِ، بِنُ بَغِيَّةٍ، دَعُهُ، يَأْتِ بَرْنِيمِ إِلَى هَذَا الْبَيْتِ، سَأُحَاصِمُهُ بِالْأَوْلَادِ! وَهَلْ أَسْتَطِيعُ؟

لَكِنْ قَدَّرُ لَوْ أَخْبَرَنِي يَوْمًا أَنَّهُ قَدْ تَزَوَّجَ بِامْرَأَةٍ جَدِيدَةٍ؟ فَلَا غَرَابَةَ فِي ذَلِكَ، وَالْحَالُ إِنَّ أَصْدِقَاءَهُ يَفْعَلُونَهُ، وَمَاذَا لَا يَفْعَلُهُ هُوَ؟ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ، ذَلِكَ، سَيَسَبُّ لِي الْمَوْتَ، أَنْ أَتَقَاسَمَ حُبَّهُ (مَعَ امْرَأَةٍ أُخْرَى) عَلَى أُسَاسِ التَّنْظِيمِ وَالتَّرْتِيبِ... فَالْأَحْسَنُ لَهُ أَنْ يَفْجُرَ وَيَزْنِي سِرًّا وَلَا يَجْهَرُ بِهِ مُبْرَمَجًا عَلَى الْجَدُولِ، فَيَكُونُ يَوْمَ الْإِثْنَيْنِ، وَيَوْمَ الْأَرْبَعَاءِ، وَيَوْمَ الْجُمُعَةِ دَوْرِي أَنَا، وَيَكُونُ يَوْمَ الثَّلَاثَاءِ، وَيَوْمَ الْخَمِيسِ، وَيَوْمَ السَّبْتِ دَوْرَهَا هِيَ. وَتَكُونُ أَيَّامُ الْأَحَدِ دَوْرَ مَنْ؟ نَرْجُو اللَّهَ أَنْ يُدَافِعَ عَنَّا شَرَّ هَؤُلَاءِ

الْخَلَائِقِ الشَّاذَّةِ الْمُرْعَبَةِ (الْمُسَمَّونَ بِالرِّجَالِ)! وَفَكَّرَ فِي الْأَمْرِ، تَرَ أَنَّ الْأُورُوبِيِّينَ عَرَفُوا أَحْسَنَ الطَّرِيقِ لِمُمَارَسَةِ هَذَا الْفُجُورِ وَالْفُسُوقِ. إِذَا أَنْتَ مَلَلْتَ بِزَوْجِكَ، تَقْطَعُ كُلَّ الْعَلَاقَاتِ مَعَهَا ثُمَّ تَتَقَاسَمُ الْمَسْئُولِيَّاتِ بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهَا فَيَذْهَبُ كُلُّ وَاحِدٍ طَرِيقَهُ حَتَّى يَبْدَأَ فِي عِلَاقَةٍ غَرَامِيَّةٍ جَدِيدَةٍ مَعَ شَخْصٍ جَدِيدٍ. لَكِنَّ هَؤُلَاءِ الرِّجَالِ الْبَهَائِمِ يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يَكُونُوا دَائِمًا قَوَامِينَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ. الْخَنَازِيرِ! الْحُرْمَاتِ، الْحُرْمَاتِ. يَا اللَّهُ، لِمَاذَا خَلَقْتَ النِّسَاءَ فِي هَذِهِ الدُّنْيَا السَّيِّئَةِ؟ لِمَاذَا تَرْضَى امْرَأَتَانِ، أَوْ ثَلَاثَ نِسَاءٍ أَوْ أَرْبَعٍ أَنْ يَتَقَاسَمْنَ رَجُلًا وَاحِدًا. وَهَلْ سَمِعْتَ قَطُّ أَنَّ رَجُلًا وَاحِدًا يَرْضَى أَنْ يَتَقَاسَمَ امْرَأَةً مَعَ رَجُلٍ آخَرَ؟ وَمَعَ ذَلِكَ، فَإِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِنَ النِّسَاءِ مَا يَتَرَدَّدُونَ فِي تَقَاسُمِ رَجُلٍ وَاحِدٍ. وَإِنِّي أَشْكُرُ اللَّهَ عَلَى أَنَّي لَسْتُ كَالنِّسَاءِ الْآخَرِ. إِنْ تَجَاسَرَ زَوْجِي عَلَى أَنْ يَتَزَوَّجَ بِامْرَأَةٍ أُخْرَى سَأُؤَدِّبُهُ، أَكِيدُ. لَكِنْ، انْتَظِرْ. مَا ذَلِكَ الَّذِي أَسْمَعُهُ مِنْ غُرْفَتِهِ؟ كَأَنَّهُ غَطِيطٌ، سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ، رُبَّمَا قَدْ دَخَلَ الْبَيْتَ عِنْدَمَا كُنْتُ أَسْتَحِمُّ وَأُجَهِّزُ نَفْسِي لِكَيْ يَشْتَهِنِي... سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ، وَقَدْ بَرِدَ عَشَاؤُهُ تَمَامًا! لَا شَكَّ أَنَّهُ قَدْ سَخِطَ إِذْ لَمْ يَجِدْ عَشَائِهِ عَلَى الطَّاوِلَةِ عِنْدَ عَوْدَتِهِ فِي الْبَيْتِ. وَكَثِيرًا مَا يُوصِينِي بِتَهْنِئَتِهِ!... يَا اللَّهُ، إِنَّهُ هُوَ النَّائِمُ فِي الْعُرْفَةِ بِغَطِيطٍ مِنَ الْجُوعِ وَالْغَضَبِ! يَا عَزِيزِي، يَا عَزِيزِي... فَلَا دَاعِي لِهَذَا الْقَلْقِ الَّذِي أُرْعَجْتُ بِهِ نَفْسِي...

"يا حَبِيبِي! يَا عَزِيزِي! اسْتَيْقِظْ! قَدْ حَانَ وَقْتُ الْعِشَاءِ يَا حَبِيبِي!"

#### Self Assessment Exercise

What did you learn from the story above?

#### 4.0 Conclusion

The Arabic passage above is a translation of yet another story from "A Forest of Flowers". The story is a romantic narrative picturing the marital life of a couple. The author's main idea is that unnecessary suspicion of the other party in a marital relationship is capable of ruining the home. Further, we are made to understand that narrow-mindedness of most women in matters related to polygamy is often the cause of many broken homes.

#### 5.0 Summary

We have been able to read and decipher another English story into Arabic in this unit. The story borders on issues of love, romance and marriage - we saw how a housewife almost destroyed her marriage due to unwarranted assumptions and suspicions she nursed in her mind against her husband. And these contemplations eventually caused worries and fear for the housewife who later found out that she had been engaging in mere illusory thinking.

