

# TEENS and TWENTIES

## Quasimodo: Man Behind the Mask

by Rumana Tasmin Khan

PEOPLE judge one another mostly by reviewing their acts, and sometimes only by looks. But behaviour is often proved to be a contrast to the appearance. No one has the capability of learning what is hidden behind the face. So the man behind the mask can always be a complete stranger.

Quasimodo, the central character of Victor Hugo's novel *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*, is one of the best examples of people whose looks did not represent their personalities. In spite of his ugliness, he was a true man inside. Unfortunately he was victimised by naive judgments, until he captured everyone's good views.

Victor Hugo's novel takes one back to the fifteenth century. Quasimodo was the bell-ringer of Notre-Dame Cathedral. At the age of four he was found near the cathedral. No one knew about his parents. He was discovered to have a deformed body with a hump between the shoulders, and had only one eye.

Quasimodo was adopted and raised by Claude Frollo, who later became the Archdeacon of Notre-Dame. So Notre-Dame became Quasimodo's home. His exceptional features restricted him to the cathedral only and not beyond it. But these features did not distort his intelligence though they prevented his normal functioning. This condition worsened when he became deaf at the age of fourteen.

The novel is based on Quasimodo's love. Both Claude Frollo and Quasimodo

fell in love with a beautiful gipsy girl — Esmeralda. But Esmeralda was obsessed with the handsome captain Phoebus. Both Frollo and Quasimodo knew why they were no match for her. For the Archdeacon it was his position, for the hunchback it was his appearance. Aware of the fact, the Archdeacon approaches Esmeralda, and being refused again and again decided to take revenge. On the other hand, Quasimodo saved Esmeralda from death, proving that he too could be a man behind a hideous face.

Quasimodo was raised in extreme isolation. All he knew and cared about was the cathedral. The reason for this was that his exceptional features only caused him to be loathed and mocked.

There was a veiled mockery when Quasimodo was elected the 'Pope of the Fools' by few ambassadors in the Festival of Fools. To the ambassadors, Quasimodo's ugliness and deafness were perfect characteristics for the 'Pope of the Fools'. But to Quasimodo those were parts of his life.

Similarly, a Judge failed to act when Quasimodo was taken to court on the charge of attempting to abduct Esmeralda. While questioning Quasimodo the Judge had some misunderstandings. This was due to Quasimodo's deafness and made the judge loose his temper. As a result of this, Quasimodo was taken to the pillory to be whipped. But this was an unfair trial as Quasimodo was only obeying Claude Frollo's orders.

While being treated with the whip, Quasimodo discovered what people really felt



The Hunchback of Notre-Dame

about him. He saw that the crowd, that crowned him the 'Pope of the Fools' the day before, cheered at his agony and mocked him. At the same time he saw Claude Frollo passing by, indifferent about his state. This made the hunchback's attitude towards the Archdeacon

change. The man that Quasimodo loved all his life became the man to abominate.

When the whole world seemed to act against Quasimodo, Esmeralda entered the scene. As his back was bleeding and he was being mocked by the crowd,

Quasimodo asked for some water. But no one helped him. Then Esmeralda went to offer Quasimodo some water, knowing that the same man had tried to abduct her the night before.

Quasimodo himself was touched by Esmeralda's tenderness, realizing who his true friend was. The thought of true friends brought tears in his eyes. This scene was not so ordinary to the crowd.

Claude Frollo tried in almost all the possible ways to stop Esmeralda from being someone else's wife. So, once when Phoebus and Esmeralda were supposed to meet at a quiet place, Frollo disguised himself in that place. At the right moment he attempted to kill the Captain and managed to blame the fault on Esmeralda. Esmeralda was tortured and tortured before she admitted to the court that she was guilty of killing Captain Phoebus. As a result, she was sentenced to death.

Just before Esmeralda was going to be executed on the due day, the Archdeacon reminded her that if she accepted his offer he could still spare her life. But her bitter hatred towards him made her reject the proposal. Then as she was walking up to the scaffold she saw Phoebus. Though she immediately cried out to him, he deliberately went out of her sight. At this point, being deceived by the Captain, Esmeralda fainted. Quasimodo, who was observing every happening, went to the poor girl's rescue.

