**O/L English Literature Model Answer Series.**

**“The story “wave” brings out both selfishness and selflessness of human beings.” Discuss with examples from the text.**

The novel “wave” by Sonali Deraniyagala presents the author’s first-hand experience of the destructive Tsunami which took away the lives of her British husband, her two children and her parents at one stroke, leaving her alone in the world. Wave charts the tortured years since Deraniyagala was forced to face this impossible truth. The novel also brings out both the selfishness and selflessness of human beings especially at moments of danger.

The story begings with the narrator’s observation of the unusual behaviour of the sea which is poised for a deadly attack. Very soon the waves begin charge and churn, giving them hardly any time to escape. She however manages to call her husband and her children and rush out of the scene with them only to be trapped by the unrelenting waves later.

It is while she rushes out of the hotel that she suddenly remembers that she did not knock at the door of her parent’s room. “I didn’t stop for my parents,” she writes. “I didn’t stop to knock on the door of my parents’ room, which was next to ours… I didn’t shout to warn them.” She has pushed her parents to the fringes of her heart, in her frantic struggle to escape. Although she regrets about it, we can see a tinge of selfishness here. It is natural that her children and husband were uppermost in her mind at that time. Fear can make us selfish, especially when we face a life-threatening situation.

Also when her friend’s parents are left behind by the jeep racing her family away from water, she doesn’t call out to the driver to wait for them. “He’s right,” she remembers thinking, “we have to keep moving.” This also shows a certain selfishness of the narrator whose sole concern was the safty of her own children and the husband.

While Sonali and her sons and her husband were making off in a safari jeep, Orlantha’s mother Beulah falls out of the jeep but nobody volunteers to pick her up and save her life. The narrator says: “I didn’t call out to the driver to wait for them”. At that time, they were concerned with their own lives rather than others’

This also brings out the selfishness of the human beings at times of danger to a certain extent.

However, Anton jumps out of the jeep and tries to help her to get up with great difficulty. This shows selflessness and sacrifice of human beings even at the risk of their own lives.

Thus the story Wave shows dramatically the selfishness and selflessness of human beings at times of danger through the actions of Sonali the narrator and those who are near and dear to her and it leaves us pondering about how we would have reacted to the situation if we had faced the same situation.