#### 6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment

Translate the following short story into Arabic:

##### **“My Passion, My Life”**

Every morning I excitedly get out of bed. Just a few minutes of goals and visions for the day swirl in my head. No lingering for me, no alarm, no wishful notes too. Just me in my night gown with no hat.

I sit down to enter my dreams and what can notes. In my journal entries that began long ago with a tiny book and its lock and key. I used to dwell on all the icky things back then but now I write God with my cheers and glees instead.

I remember the days I knew not whether I was going to live or die. I also never thought I'd see why cancer came by. I'm glad I had cancer because today I like the who I've become. Which would have never occurred had it not appeared.

If I dwell, I can remember the day of an accident that left me in a wheel chair for years. Because I know if I do, today there will be a lot of have nots and heart of tears too.

As a coach I've been trained to be in the present moment with me. Thank goodness for apple trees. For if it had not been for growing things fresh air would not have been. And I would not be able to enjoy breathing it all in.

Next I write wisdom, only wisdom that I can share. I know that someone will be here and be inspired because I'd cared. I travel through my day with a soul of glee.

Knowing, really knowing, this is the right place for me to be. The excitement occurs when I pick up my pen and get the surprise of how far it's all come.

I know there were days long ago when I dreaded my day. I'm glad, I'm glad, there aren't none of them anymore. For when their inklings first appear, I now have the training and support to make them disappear. Coaching made me work so that I can appear.

When I crawl under the covers at night, I smile with prayer at the difference I made in everyone's life this day. Just because I was there. Before I drift off to sleep my sugar



plums swirl with what next I can do with my pen. I nod off to sleep, gracefully and slow, lingering on the stories yet to be told.

Occasionally there is a 2 am up. Just because what was swirling before needs to be said. So I honor the time with my pen and then its back to la-la-land I go. I'm so glad of my passion, my life. It allows everything to be said. After my last eye lid shutter, my last thought is tomorrow's putter.

#### 7.0 References/Further Readings

Saro-Wiwa, Ken, (1986) "*A Forest of Flowers*" Saros International Publishers: Port Harcourt.

Wehr, Hans (1960) *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, Macdonald & Evans Ltd: London.

Hornby, A.S (2010) *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition, Oxford University Press: Oxford.

Catherine Franz, <http://www.abundancecenter.com>

### **Unit 5: Translation of "A Caring Man"**

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Objectives

3.0 Main Body: Translation of "A Caring Man"

4.0 Conclusion

5.0 Summary

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment

7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 Introduction

Lessons in the Arabic-English translation module certainly must have opened your eyes to secrets of translation. You also may have by now been familiar with techniques of English-Arabic translation. What you have taken in this module is supposed to complement the lessons contained in the former; hence, you should try to harmonize instructions in the two modules for your optimum benefits. This unit is however, going to showcase another story by our author, Saro-Wiwa, it is titled "A Caring Man".

2.0 Objectives

On completion of this unit, students are expected to:

- Have mastered the art of translation to a reasonable level.
- Attempt constructing short stories in both languages (i.e. English and Arabic)
- Be dynamic in their style of writing and translating.

### 3.0 Main Body: Translation of “A Caring Man”

#### **“A Caring Man” - The Original Version**

I knew he was having affairs on the side. But I hardly thought he would prove so very degenerate, humiliating me into the bargain. You know how it is. You are holding down a full-time job just to make ends meet in these hard, difficult times. So you cannot do the household chores alone. And when you have two little girls into the bargain, housekeeping and mothering become quite a nightmare. So naturally you need help. And your help had better be a girl because then she becomes a friend to your little ones. Dani never did take an interest in these domestic details. He always thought and said it was entirely my responsibility. And I agreed with him. That was how Ayo came to live with us.

Ayo was a skinny, spindly-legged girl just approaching puberty when she came to us. I took one look at her and decided there and then that before she could say one word to me, I'd have to give her a thorough bath. Which I did. And after I gave her some of my old clothes, she looked more presentable. She was not useful to me at first. But I believed I could train her. She did respond to training. And before very long she became indispensable to me and the household.

Dani and I were getting on. At fifty, there were strands of grey in my hair as in his. At that age, a woman is perhaps not so attractive to most men. But a husband, well, you would suppose there are things to think back on, memories of twenty-six years of marriage and companionship. I never did worry about the affairs he had on the side. I did not consider myself cheated. I set it down to the warmth of the African male about which no amount of nagging and tears will ever be able to do much. Besides if he was going to be like his father who married eight wives and had well over three dozen children... I had only myself to blame for marrying him. So he had his fun and I had my marriage. And that was that.

Problems actually began when I heard that he had had a baby by some woman. I took it badly; any wife would. But I'd have gotten over it by adopting the child, rearing him with my natural children as a part of one happy or not-so-happy family. My friend Toun did so. And it worked. But Dani's mother didn't give me a chance. She was happy

as a bee at my discomfiture and went out of her way to rub salt into the wound her son had inflicted on my. I never did get on well with my mother-in-law, you see. She was secure in the love of her son. I was not. And I've always hated any hint of rivalry. Now with his new baby and her obvious delight, we were perpetually at daggers drawn. And my anger at Dani was duly compounded.

I was not about to leave him – I'm not one for a divorce – and I had to take the children into account. But he had to know that I was not exactly ecstatic, to put it mildly.

It helped a lot that I was often away at work some nights in the month. It meant that I did not have to see him very often. And I could work out my unhappiness alone. He did a lot to make up to me – he was always a caring man – but I did not encourage him.

I'm afraid Ayo and the children saw a lot of our rows. Because they were noisy, robust affairs, full of blows, scratches, broken chairs, broken crockery, flying cutlery and fulsome tears. I gave Dani so quarter. I wanted him to feel remorse and to be on his best behaviour at least for some of the time.

He was. As a I was soon to find out. One rare Sunday morning after breakfast, Dani and I sat in the lunge listening to classical music as was our habit when a knock came at the door.

'Who is that?' I asked.

'Mama Ayo,' a voice answered.

To my surprise, Dani fed upstairs. He was well dressed and I did not understand why he should make so undignified an exit at the sound of Mama Ayo's voice.

'Come in,' I said

Mama Ayo and her husband came in. we exchanged pleasantries and I offered them seats. They didn't want a drink or anything. I heard the key click in the lock upstairs. "Mama Ayo spoke next. She was direct and to the point.

'Is Oga in?' She asked.

'No,' I lied. 'He's gone to church.'

'We wanted to see him. Because now that he has started sleeping with Ayo, we won't be pleased if Ayo gets pregnant.' Bland. Crude. Direct. Shattering.

I didn't know what to do. I wished I could hide myself twenty feet underground. That the earth under my feet would open and swallow me up. That thunder would strike me dead. I felt ashamed, embarrassed and humiliated all at once. I tried to, but could not speak. It was with difficult that I said the next words to Mama Ayo and her husband.