He heroically got hold of Esmeralda, brought her within the walls of Notre-Dame and declared giving

her sanctuary. The crowd appreciated and cheered, repeating Quasimodo's words, 'Sanctuary! Sanctuary!'. All the officers and executioners remained still at their places, taken aback while Quasimodo victoriously rescued their prisoner. Everyone felt, at that time, the hideous faced hunchback was beautiful deep inside. And Quasimodo was truly beautiful, much more beautiful than the jealous Archdeacon or the selfish Phoebus.

But the story does not end there. Again Esmeralda falls in the grip of Claude Frollo, while Quasimodo unknowingly fights people trying to rescue Esmeralda before the sanctuary is made to expire. This time Quasimodo becomes unable to save his love from death. As revenge, he throws the Archdeacon off the top of Notre-Dame. Months after that Quasimodo's skeleton was found embracing Esmeralda in the 'vault of Montfaucon', where the executed persons' bodies were dumped.

Quasimodo was a very lonely person. His childhood was spent making friends with statues of the cathedral. Physical disability did not prevent his mental development, but the social rejection towards him kept his thoughts and emotions suppressed. These thoughts and emotions were comparable to that of the other characters. With all, Quasimodo proved himself to be a true man concealed in his exceptional features. He teaches us not to judge a person by his looks, for our faces are only masks under which we are hidden.

## Handwriting Analysis: Decoding the Personality

by Shamsad Mortuza

EVERY time you leave a note or write a letter, you leave a part of you — and quite a significant part indeed! You write in order to communicate and words are the signs through which you express yourself. But when it comes to the question of handwriting — you not only express but reveal yourself, unconsciously of course. And your revealed self stands, visible under the magnifying glass of the graphologists, the handwriting experts.

The discipline that these graphologists master is graphology. Believe it or not, entrepreneurs or business firms in the western world employ a good number of graphologists only to scrutinize

the handwriting of their employees or potential employees. Besides, psychologists and psychiatrists often use handwriting to diagnose and monitor emotional illness. Moreover, handwriting helps to detect heart ailments or neurological disorders to the physicians.

Now, you do not have to be an expert to know the secrets of the writer's personality. Here are few tips through which you can decode the coded personality of a writer hidden in the handwriting.

Letter Boldness  
When you go to the New Market, what kind of ball-point pen do you choose? From the array of pens, if you choose a pen that produces bold letters with thick strokes then it is suggested that you are physically active, adventurous and impulsive. If the pen that you have purchased produce average letters then it is indicated you are the one who shares a balanced interest in money and people.

Slant  
Even the direction in which the letters lean can provide important information about a person's social and emotional tendencies. A moderate forward slant of letters suggests that the writer is a healthy extrovert who is sociable and feels comfortable expressing emotion and being part of a group. An extreme forward slant, however, indicates that the

writer possesses a logical mind. Separated letters, on the contrary, belong to an 'intuitive, insightful' person.

Size  
The writing size is one of the major keys that help the graphologists to find out whether the writer is a thinker or a doer, an introvert or an extrovert.

Small writing indicates the writer is introvert but modest in nature with a high degree of intelligence. Medium writing reflects that the person can be both private and social. Large writing belongs to the extrovert, the confident, assured individual.

With very large writing, one is surely showing off and desperately trying to gain attention. Roundness or Sharpness  
Smooth and round letters are generally written by gentle and easygoing persons. Letters with sharp lines and pointed arches (particularly on the m's and n's) exhibit signs of tension and inflexibility.

Well, now that you know the secrets...what are waiting for? Go and analyze the writings of your nearest and dearest ones. And don't forget to analyze yours...who knows you might even need a change in your handwriting style just to be in tune with your desired personality. If handwriting can reveal personality — any change in it should also be reflected in the personality. And what a bluff it would be for those pedantic graphologists.

(The information used in this article are taken from a back-issue of Seventeen Magazine).



