

Q. Write a brief note on G K Chesterton's Wit and Humour with particular reference to his essay "On Lying in Bed".

Or

Q. Analyse Chesterton's sense of understanding human behavior in the light of the modern day society.

Answer:-

G K Chesterton was a prolific English critic and author of verse, essays, novels, and short stories. Although best known nowadays for his detective fiction, Chesterton first gained public attention as a journalist and social philosopher. Not only did Chesterton write detective stories, he also wrote several critical essays about not only its proper form and style but his deep understanding of humanity is evident in his essays. He speaks informally and rambles like the common speaker does. Chesterton was the master of the short essays and they are the embodiment of Chesterton's wit and humour.

In the short essay, *On Lying in Bed*, G.K. Chesterton displays his absolute understanding of human nature. He explains this nature through humor and wit in this particular essay, *On Lying in Bed*. According to this essay, Chesterton has developed three parts to human nature. The first part is that items that are desired by humans can often be found in unusually normal places. The second part is that humans have begun to aggrandize trivial morals and to debase major morals. The final part to his outlook on human nature is that the lives of humans have become exceedingly mechanical. These are the topics explained by G.K. Chesterton in this essay.

Chesterton begins his essay by discussing his idea that items longed for by humans can be found in normal places. He does this in the essay by describing his pursuit of a perfect space to paint. He states that he looks on walls, paper, and several other places. His search, however, comes to end in the most normal of places, the ceiling above his bed. In the essay he realizes that he has found his object of desire in a rather ordinary place.

In a similar way, people in today's society can find their desires in places that are rather customary. We, however, are not looking for a place to paint. In the many items we covet, many can be found in regular locations. Frequently, we look in unusual places for these items, when they are actually located directly 'under our nose.' This shows the first part of the human nature presented by G.K. Chesterton.

The second part of Chesterton's essay displays his next theory on human nature. This second theory, that humans promote unimportant values and cheapen important values, is shown by examples in the next part of the essay. He interweaves this theory into the essay again by using the example of lying in bed. He demonstrates that people have begun to believe that lying in bed is worthless, while in fact, it is vital to life to lie in bed at some point.

Likewise, people in modern society have priorities jumbled. Some people now believe that it is more important to make money than to work hard. They believe that supporting one's self is more important than helping others. If these people would read this essay, they would realize that their values are mixed, and that in the end, they will regret it because they will feel unfulfilled.

The third and final part of Chesterton's essay deals with his idea that life has become a monotonous task for some people. He shows this by demonstrating that it is more beneficial to lie in bed spontaneously than to lie in bed after examining the pros and cons of it. He states that it can be detrimental to maintain the same routine without surprises.

Similarly, people today live a mechanical life. This part of human nature can be found even in myself. Often, I find myself repeating the same schedule for weeks. Soon, I realize that my life has become very boring. This essay shows that when something spontaneous is done in my life, it will become more exciting.

In short, G.K. Chesterton's essay, *On Lying in Bed*, demonstrates his complete understanding of humans and their nature. The essay clearly emphasizes his wit and deep understanding of humanity. Chesterton portrays certain issues that reflect upon society's vices and virtues. Although this work initially comes across as an informal rambling, Chesterton presents his first theme of what one can do while lying in bed in a vivid and picturesque fashion. Playing on the first theme, he then expresses the hypocrisy he bestows upon people who lie in bed. Lastly, the author admonishes the practice of lying in bed for unjustifiable reasons. In fine, Chesterton uses a very common theme to demonstrate that an understanding of mankind's habits can be a window to their behavior.