'I understand how you feel ... we will make arrangements to send Ayo back to you. That will stop Oga from ...'

Already tears were dribbling down my cheeks. Mama Ayo and her husband quietly withdrew, leaving me to my sorrows. I grew weak and tired, as though a heavy

load had been placed on my shoulders. Stuck in my seat. I felt dizzy and dazed. There was no holding back the hot tears. I do not know for how long I stayed like that but finally, I picked myself up and dragged my unwilling feet up the staircase. The door to our bedroom was still locked. I knocked loud.

‘Open the door, you miserable wretch,’ I yelled at the top of my voice. There was no sound from the bedroom. I knocked louder still. ‘Open the door, or I’ll break it myself, you good-for-nothing adulterer. Do you hear me? You shameless, empty gas bag, let me just get my hands on you.’

The key turned in the lock and I pushed the door open and rushed into the room. Dani was sitting on the bed. I do not remember the look on his face. Because although I looked at him, I did not see him, so blinding was the hate I felt for him at that moment.

‘Why did you run upstairs and lock yourself in?’ I asked.

‘I didn’t run upstairs. I didn’t lock myself in,’ he lied.

‘Liar. You didn’t want to stand face to face with your crime.’

‘Crime? What crime?’

‘You knew what Mama Ayo and her husband came to tell you, didn’t you?’

‘How was I to know? How could I know?’

‘Then why didn’t you wait to hear them out?’

‘I didn’t even know they were the ones at the door. So what did they say?’

‘That you’ve been sleeping with Ayo. That if she gets pregnant, they won’t be pleased.’ ‘And did you believe them?’ Dani asked, a hollowness in his voice.

‘Have you been sleeping with Ayo?’

‘No.’

‘So, Mama Ayo and her husband are lying?’

‘Do you believe them?’

‘Of course. They could not invent such a story.’

‘You believe them and disbelieve me?’

‘Naturally. You are a born liar. How dare you stand before me to deny what’s so obvious? Why did you flee so guiltily upstairs ... you good-for-nothing scab. You call yourself a man and you cannot face your own misdeeds. Now I imagine you will tell me the truth with Ayo standing before you. Because I’m going to get Ayo here right now.’

And getting out of the room onto the landing I yelled ‘Ayo, Ayo, Ayo.’ There was no answer. I went to the helpers’ quarters where Ayo normally stayed. She was gone. I returned upstairs to look for Dani. He too had slipped out. I heard the car drive out of the garage. I lay back in bed and cried myself to sleep.

I do not know for how long I slept. But I must have slept for a long time. Because when I woke up it was already night. I found a note from Dani saying he was off to London for a week on a business trip.

He stayed away a whole month. During all that time, he telephoned once asking 'Is everything all right?' I banged the telephone on him.

At the end of the fourth week, he returned, his hair in jerry coils. At fifty-five, he was wearing jerry coils, like a miserable, cocaine-sniffing West Indian on the crumby streets of Brixton. I took one look at him and the image that came to my mind was of a vulture wearing glass beads. I refused to talk to him, of course. I locked him out of our room and he had to make do with the other bedroom. I made sure his sheets were unwashed for weeks. I did not serve him any of his meals. No punishment I could devise looked bad enough for him. And oh, how I hated to see him in those jerry coils! They made me more vicious.

Then one day I heard a car drive up to our house. I looked out of the window and saw a brand new Mercedes Coupe, in a lovely wine colour. Dani was at the wheel. He got out and walked up to me and dropped the car keys into my palm. "Yours," he said simply, nodding towards the car. Well, jerry coils are one thing, but a Mercedes Coupe in wine colour is something else. The milk of human forgiveness welled up in my breast. Dani was always a caring man, you know.

### Arabic Translation of "A Caring Man"

#### رَجُلٌ مُهْتَمٌّ بِأَسْرَتِهِ

إِنِّي أَعْرِفُ أَنَّ عِنْدَهُ عَلاَقَةً غَرَامِيَّةً سِرًّا، لَكِنْ مَا كُنْتُ أَعْتَقِدُ أَنَّهُ سَيَتَفَسَّخُ إِلَى حَدِّ أَنْ يُهَيِّنَنِي إِلَى مُسَاوَمَةٍ. أَنْتَ تَعْرِفُ كَيْفَ يُجْرَحُ مِثْلُ هَذَا الْخُلُقِ السَّيِّئِ. إِذَا أَنْتَ تُحَاوِلُ الْإِحْتِفَاطَ بِعَمَلٍ بِالتَّفَرُّغِ لِكَسْبِ الْمَعِيشَةِ فِي هَذِهِ الظُّرُوفِ الْقَاسِيَةِ، فَلَا يُمَكِّنُكَ الْقِيَامُ بِتَدْبِيرِ الْمَنْزِلِ أَنْتَ وَحَدَّكَ. وَإِذَا كَانَتْ عِنْدَكَ بِنْتَانِ صَغِيرَتَانِ فِي الْمُسَاوَمَةِ، صَارَ تَدْبِيرُ الْمَنْزِلِ وَالْحِصَانَةُ كَأَبُوسًا. فَطَبَعًا، أَنْتَ تَحْتَاجُ إِلَى خَادِمٍ، وَالْأَحْسَنُ أَنْ يَكُونَ الْخَادِمُ فَتَاةً حَتَّى تَكُونَ لِأَوْلَادِكَ صَدِيقَةً. وَلَمْ يَكُنْ دَانَ يَرْغَبُ قَطُّ فِي الْأَعْمَالِ الْأَسْرَوِيَّةِ، فَكَانَ دَائِمًا يَعْتَقِدُ وَيَقُولُ إِنَّ الْأَعْمَالَ الْمَنْزِلِيَّةَ الرَّوْتِينِيَّةَ كَانَتْ مِنْ مَسْئُولِيَّتِي، وَقَدْ وَافَقْتَهُ عَلَى ذَلِكَ، فَهَذَا هُوَ سَبَبُ مُكْثِ آيَوِ عِنْدَنَا.

كَانَتْ آيُوفَتَاةً نَحِيْلَةً، طَوِيْلَةَ الرَّجْلَيْنِ وَهِيَ تَتَقَرَّبُ سِنَّ الْبُلُوغِ عِنْدَمَا جَاءَتْ إِلَيْنَا، نَظَرْتُ إِلَيْهَا نَظْرَةً وَاحِدَةً وَعَزَمْتُ فَوْرًا عَلَيَّ أَنْ أَنْظِفَهَا بِعُغْسَلٍ شَامِلٍ قَبْلَ أَنْ تُكَلِّمَنِي فِي شَيْءٍ، فَنَظَفْتُهَا ثُمَّ أَلْبَسْتُهَا بَعْضَ ثِيَابِي الْقَدِيْمَةِ، فَصَارَتْ صَالِحَةً لِلْعُرْضِ، وَلَمْ تَكُنْ تُفِيْدُنِي فِي شَيْءٍ فِي الْبِدَايَةِ، لَكِنْ كُنْتُ أَعْتَقِدُ أَنَّي أَسْتَطِيعُ تَرْبِيَّتَهَا وَتَدْرِيْبَهَا، وَحَقِيْقَةً، اسْتَحَابْتُ لِلتَّرْبِيَّةِ وَالتَّدْرِيْبِ، حَيْثُ صَارَتْ بَعْدَ مُدَّةٍ قَلِيْلَةٍ لَا غِنَى عَنْهَا لِي وَلِلْأُسْرَةِ جَمْعًا.