It can be unanimously acknowledged by most of the level-headed and educated people of Bangladesh that the existing education system in this country seriously needs improvement. The article 'We don't need no thought control' written by Joy Alamgir on the 28th of July was a piece in which the writer expressed concern for our education system.

Joy has rightly emphasized the fact that syllabuses of certain subjects such as English, Physics and Chemistry are inadequate and the text of these subjects are very much back dated. However, I personally do not fully agree with the writer when he states that chapters covering classification of plants and information about parallel veins on leaves are 'obsolete stuff', the learning of which serves us no purpose.

Although I still hold a personal grudge against 'useless' classifications, all the same, there kinds of information helps indirectly to make us understand more clearly about the variety of life on Earth. Some informations in texts really seem too distantly related to real life and our everyday dealings but is it not important for us to know that hydrogen and oxygen make up water?

The writer, in his article, has criticized the fact that because of some subjects being compulsory, students are forced to take up subjects for which 'they don't have the knack.' A problem would however arise here if certain subjects such as English,

## The Existing Education System

by Susmita Roy

Bengali, Mathematics etc were optional.

A student might then have the freedom to omit for example, English from his course just because he/she isn't good at it or has no interest in it. As a result, the student would complete his education without knowing English which, as the writer himself had mentioned, is vital to be learnt thoroughly.

Basically it is not so much the text books and the syllabuses themselves that hamper our education but it is the teaching and learning methods and the lack of school — facilities which retard proper education in our country. The system in which subject matters are taught in school and the exam technique itself is most inappropriate and degrading. The main problem with the education system lies mainly in the primary sector. This section is almost totally ignored and neglected and only a minimum of care is taken to actually 'educate' a child in primary schools.

It is very fine and dandy that the government is aiming for more and more primary schools but what percentage of students come out educated in the real sense? The few who pass into secondary schools barely know more than simple calculations, the process of writing their names besides knowing how to memorize without understanding. These chil-

dren hardly know how to interact with teachers, express their thoughts, use their creativity and intelligence and are totally unaware of how to use imagination.

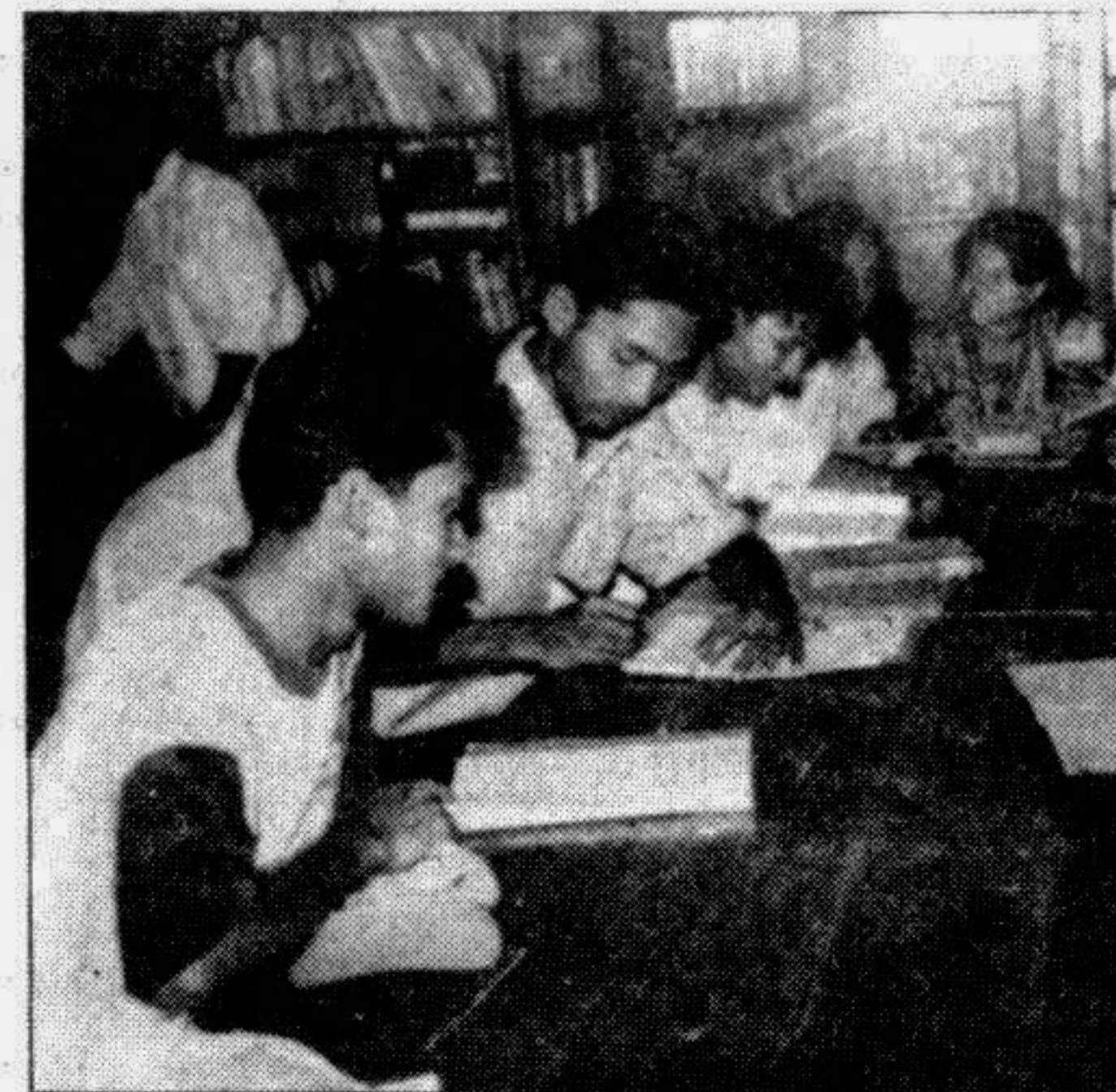
In most primary schools, the students huddle together in cramped conditions and go through the process of repeated recitation of the text until the information is embedded into their heads for life. Punishment include prehistoric ones such as whipping the child, swatting his