تَقَدَّمْنَا فِي السَّنِّ أَنَا وَدَانِ، فِي الْخَمْسِينَ مِنَ الْعُمْرِ، تُرَى ضَفَائِرَ الشَّيْبِ فِي عَدْلِي وَعَدْلِهِ. وَفِي ذَلِكَ الْعُمْرِ، قَدْ لَا تَكُونُ الْمَرْأَةُ فَاتِنَةً جَذَابَةً لِمُعْظَمِ الرِّجَالِ، أَمَّا بِالنِّسْبَةِ لِلْبُعْلِ، فَطَبْعًا، تَعْرِفُ أَنَّ هُنَاكَ أَشْيَاءَ تَدْعُو إِلَى التَّفْكِيرِ، ذَلِكَ مِثْلُ تَذْكَارِ زَوَاجٍ وَصُحْبَةِ سِتَّةٍ وَعِشْرِينَ سَنَةً، وَلَمْ أَكُنْ أَفْلُقُ مِنْ أَجْلِ الْعِلَاقَةِ الْغَرَامِيَّةِ الَّتِي يُجْرِيهَا سِرًّا لِأَنَّي لَمْ أَعُدَّ نَفْسِي مَعْشُوشَةً، بَلْ اعْتَبَرْتُ الْأَمْرَ مِنْ انْفِعَالِ الرَّجُلِ الْأَفْرِيْقِيِّ، الْإِنْفِعَالِ الَّذِي لَا يَنْفَعُ فِيهِ تَذَمُّرٌ وَلَا بُكَاءٌ. وَإِضَافَةً إِلَى ذَلِكَ، إِذَا هُوَ أَرَادَ أَنْ يَكُونَ مِثْلَ أَبِيهِ الَّذِي تَزَوَّجَ بِشِمَانِ نِسْوَةٍ، وَأَنْجَبَ أَكْثَرَ مِنْ سِتَّةٍ وَثَلَاثِينَ وَكَلْدًا... جَازَ لِي إِذْنٌ أَنْ أُؤْتَبَ/أَلُومَ نَفْسِي لِزَوَاجِي مَعَهُ، إِذْ قَدْ اتَّخَذَ الزَّوْاجَ تَسْلِيَّةً وَهَزَلًا حَيْثُ اتَّخَذْتَهُ جِدًّا، وَخَلَاصِ، انْتَهَى الْأَمْرُ.

بَدَأَتْ الْمَشَاكِلُ عِنْدَمَا سَمِعْتُ أَنَّهُ قَدْ أَنْجَبَ وَكَلْدًا مِنْ امْرَأَةٍ، غَضِبْتُ كَثِيرًا لِهَذَا الْأَمْرِ، كَمَا سَتَعُضِبُ أَيُّ امْرَأَةٍ وَجَدَتْ نَفْسَهَا فِي مِثْلِ هَذِهِ الْحَالِ، لَكِنْ غَلَبَتْ عَلَيَّ الْأَمْرُ، فَقَمْتُ بِحِضَانَةِ الْوَلَدِ وَتَرْبِيَّتِهِ، وَاتَّخَذْتُهُ وَكَلْدًا لِي وَاهْتَمَمْتُ بِرِعَايَتِهِ مَعَ أَوْلَادِي حَتَّى صَارَ عَضْوًا مِنْ أُسْرَتِنَا السَّعِيدَةِ، أَوْ إِنْ شِئْتَ قُلْ أُسْرَةً لَا بَأْسَ بِهَا. قَدْ جَرَّبْتُ ذَلِكَ صَدِيقَتِي تَوْهُونَ وَنَجَحْتَ. لَكِنَّ الْوَالِدَةَ دَانَ لَمْ تُؤْتِنِي فُرْصَةً، حَيْثُ كَانَتْ مَسْرُورَةً كَالنَّحْلِ كُلَّمَا رَأَيْتَنِي مَهْزُومَةً فِي فَوْضِي، وَقَدْ أَدَى بِهَا الْأَمْرُ إِلَى حَدٍّ أَنْ طَعَتْ عَلَيَّ، وَزَادْتَنِي جُرْحًا عَلَيَّ إِحْرَامِ ابْنِهَا عَلَيَّ، فَلَمْ تَكُنْ تُعَامِلُنِي مُعَامَلَةً طَيِّبَةً. وَإِنْ هِيَ كَانَتْ مُطْمَئِنَّةً فِي حُبِّ وَكَلْدِهَا، فَمَا حَظَّيْتُ بِنَصِيْبِ أَوْفَرٍ مِنْ حُبِّهِ، فَكُنْتُ أَكْرَهُ أَيَّ إِيمَاءِ الْمُنَافَسَةِ. وَقَدْ صَارَ عِنْدَهُ الْآنَ مَوْلُودٌ جَدِيدٌ، وَهِيَ مُبْتَهَجَةٌ لَا شَكَّ، فَصِرْنَا فِي خِصَامٍ دَائِمٍ، وَسَخِطْتُ عَلَيَّ دَانَ أَكْثَرَ.

لَمْ أَكُنْ أُحْطُّ بِإِطْلَاقِهِ - لَسْتُ مُسْتَعِدَّةً لِلإِطْلَاقِ - جَازَ لِي أَنْ آخُذَ الْوَالِدَ فِي عَيْنِ الإِعْتِبَارِ، لَكِنْ يَنْبَغِي لَهُ أَنْ يَعْرِفَ أَنِّي لَسْتُ ذَهْلَانَةً كُلَّ الذُّهُولِ، ذَلِكَ إِذَا شَكَّوْهُ بِلُطْفٍ.

أَفَادَنِي كَثِيرًا أَنِّي غَالِبًا كُنْتُ فِي المَعْمَلِ بَعْضَ اللَّيَالِي فِي الشَّهْرِ، وَهَذَا يَعْنِي أَنْ لَيْسَ لِي أَنْ أَرَاهُ كُلَّ حِينٍ، فَاسْتَطَعْتُ أَنْ أَحُلَّ المُشْكِلَةَ لِوَحْدِي، وَقَدْ حَاوَلَ كَثِيرًا أَنْ يَتَصَالَحَ مَعِي - كَانَ رَجُلًا مُهْتَمًّا بِأُسْرَتِهِ - لَكِنْ لَمْ أُشَجِّعْهُ.

إِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَى أَنْ آيُوَ وَالْوَالِدَ شَاهِدُوا بَعْضَ عِرَاكَاتِنَا لِأَنَّهَا كَانَتْ شِجَارَاتٍ ضَحَّاجَةٍ صَخَّابَةٍ مَلِيئَةٍ بِضَرْبَاتٍ، وَخَلْبَاتٍ، وَرَمِي كِرَاسِي مَكْسُورَةٍ، وَأَوَانٍ خَزَفِيَّةٍ، وَسَكَكِينَ، وَبُكَاءَاتٍ سَاخِنَةٍ. فَلَمْ أَجْعَلْ لِذَانِ أَيٍّ فُرْصَةَ لِيَتِمَادَى فِي الفَسَادِ، وَكُنْتُ أُرِيدُهُ أَنْ يَشْعُرَ بِالنَّدَمِ حَتَّى يَتَصَرَّفَ بِبَلَاقَةٍ، عَلَى الأَقْلِ لِمُدَّةٍ قَلِيلَةٍ.

وَقَدْ اكْتَشَفْتُ أُخِيرًا أَنَّهُ قَدْ تَغَيَّرَ أَخْلَاقِيًّا، عِنْدَمَا حَدَّثَ أَنِّي وَدَانَ فِي صَبِيحَةِ يَوْمِ الأَحَدِ جَلَسْنَا فِي قَاعَةِ الإِسْتِقْبَالِ نَسْتَمِعُ إِلَى مُوسِيْقَا كِلَاسِيْكِيَّةٍ كَمَا تَعَوَّدْنَا، ثُمَّ سَمِعْنَا دَقَّةً عَلَى البَابِ.

"مَنْ عِنْدَ البَابِ؟" سَأَلْتُ.

"أُمُّ أَيُّوُ،" أَجَابَنِي صَوْتُ.

وَقَدْ أَعْجَبَنِي أَنْ فَرَدَانَ إِلَى الطَّابِقِ الفَوْقِيِّ، وَهُوَ مُتَرَيِّنٌ بِزِيٍّ جَمِيلٍ، وَلَمْ أَفْهَمْ لِمَاذَا هَرَبَ فُجَاءَةً عِنْدَ سَمَاعِ صَوْتِ أُمِّ أَيُّوُ.

"أَدْخُلْ،" قُلْتُ لَهَا.

دَخَلْتُ عَلَيْنَا أُمُّ أَيُّوُ وَأَبُوهَا، وَتَبَادَلْنَا التَّحَايَا، ثُمَّ طَلَبْتُهُمَا بِالإِجْلَوسِ فَجَلَسَا، غَيْرَ أَنَّهُمَا لَمْ يَرِغَبَا فِي تَنَاوُلِ شَرَابٍ أَوْ أَيٍّ أَكَلَةٍ. ثُمَّ سَمِعْتُ تَكْتِكَةَ المِفْتَاحِ فِي القُفْلِ مِنَ الطَّابِقِ الفَوْقِيِّ، وَتَبَعَ ذَلِكَ كَلَامُ أُمِّ أَيُّوُ، وَقَدْ كَانَتْ مُصْرَّحَةً فِي كَلَامِهَا مُجَدَّةً.

سَأَلْتَنِي "هَلْ رَبُّ المَنْزِلِ مَوْجُودٌ؟"

أَجَبْتُ "لا، قد ذهبَ إلى الكَنِيسَةِ." وَقَدْ كَذَبْتُ.

ثُمَّ قَالَتْ: "نُرِيدُ أَنْ نَرَهُ، لِأَنَّهُ قَدْ بَدَأَ يُضَاجِعُ أَيُّو، وَلَنْ نَرْضَى إِنْ حَمَلَتْ أَيُّو."

وَقَدْ كَانَتْ فِي كَلَامِهَا لَطِيفَةً، غَلِيظَةً، مُصْرِحَةً وَمُفْجِعَةً فِي الْوَقْتِ نَفْسِهِ.

وَلَمْ أَدْرِ مَاذَا سَأَفْعَلُ، فَتَمَنَّيْتُ لَوْ أَسْتَطِيعُ أَنْ أَخْتَفِيَ تَحْتَ الْأَرْضِ بِقَدْرِ عِشْرِينَ قَدَمًا، أَوْ تَنْفَتِحَ

الْأَرْضُ تَحْتَ أَقْدَامِي وَتَبْتَلِعَنِي، أَوْ يُدَمِّرَنِي الرَّعْدُ إِلَى الْمَمَاتِ. شَعُرْتُ بِالْخَجَلِ وَالْحَيْرَةِ وَالْإِهَانَةِ فِي

الْوَقْتِ حِينِهِ. وَحَاوَلْتُ الْكَلَامَ لَكِنْ لَمْ أَسْتَطِعْ، وَبِكُلِّ الصُّعُوبَةِ، فَهَيْتُ بِالْكَلامِ إِلَى أُمِّ أَيُّو وَبَعَلِّهَا

قَائِلَةً:

"إِنِّي أَفْهَمُ كَيْفَ تَشْعُرَانِ... سَنَقُومُ بِتَرْتِيبِ الْأُمُورِ حَتَّى تُرْسِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ أَيُّو. سَيَمْنَعُ ذَلِكَ بَعَلِّي مِنْ..."

وَالآنَ، بَدَأَتْ عِبْرَاتٌ تَسِيلُ عَلَيَّ وَجَنَّتِي، ثُمَّ انْصَرَفَ وَالِدَايُ وَأُمُّهَا بِهَدُوءٍ تَارِكِينَني وَأَحْزَانِي.

صِرْتُ مِنْهَكَةَ مُتَعَبَةً كَأَنِّي وُضِعَ عَلَيَّ أَكْتَفِي حِمْلٌ ثَقِيلٌ. وَهَكَذَا بَقِيَتْ مُلْصَقَةً فِي جُلُوسِي مُدَوَّخَةً

مَبْهُورَةً. وَلَمْ أَسْتَطِعْ إِيقَافَ الدَّمْعَةِ السَّاخِنَةِ (الْمُتَسَلِّلَةِ مِنْ عَيْنِي)، فَلَمْ أَدْرِ لِأَيِّ مُدَّةٍ بَقِيَتْ كَذَلِكَ،

لَكِنِّي قُمْتُ أَحْيِرًا وَجَرَرْتُ أَقْدَامِي الثَّقِيلَةَ نَحْوَ السُّلَمِ (الْمِرْقَاةِ)، وَمَا زَالَ بَابُ غُرْفَتِنَا مُعْلَقًا، فَدَقَقْتُ

بِعُنْفٍ شَدِيدٍ.