palms with a ruler or making him stand holding the ears.

These so called punishments which physically torture and frighten a pupil cannot be called punishments since they fail to rectify a child permanently. A child should be made to realize where his fault lies and the consequences of his error ought to be made clear. A teacher should be able to understand a student who in turn will understand and respect the teacher. A teacher

ought to talk to, guide and help every child individually and refrain from acting like a dictator.

Most often a child goes through school without his talents and creativity ever being expressed. There is hardly ever any opportunity



How would they use their imagination.

for a youngster to show what she/he is capable of. This is also where the system is at fault. It is not the fault of the students who automatically become 'memorizing masters' but it is the system itself

which encourages such un-called for ability. Proof of this are the board exams themselves. Why are board questions repeated and why is it possible to predict the following year's exam questions?

If some exam procedures were changed, all students would be forced to prepare themselves with a totally different and new approach and thus in the process, the learning programme would then be a success. It is very obvious that in Bangladesh, average students who pass out from secondary schools have very limited knowledge and have the least capability of interpretation.

Unfortunate it may be, but it is a fact that an average student who has passed O'Level exam possesses a greater knowledge and understanding ability than one who is studying HSC. Here the difference arises not because of the degree of intelligence, smartness etc but because of the difference in the education system.

If only some exam techniques were improved, if teachers start teaching with a different and modern approach, there would undoubtedly be great and noticeable changes in the education system. As is the case with all other countries of the world, our country also wants to see a well-educated population. But if the system of our education is not updated and modernized soon, the future, of which education is the foundation, looks bleak.

death? As human beings we have been taught to hate the crime, not the perpetrator. And the fact, that we, humans are the only civilized ones amongst the living world alone, should deter us from butchering each other like any other animal. However as death penalty is not the only punishment that can be categorized as severe; punishment like life term jail should, in my opinion, persist. It is more than enough for the guilty — moreover, it could be better as the years in captivity gives one the chance to repent and beg forgiveness from Allah and those who have been harmed by his actions. Is it not better that the guilty should suffer the torment of his conscience than just feel the icy hands of death momentarily?