وَقَدْ صَرَخْتُ بِصَوْتٍ مُرْتَفِعٍ قَائِلَةً: "افْتَحِ الْبَابَ، يَا حَفِيرُ، دَنِيءٌ، شَقِيءٌ."

لَمْ أَسْمَعْ أَيَّ صَوْتٍ مِنْ غُرْفَةِ النَّوْمِ، فَدَقَقْتُ الْبَابَ بِعُنْفٍ أَشَدَّ، وَصَحْتُ: "افْتَحِ الْبَابَ، وَإِلَّا،

سَأُكْسِرُهُ بِيَدِي، يَا زَانٍ، شَنِيعٌ، شَرِيرٌ، هَلْ تَسْمَعُنِي؟ يَا وَقِحَ مُعْفَلٌ، دَعْنِي أُمْسِكْ عَلَيْكَ بِيَدِي."

فَتَحْتُ قُفْلَ الْبَابِ وَدَفَعْتُ الْبَابَ حَتَّى انْفَتَحَ، فَأَسْرَعْتُ إِلَى دَاخِلِ الْغُرْفَةِ، وَوَجَدْتُ دَانَ جَالِسًا عَلَيَّ

السَّرِيرِ، وَلَمْ أَتَذَكَّرِ الْمَنْظَرَ عَلَيَّ وَجْهَهُ، لِأَنَّهُ، عَلَيَّ الرَّغْمِ مِنْ أَنِّي كُنْتُ أَنْظُرُ إِلَيْهِ، لَمْ أَرَهُ، لِأَنَّ الْكُرَّةَ

الَّذِي أَشْعُرُ بِهِ ضِدَّهُ تِلْكَ اللَّحْظَةَ، قَدْ أَعْمَانِي.

"لِمَاذَا هَرَبْتَ إِلَى الطَّابِقِ الْعُلُويِّ وَاخْتَفَيْتَ فِي الدَّاخِلِ؟" سَأَلْتُهُ.



"لَمْ أَهْرُبْ إِلَى الطَّابِقِ الْفَوْقِيِّ، وَلَمْ أَخْتَفِ فِي الدَّاحِلِ،" كَذَبَ هُوَ. "كَذَّابٌ. لَمْ تُرِدْ أَنْ تَقُومَ عَيْنًا  
بِعَيْنِ بَجْرِيْمَتِكَ."

"جَرِيْمَةٌ؟ أَيُّ جَرِيْمَةٍ؟"

"أَنْتِ عَرَفْتَ مَاذَا أَتَتْ أُمُّ آيُو وَزَوْجُهَا لِيَشْكُوا إِلَيْكَ، أَلَيْسَ كَذَلِكَ؟"

"كَيْفَ أَعْرِفُ؟ كَيْفَ يَنْبَغِي لِي أَنْ أَعْرِفُ؟"

"إِذَنْ، لِمَاذَا لَمْ تَنْتَظِرْ لِتَسْمَعَ شَكْوَاهُمْ؟"

"لَمْ أَعْرِفْ أَنَّهُمَا هُمَا اللَّذَانِ جَاءَا عِنْدَ الْبَابِ. وَمَاذَا قَالَا؟"

"قَالَا إِنَّكَ قَدْ بَدَأْتَ تُلَامِسُ آيُو. وَأَنْ لَنْ يُرْضِيَهُمُ الْأَمْرُ إِنْ حَمَلَ آيُو."

"وَهَلْ صَدَّقْتَهُمَا؟" سَأَلَ دَانِ، مَعَ صِيَاحٍ فِي صَوْتِهِ.

"وَهَلْ كُنْتَ تُلَامِسُ آيُو؟"

"لا."

"إِذَنْ، وَهَلْ يَعْنِي هَذَا أَنَّ أُمَّ آيُو وَزَوْجَهَا يَكْذِبَانِ؟"

"هَلْ تُصَدِّقِيْنَهُمَا؟"

"طَبَعًا، لَا يُمَكِّنُ لَهُمَا أَنْ يَخْتَلِقَا مِثْلَ هَذِهِ الْحِكَايَةِ."

"صَدَّقْتَهُمَا وَكَذَّبْتِي؟"

طَبِيعِيًّا. أَنْتِ كَذَّابٌ بِالْوِلَادَةِ. كَيْفَ تَحْرَأْتِ عَلَيَّ وَقُمْتَ أَمَامِي تُنْكِرُ أَمْرًا بَيْنَنَا؟ وَمَاذَا فَرَرْتَ إِلَيَّ

الطَّابِقِ الْفَوْقِيِّ مِنْ شُعُورِكَ بِالذَّنْبِ... يَا سَيِّئَ الْخُلُقِ يَا نَمَامٌ، تَدَّعِي أَنَّكَ رَجُلٌ وَلَمْ تَسْتَطِعْ مُوَاجَهَةَ

إِسَاءَاتِكَ وَذُنُوبِكَ. وَالْآنَ إِنِّي أَظُنُّ أَنَّكَ سَتَقُولُ الْحَقَّ إِذَا رَأَيْتَ آيُوَ وَاقِفَةً أَمَامَكَ، لِأَنَّي سَوْفَ أَدْعُو

آيُوَ إِلَيَّ هُنَا فَوْرًا."

وَهَكَذَا خَرَجْتُ مِنَ الْعُرْفَةِ إِلَى الطَّابِقِ الْأَرْضِيِّ وَصُحْتُ أَنْادِي "آيُو، آيُو، آيُو." لَكِنْ لَمْ أَسْمَعْ  
 الْإِجَابَةَ مِنْ أَيِّ وَاحِدٍ، فَدَخَلْتُ إِلَى مَحَلَّاتِ الْخَدَمِ حَيْثُ كَانَتْ آيُو تَسْكُنُ عَادَةً. وَقَدْ غَادَرَتِ  
 الْمَحَلَّةَ. فَرَجَعْتُ إِلَى الطَّابِقِ الْعُلُويِّ لِكَيْ أَبْحَثَ عَنْ دَانَ وَقَدْ انْزَلَقَ هُوَ أَيْضًا عَنِ الْمَسْكَنِ. فَسَمِعْتُ  
 صَوْتَ سَيَّارَةٍ مَقُودَةٍ خَارِجَ الْإِيوَاءِ، فَاتَّكَأْتُ عَلَى السَّرِيرِ وَبَكَيْتُ حَتَّى اسْتَعْرَقْتُ فِي النَّوْمِ.  
 لَمْ أَدْرِ لِأَيِّ مُدَّةٍ اضْطَجَعْتُ، لَكِنْ يَحْتَمِلُ أَنَّي نِمْتُ طَوِيلًا، لِأَنَّهُ قَدْ هَبَطَ اللَّيْلُ عِنْدَمَا اسْتَيْقَظْتُ،  
 وَوَجَدْتُ كُرْسِيَّ أَحْبَرَنِي فِيهَا دَانَ أَنَّهُ قَدْ سَافَرَ إِلَى لَنْدُنَ فِي رِحْلَةٍ تِجَارِيَّةٍ، وَسَيَبْقَى هُنَالِكَ لِمُدَّةٍ  
 أُسْبُوعٍ.

مَكَثَ هُنَالِكَ لِمُدَّةٍ شَهْرٍ، وَخِلَالَ تِلْكَ الْمُدَّةِ اتَّصَلَ بِي هَاتِفِيًّا مَرَّةً وَاحِدَةً يَسْأَلُ "كَيْفَ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ؟"  
 لَكِنْ امْتَنَعْتُ عَنْ إِجَابَةٍ وَأَعْرَضْتُ عَنِ التَّلْفُونِ.

فِي نِهَائَةِ الْأُسْبُوعِ الرَّابِعِ، قَدِمَ لِابِسًا لَفِيفَ الشَّعْرِ ذِي لَيَّاتٍ. فِي الْخَمْسِينَ مِنَ الْعُمْرِ، هُوَ يَلْبَسُ لَفَّاتِ  
 الشَّعْرِ، وَكَأَنَّهُ رَجُلٌ شَقِيٌّ مِنْ غَرْبِ الْهِنْدِ، يَتَشَقَّقُ كَوَكَايِينَ فِي مَقْوَضَةِ شَوَارِعِ بَرِيكْسْتِينِ. نَظَرْتُ  
 إِلَيْهِ نَظْرَةً وَاحِدَةً، وَالصُّورَةُ الَّتِي حَضَرَتْ فِي نَفْسِي هِيَ صُورَةُ نَسْرِ يَلْبَسُ عُقُودًا زُجَاجِيَّةً. امْتَنَعْتُ عَنْ  
 الْكَلَامِ مَعَهُ، طَبْعًا. وَقَدْ أَقْفَلْتُ دُونَهُ بَابَ غُرْفَتِنَا، فَرَاخَ إِلَى الْعُرْفَةِ الْأُخْرَى. ثُمَّ امْتَنَعْتُ عَنْ تَنْظِيفِ  
 أُغْطِيَةِ سَرِيرِهِ لِأَسَابِيحٍ، كَمَا امْتَنَعْتُ عَنْ طَبْخِ طَعَامِهِ. وَمَعَ كُلِّ ذَلِكَ، شَعُرْتُ أَنَّ لَمْ يُكَافِئَهُ كُلُّ  
 الْعِقَابِ الَّذِي حَطَّطْتُ لَهُ. وَقَدْ كَرِهْتُ أَشَدَّ كُرْهُهُ أَنْ أَرَاهُ فِي تِلْكَ اللَّيَّاتِ مِنَ الشَّعْرِ (عَلَى رَأْسِهِ)! إِذْ  
 جَعَلْتَنِي شَرِسَةً أَكْثَرَ.

ثُمَّ ذَاتَ يَوْمٍ سَمِعْتُ سَيَّارَةً سَيَقَتْ إِلَى بَيْتِنَا. نَظَرْتُ خَارِجَ الشُّبَّاكِ وَرَأَيْتُ سَيَّارَةَ الْمَرْسِيدِ جَدِيدَةً  
 ذَاتَ لَوْنٍ خَمْرِيٍّ جَمِيلٍ. وَكَانَ دَانَ عِنْدَ الدَّرَاجَةِ، نَزَلَ مِنَ السَّيَّارَةِ وَمَشَى إِلَيَّ، ثُمَّ وَضَعَ مَفَاتِيحَ  
 السَّيَّارَةِ فِي رَاحَةِ كَفِّي.

"لَكَ هَذِهِ،" قَالَ فِي صَوْتٍ خَافِتٍ، وَهُوَ يُحَرِّكُ رَأْسَهُ نَحْوَ السَّيَّارَةِ.

حَقِيقَةً، إِنَّ لَفَيْفَ الشَّعْرِ (على رأسه) شَيْءٌ وَاحِدٌ، وَلَكِنَّ سَيَّارَةَ الْمَرْسِيِّدِ ذَاتَ اللَّوْنِ الْخَمْرِيِّ،  
 شَيْءٌ آخَرٌ، عَجِيبٌ. وَفَوْرًا نَبَعَ حَلِيبُ الْعَفْوِ الْبَشْرِيِّ فِي صَدْرِي، أَكِيدُ، كَانَ دَانَ رَجُلًا مُهْتَمًّا  
 بِأَسْرَتِهِ، صَدَّقَنِي.

#### Self Assessment Exercise

Reread the Arabic translation of “A Caring Man” and extract 20 vocabularies you have learnt.

#### 4.0 Conclusion

The Arabic passage above is an Arabic version of the English short story originally created by Ken Saro-Wiwa. Its English version is replete with fluent and figurative expressions, thus enriching the Arabic version with polished language and clear lexis without defeating the fundamental purpose of the author. The author’s perspective is geared toward societal reform.

#### 5.0 Summary

This unit has presented you with an Arabic translation of the fourth story extracted from “A Forest of Flowers”. The story has derivable lessons, which students are expected to spin out for their personal and intellectual development. Critical attention was paid to detail in translating so as to present accurate or close to perfect Arabic translation. The next unit will thoroughly appreciate this story from literary perspective.

#### 6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment

Translate the following passage into Arabic:

*“The Discovery of the High Lama”*

The older I get, the more I am astonished by this trickster hand of time.

Look at all the boys we thought would go on to become doctors and engineers. They became *lafanka* men playing guitar in Thamel. And all the *lafanka* ones went on to become stars in unexpected places. One boy who came last in class throughout his school days won a scholarship to study fashion design in New York. Another boy, who was the top student of our batch, became so disheartened after Harvard rejected his application-

he spent the next decade drinking in the Bamboo café, talking sadly about his plans to be a chemical engineer.

But the most surprising story of all was Bigyan's. Did you ever meet him? He was one of the boys who played in the Dead Rose Tigerbalm band in the Insight Bar. Yes, that's right - the guitarist. He had that curly hair always slick with gel, and the dreadful pair of sunglasses. He wore that Pakistani imported leather jacket with a big white yin-yang patch on the back...

#### 7.0 References/Further Readings

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## **Unit 6: Literary Appraisal of a Short Story**

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Objectives

3.0 Main Body: “*A Caring Man*” vis-à-vis the components of a short story

4.0 Conclusion

5.0 Summary

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment

7.0 References/Further Readings

### **1.0 Introduction**

We have in the previous lessons enumerated and explained the elements that make up a short story. We have also tried as much as possible to render into English four

different stories from Saro-Wiwa's stories collection entitled "*A Forest of Flowers*". In this unit however, as a way of experimentation, we will try to literarily appreciate one of the four translated stories, "A Caring Man", using the mechanisms of a short story as our guide.