Lastly — I would like to say that Allah gave all living things life. That is why no human being has the right to bring about destruction of lives. Let Allah be the one to take lives away.

PS: The author does not mean to contradict the other article mentioned in this write up. This is merely his personal view on the matter.

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## A Peaceful Quest

LOOKING out of my window at the world, I see problems looking back at me. And I'm not the one to get involved. Therefore, problems will never get solved. We've got acid rain, Saddam Hussein, National deficit, a crack cocaine, Homeless people being driven insane. By a world that gives them not a thing to gain. Croatia and Rwanda have become the tragic drama. To leaving the entire nation in trauma. No matter who's right they've got to stop the fight! No matter who's wrong The devil's still strong!! Just listen to the peaceful I — I'll show you how. So listen to the words I speak. Look around you — things ain't so bleak!!! Well a change is needed and I can tell. If we work together we'll never reach hell! Come journey with me on the Peaceful Quest — That is what I request. Being African, American or Asian won't make no difference. For if we stick to this way, we won't last till X-Mas. Regardless of our creed, colour, sex, religion or mass, we are 1 family — A nation united in harmony Of the many, we are the only. Come journey with me on the Peaceful Quest — That is what I request. — P E A C E that is what it means to me...

by T & T member

## The Death Panalty

by Adnan R Amin

THE first major crime committed in history was the murder of Habil by his perverted brother Kabil. They were both sons of Hazrat Adam (PBUH) Since then innumerable crimes have been committed. Somewhere between this time, in order to maintain peaceful harmony and order in the society man made laws. It is to be carefully noted that these laws were man made and unlikely to be completely flawless.

I write this article in reference to a former article published on the 18th August, an issue of The Daily Star, titled, 'Death Penalty: Why the policy should be strengthened' by Ms Farhana Yousuf. Every year thousands of heinous crimes of appallingly inhuman nature are committed. Sometimes it is hard to believe any normal human being could commit crimes of that nature. Crime rates are on the rise everywhere. But unfortunately the guilty are not always apprehended and prosecuted. And as it is only human to err, the identification of a criminal, positively is not possible. So, while in punishing the crim-

inals of our society, the existence of the death penalty is a tremendous relief; it also makes uneasy to those of us who think carefully, because they realize that it might be imposed on the wrong person due to circumstantial evidence or other reasons.

Regarding the paragraph concerning the heinous crimes of the Serbs, I should agree completely with the writer in determining that they should be punished severely. However, as the country is in a complete state of disorder it is seemingly impossible to enforce law and order over there and catch all the Serbian people taking part in the bloody battle, and committing associated crimes on the Bosnians.

One thing that I would like to add to the absolutely unfair and untrue statement claiming that only people of the lower class beat up their

wives, is that, the so-called 'elite' society is doing it too. It may, though, be for entirely different reasons. What better example could be set after mentioning the murder of Rima, by Munir, in this matter?

The answer, I feel, does NOT lie in butchering every man, who has been convicted, be it in a fair or unfair manner. Prevention is always better than cure. That's why we have to overlook individual cases and look beyond what's apparent and try to find out why a father should slaughter his child and sell the body organs. (This news was reported in a well-known daily, a few months back) For a crust of bread? Is it because hunger brought out the monster in him? That — we shall never know. But wherever there is crime there is punishment. But need it be so savage and crude as to indiscriminately put one to

## Meat Dummies

FLESH puppets — that's what we are. Trying to pull each other's strings. Always interfering with the diets schemes. Which are bad enough anyway. Where heartbreaks are pre-planned. Like the murder of an angel. With each jerk of the spider thread. Another jerk jerks to life. Waking from the apathy. Trying to hide the ignorance behind a wall of glass. Pretentious pipe dreams. Which the first pebble shatters. I'm the lord where I exist but I can only be in the world I created. The universe of my one-track mind. Where anything, which goes upon two legs is an enemy and anything which goes upon four legs or has wings is a friend. Get yourself a greener lawn but the extra chlorophyll. Will just add to your envy. Wake to find another dawn. Then lament — another yesterday's gone.

by Kazi Khaled Arafat