## 2.0 Objectives

On successful completion of this unit, students will be able to:

- Analyze any fictional works by means of the characteristics of a story.
- They will have as well acquired the ability to effectively appropriate story elements in creating their own fiction as the elements used for appraisal here are also applicable for appreciating such stories of longer size as the novel and the drama.

## 3.0 Main Body: "A Caring Man" vis-à-vis the components of a short story

### a. The narrative

"A Caring Man" is a short story narrated according to the principles laid down by pioneers of the genre. The author narrated the story from the standpoint of the first person, who in this case, happens to be the protagonist (a housewife) of the story. Thus, the writer uses "I", "Me" "We" and "Us" even right from the opening of the story, and renders the narrative through the major character. This makes it possible for reader to see the story events through the eyes of the central character.

The story, "A Caring Man" is premised on sociological comedy of love between 'Dan' and his wife, who had been married for twenty six years. But their marital life however, turned sour when 'Dan', the family head, got involved with their house maid, 'Ayo' in a clandestine love relationship. The story ultimately reached its high point when the house wife uncovers the love escapade between 'Dan', her husband and 'Ayo', the house help.

### b. The characters

The story, 'A Caring Man' was constructed around a very few characters, eight to be specific. These include 'Dan', the family head, his wife (hero of the story) and their two children. Others are Dan's mother, 'Ayo', the house help and her parents (Mama Ayo and Papa Ayo).

Dan's wife is the central character of the story. She was happily married, and the marriage was blessed with two female children. Though, she was lucratively employed but the stress of her job made it difficult for her to manage effectively between work and household responsibility, as Dan, the husband, never took

interest in assisting her with the tasks. Hence, the need arose for her to get a house help who would take care of the household chores while she devotes enough time to her job. Eventually, she brought in 'Ayo'.

Ayo was a skinny tall girl approaching puberty when she joined Dan's family as a maid. She was from a poor background though, but Dan's wife took good care of her by feeding, clothing and training, which transformed her to a presentable young lady. Thus, she became useful and indispensable to the entire family. But unfortunately, her presence in the home soon became the pivot around which revolved the comedy in the home front.

Dan and wife were in their fifties – a plausible reason why Dan's wife was losing physical attractiveness. Other probable reason was the demand of her job and the stress she suffered there from. These and other factors collaborated to deprive Dan of his wife's attention. In an attempt to reminisce on marital bliss and to get rid of these matrimonial challenges, Dan soon began to have extra marital affairs which later on "earned" him a bastard baby boy. Dan's wife took it badly initially but quickly got over it and she decided to adopt the child and rear him together with her biological children. But Dan would not stop at that as he, before long, added salt to the injury of his wife: he condescended and put the house help 'Ayo' in a family way through a promiscuous affair.

It was at this point that "papa" and "Mama" Ayo featured in the story: they appeared in the house of Dan to express their anger and disapproval of Dan's misconduct. Their presence in the house consequently let the cat out of Dan's bag as it turned to be an occasion for Dan's wife to realize her husband's persistent infidelity. She was seriously devastated, ashamed, embarrassed and humiliated. She wept bitterly and appealed to Papa and Mama Ayo for clemency; that arrangements would be made to send Ayo back to them, but before she could do this Ayo had fled the house.

Incredibly, Dan had withdrawn from the sitting room on hearing papa and Mama Ayo knock the door, hence leaving his wife to face the wrath of his misbehavior. This caused a hot confrontation between the couple, and Dan before dawn had left home informing his wife through a note that he was travelling to London for a week on business trip. But Dan did not return home until after one month probably after having suffered nostalgia. The quarrel continued between the couple even after a month of separate living, and no punishment his wife devised seemed commensurate with his naughtiness. When co-existing with the wife under the same roof was becoming miserable, Dan decided to appease her with a gift of Mercedes Benz car, which she gladly accepted and then pardoned him. Her

remark was that “Dan was always a caring man...” Was he truly a caring man? The answer is in between the lines of the story!

**c. The setting**

With respect to the time setting, “A Caring Man” belongs to Nigeria’s post-independence period. It is an invention of the period of military rule, when dictatorship, oppression and cruelty were the system of governance. The story is a production of what is referred to in literary sphere as the modern period.

Concerning the place setting, it belongs to a metropolitan city in the Niger Delta area of Nigeria where ignorance, high life and social corruption often cause heartbreaking consequences on individuals, families and the society at large. This is apparent in the fallout between two different families and the aftereffect on the larger society, all as a result of waywardness of a family head.

**d. The plot**

The plot of the story, “A Caring Man” was designed through logical and sequential arrangement of the events in the story. Thus, the story has beginning, middle and end as the author networks the activities of characters with one another, revealing the bearing of each character (and his/her actions) to the central theme of the story. The author employed what is known as “Rising Action” when he revealed the conflict in the story to reader and where the events become complicated. This, as far as this story is concerned, came to the open when Dan’s wife discovered that her husband was having an affair on the side. This led the reader to the highest point of interest (climax) in the story as s/he wonders with anxiety what will happen next; will the conflict be resolved or not? The conflict eventually got resolved with the settlement between the couple, thereby furnishing the reader with the outcome of events in the story.

**e. The central theme**

The central idea behind the short story is the theory that “man is the backbone of the family” and any transgression on the part of the man in a given home, would certainly crumble the home and would impact negatively upon the larger society. This was made clear in the story through the gross social misconduct of a family leader; how his home consequently fell apart and how the larger society was adversely affected. The author also pointed out the need for man to assist the spouse in some petty domestic duties to ease the burden, especially when she is taking up a white collar job.

### Self Assessment Exercise

What is the connection between plot and character in developing a short story?

#### 4.0 Conclusion

“A Caring Man” is a five-page short story curled from “A Forest of Flowers”, a collection of stories written by Ken Saro-Wiwa in 1986 to portray ignorance, fallacy and moral decadence of the Nigerian society. “A Caring Man” is the seventeenth story in the story collection that was divided into two unequal parts. The first part consists of eight short stories, while the second comprises of eleven different stories.

In “A Caring Man”, appreciated here, Saro-Wiwa’s underlying theme is that man as the pivot upon which any family rests, determines to a large extent, the moral rectitude of the nuclear family and that of the society as a whole. The story is observed to have fulfilled all the requirements of a short story, and the writer was able to effectively manage the story elements.

#### 5.0 Summary

In this unit we were able to analyze the story, “A Caring Man” using the five components of a narrative, which include the narrative style (or writer’s point of view), the characters, the time and space setting, the plot and the main idea of the author. Our experimentation here shows that none of these five elements can function in a short story in isolation of the others.

#### 6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment

Use the experiment in this unit to appreciate the translated story, “Love Song of Housewife” "أَغْنِيَّةُ الْحُبِّ مِنْ رَبَّةِ بَيْتٍ" contained in unit four (4) of this module three (3).

#### 7.0 References/Further Readings

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